

**60 YEARS OF CHARITY, UNITY, & FRATERNITY  
IN THE ANNANDALE COMMUNITY  
1958-2018**

On December 18, 1957, thirty-seven Catholic men from Annandale, Bailey's Crossroads, Culmore, Fairfax, and Springfield took the first steps to establish a Knights of Columbus ("KoC") council, electing Joseph L. Schaffer as founding Grand Knight and a complete slate of officers. Selection of a Council name proved elusive, so for the next 47 years, we were known as Fairfax Council 4522. The Council was formally established on January 23, 1958, at Edward Douglas White ("EDW") Council 2473 in Arlington.

The fifth council in Northern Virginia, and the first in southern Fairfax County, during its first 25 years the Council served almost all of the area parishes: St. Anthony, St. Michael, St. Leo, St. Bernadette, St. Mary's Fairfax Station, Holy Spirit, St. Philip, Queen of Apostles, St. Lawrence, St. Ambrose, Nativity, Blessed Sacrament, and Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Church.

As membership grew in the early years, the Council decided to construct its own Council home. As a first step, on January 14, 1959, the Council set up a "home corporation," the Casey Club Association, Inc., under Virginia state law, modeled on the EDW Council's Columbus Club. The Casey Club was created "to provide, operate, and maintain all property and facilities" on behalf of the Council. In March, the membership voted to purchase an 8-acre site on Little River Turnpike for \$25,000. Planning for a clubhouse, swimming pool, and picnic grove began almost immediately, and the Council launched various fundraising efforts, including operating bingo games at St. Anthony's twice a month.

Groundbreaking for the new Council Home took place on Memorial Day 1962. The pool was completed first, opening August 19, 1962. Three months later, the Council Home was formally dedicated on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

As the 1970s began, Fairfax Council was the second largest Council in the state. Economic pressures, however, soon resulted in decreasing revenues and increasing expenses, and by 1976, the Casey Club found itself unable to cover all of its expenses. Council leadership called on the membership to increase their support of the Council and launched the Casey "500" Club raffle in February 1977 to raise needed revenue. The money from these monthly raffles helped somewhat, but participation never reached its full potential. Tuesday bingo at St. Anthony's, however, continued to be the Council's primary revenue source. Hoping to replicate a "Cash Cow," the Council began a second bingo game at the Council Home in September 1975. While a financial success, staffing problems forced its discontinuance at the end of February 1977—and financial concerns worsened. As the decade came to a close, the swimming pool, a popular summertime draw for families, needed major repairs and refurbishment to meet new Fairfax County standards. Consequently, in the fall of 1979, the Council decided permanently to close the pool. The decision to close the pool was not uncontroversial—and many members left the Council.

By August 1980, the Council home too, had deteriorated. The Grand Knight appointed a committee "to develop detailed architectural plans for our council building along with an estimate of construction costs." On October 14, 1981, the Council approved a \$350,000 plan to renovate and expand the Council Home. Because the Council was still paying the original 1962 mortgage, the Council decided to raise the needed funds by selling construction bonds to the membership. Between January 1984 and November 1987, a total of 167 bonds were sold,

generating \$170,000. The Council planned to redeem the bonds over a 15-year period, but thanks to the successful Friday bingo operation, the Council paid back the last 21 bondholders in early 1992. To raise the remaining necessary construction funds, the Council renewed a second bingo game at the Council Home in the fall of 1985. So successful was the second bingo game this time around that it became a weekly event with all profit marked for the expansion project and other charities. This version of the second Bingo game lasted until it once again succumbed to available resources and shut down on May 31, 2002.

On April 23, 1983, the Council observed its 25th anniversary with week-long celebration, starting with Mass celebrated by Bishop Thomas J. Welsh, and concluding with a dinner-dance at EDW Council. During these first 25 years, the Council's barbecues, family picnics, ethnic dinner-dances, pool/patio parties, and cookouts were both popular and profitable. The Council had its own bowling teams, soft ball teams, and sponsored annual golf tournaments. Members enjoyed annual bus trips to Philadelphia and Baltimore for baseball games, and trips to Shenandoah Downs in Charles Town, WV, and Atlantic City. The Council also sponsored spelling bees, a swim team (the Barracudas), Boy Scout Troops 894 and 1894, Cub Scout Pack 184, annual altar server picnics, a Squire's Circle, and various community sport teams. The Saturday matinees for kids in the Council Hall became a very popular event, and a first-class boxing team was a hit with boys age 10-18. Fairfax Council was truly "a family council" with very active programs for both adults and children.

After almost 11 years of planning, on July 5, 1986, the Council broke ground on the Council Home renovation and expansion. Work was nearly completed, when early on the morning of January 8, 1988, a disastrous fire occurred, caused by a malfunction in the old oil heater. Although the Annandale Fire Department quickly put out the fire, it burned through the roof. A structural engineer concluded that the exterior walls and main support beam were still structurally sound. Insurance covered all losses. The fire affected all Council programs and activities. Council meetings shifted to St. Michael's School, and the Casey Women's Club met in members' homes. Friday bingo temporarily transferred to Queen of Apostles' Hannan Hall, and all social events were transferred to Queen of Apostles or postponed. With the kitchen out of service, both the Family Breakfasts and Retirees' Luncheons were cancelled. By June, various activities and events had returned to the Council Home.

On October 10, 1988, over 150 people attended the dedication of the newly expanded Council Home. After a mass of thanksgiving, Council Chaplain Fr. Dan Spsychala conferred the Apostolic Blessing of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, upon the Council in honor of the newly expanded and renovated Council Home. Completion of the expanded facility (including installation of a long-desired commercial kitchen) generated a renewed sense of pride among the membership. Following the reopening of the Council Home, Casey Club officials decided to hire a paid, full-time manager to expand operating hours, allow hot food to be sold, and to oversee the rental program. On January 1, 1990, Vickey O'Brien became the first in a series of club managers. Budgeting for the position, however, became an issue as income from the rental program failed to meet expectations.

By the late 1990s, despite the best efforts of both the Council and the Casey Club, the expenses of operating a large physical plant were outstripping income. After much study, on October 25, 2000, the Casey Club Board made the difficult decision to sell the Council Home, and on July 1, 2002, the Casey Club sold the 7.2 acre lot at 6729 Little River Turnpike in Annandale for \$2.5 million.

Between the sale of the Council Home and the acquisition of a new home, the Council met at Queen of Apostles and St. Michael's Churches. On October 3, 2001, GK Don Champagne appointed a 5-man committee under the leadership of PGK Ron Plavchan, which came to be known as the New Visions Committee, to plan for the future. During its 4-year existence, this committee met more than 150 times to tackle issues facing the Council. Its members pursued numerous leads in search of suitable property for a Council home, secured approval of a "charitable set-aside" to lower the Club's tax liability from the sale of the old Council Home, and sought to establish a nonprofit foundation (Casey 4522 Foundation) to handle the funds set aside for disbursement to eligible charities under IRS regulations.

A small piece of property was eventually found in the central business district of Annandale, and PGK Owen felt it could be made to accommodate the needs of the Council. At a special meeting on March 10, 2004, the Council unanimously voted to acquire the property on Martin Avenue. During the latter part of this period during which the Council was "wandering in the desert," there was an effort to change the Council's name, and on May 11, 2005, the Council voted to change its name to the Pope John Paul II Council. On June 10, 2005, the Supreme Board of Directors approved the name change. On May 12, 2005, work on converting the house on Martin Avenue into a Council home began with demolition of the then-existing structure. By the end of October, work was nearly finished, and the newly-renamed Council held its first meeting in the totally renovated Martin Avenue facility on November 9, 2005. Although some were sad to have lost the old property, everyone looked forward to a return to normalcy after several tumultuous years.

In 2008 the Council took time to celebrate its 50 years of service and faith in the Annandale area. Over 100 people enjoyed a picnic on the grounds of the new Council Home. The celebrations were somewhat muted, however, by the news that the State Council had approved a request from our former Chaplain, Fr. Dudzinski, to form a new council at St. Michael's parish. With the establishment of a new council at St. Michael's Parish, the Pope John Paul II Council began to transition toward greater alignment with Queen of Apostles parish.

Over the past 10 years, the Council has intensified its association with Queen of Apostles and with the strong support of Fr. Leopoldo and the other priests, has become a "family within the family" at the Parish. The Council continues to do good works throughout community such as serving the needy at Christ House in Alexandria and the military at the Veterans' Hospital in Martinsburg, West Virginia, providing over TWO TONS of food just this past year to the Poor Sisters of St. Joseph's Food Pantry and helping Brothers and the parish at large grow in the faith.

While the "glory days" of Fairfax Council will always be recorded in history, Pope John Paul II Council has continued to serve the surrounding area in an outstanding manner—one that has spread the message of our founder, Fr. Michael J. McGivney throughout Fairfax County for the past sixty years.