

to have ten to twenty and even thirty years of leadership in every unit throughout the diocese. In addition, many were also members of the Knights of Columbus and active in their parish so the good will between Scouting and sponsor organizations was at its all time high. When Bob Connelly succeeded Lee Reese, The CCS had come of age and its continuity was assured as Bob Connelly maintained the high standards established. This unbroken standard of excellence was validated when the Fort Worth Deanery was asked to conduct the first annual awards ceremony outside of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Dallas. In a triumphant moment of pride, Bishop Gorman congratulated the Fort Worth Deanery for its masterful production of the first annual awards ceremony to be held at St. Patrick's Church. This outward bellwether of how well the committee was organized solidified its status and guaranteed its strong continuation beyond the transition to the new Diocese of Fort Worth. Bishop Gorman held separate awards ceremonies in Dallas and Fort Worth during 1968 before the creation of a new Diocese during 1969.

Catholic Unit Legacies Begin

The quality and quantity of Catholic units was spread throughout the Greater Fort Worth area and in pockets within the Diocese. Each one bringing its own rich heritage and talents to the religious awards program. The commitment of their leadership from the 1920's through the 1950's is evident in the continuation of a vibrant program. The following are accounts of many Catholic units early trials, accomplishments and humorous adventures.

One of the most colorful units was also the first to exist as a Sea Scout group (1940's). Ship 19 Scout Charles Bush, a thin, lanky boy from Fort Worth, was the catalyst that skippered the good ship "Santa Maria" on the high seas of Lake Worth. Sea Scouts wore no preservers, as there were no safety requirements as there are today. Scouts of Ship 19 would hitchhike to Camp Shuman, board the ship and salute the Officer of the Day before setting sail on a weekend of adventure.

Regional Bivouacs were the big event for the Sea Scout Program during the 1940's. "Crews" from all over the southwest met at White Rock Lake in Dallas for a competition sponsored by local sailboat owners. Members of each Sea Scout Ship would be divided up between all the ships and would compete to see who would win the day. One scout from Ship 19 watched as the skipper of his ship drove up, exiting the car in a wheelchair and was assisted to the helm (steering wheel). Although this young scout was apprehensive about their chances, he learned that day that anyone can overcome adversity when their ship won the competition.

While Ship 19 was on one weekend voyage around Lake Worth, Skipper Bush decided to pilot the Santa Maria close to the outer buoys marking the secure water area below the runway at Carswell Air Force Base during WWII. As he steered the craft close to the buoys, two speedboats approaching from the secure area with heavy machine guns mounted on their deck suddenly took the entire crew aback. It was so unexpected that not a word was spoken as he immediately put more space between themselves and the secured area. Luckily, the military speedboats looked ferocious but never made a sound or attempted to hail the crew of Ship 19.

A 40-foot schooner named "The Betsy" was a dual masted ship owned by the Fort Worth Area Council as a result of a donation from the Governor of Texas. On a sunny day in November, sailors of Ship 19 were asked to take a group of Boy Scouts on a cruise of Eagle Mountain Lake. The weather was unseasonably warm as the Betsy set sail. However, they were at the far side of the lake when a "Blue Norther" arrived and boys began congregating around the warm engine of the ship. High winds caused water to break over the ship and ice formed on every part of The Betsy. The severe drop in temperature, force of the wind and the pressure from the sails resulted in a cracked mast. Fortunately, the crew of Ship 19 were spared any repercussions because of the swiftness of the storm and because the weather technology of the day could not have predicted the ferocity of the winds.



Pack 32. Circa 1940's. Cub Scouts repaired toys for St. Theresa's Orphanage.

During the late 1940's, St. Patrick's Church (downtown Fort Worth) and Msgr. J. O'Donoghue sponsored Cub Scout Pack 32. Boys from the Pack appear in a Star Telegram pictorial on December 21, 1949 after having repaired toys that would be delivered to St. Theresa's Orphanage. Among the nine boys who appeared, Ken Potempa and David Nichols would go on to achieve Eagle Scout. Many Catholic units through the years would also participate in good turns for the children of the orphanage until it left the Fort Worth area several decades later.



Albert O'Neal (standing far left), OA Lodge Chief dressed in Indian outfit that helped win National OA Dance Team honors during 1956.

Scouting was an outlet for many volunteers to get past the horrors of World War II and promote the ideal of world brotherhood to youth. Cooperation became common as Troop 32 adults were instrumental in the creation and continuation of Troop 15 (All Saints Church) and Troop 34 (St. George's Church). Scouts from each of the units participated in a 1951 Philmont Trek, a contingent to the 1953 National Jamboree and as Indian dancers in the national OA

Dance Team Championship during 1956. This camaraderie also resulted in an unprecedented effort by Knights of Columbus Council 759 to build a scout hut (1953) in which scouts and leaders of the area could meet.

One of the benefits of Postwar America was the influx of military men and volunteers within scouting. Many of these men had lived their whole adult life according to the

methods they had to abide by during military life. So it was inevitable that the discipline, the leadership structure and the emphasis on uniforms became commonplace in Scouting. Although many units adopted this style during the 1950's and 60's, SM Ben Ford of Troop 97 was one of the more prominent proponents of order and discipline. Initially, he ran the troop as a military unit. Occasionally when meetings were getting out of hand, he would adopt "left face, right face" drills to regain control. Each patrol stood behind their Patrol Leader (who held the patrol flag) at attention until each group broke up into patrol corners. Uniform inspections each meeting and protocol regarding display and ceremonial use of the American Flag were strictly adhered to. Ben Ford's management style, also used by many others, gradually changed with the advent of Woodbadge style leadership methods. However, Ben's influence grew T97 from a unit of thirty scouts to one, which had one hundred boys.

Although the Longhorn Council provided Worth Ranch for camping, some troops had the luxury of private camping areas. Several relationships began during Scout Sunday at St. Alice's Church resulted in the donation of Camp Murrin to the catholic units of the area. Troop 1 (renamed Troop 101) and its devotion to the Scouting code was responsible for this legacy left to the hundreds of boys who have camped along the creekbed of Camp Murrin.

As Air Power rose in prominence during World War II, Air Squadron 32 was formed during the late 1950's as an Exploring unit dedicated to this emerging science. Air Squadron 32 participated in notable activities such as scout flights from Meacham Air Field in Fort Worth to Greater Southwest Airport (close to present-day DFW Airport) in order to tour Jesuit High School and visit with priests of the Jesuit Order. Some scouts used this opportunity to complete their pilgrimage requirement for the Ad Altare Dei award.

A fresh afternoon rain had fallen as the final rays of the sun were peeking over the Tooth of Time. As the purple sunset reigned over Philmont, each boy had persevered over his

own doubts, had learned the value of teamwork, and felt the inner glow that can only be summed up in one word – confidence. Philmont Scout Ranch was the destination and Ole Man was the advisor during 1951 when senior scouts of Troops 32 and 15 visited. Under individual accomplishments,



Circa 1963. Fr. John Matzner, Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish blesses a flag which has flown over the United States Capitol in Washington. Scouts of T13, holding the flag are: (L to R) Paul Pusko, John Foley, Paul Knuckley, Harold Horry, Henry Litteken, Ray Mathe and John Choens. The flag was obtained for Our Lady Q of P School at the request of John A. Bindel, OLQP parishoner, from the Hon. Graham Purcell, Representative from the 13th District of Texas. A letter of certification from George Stewart, Architect of the Capitol, was attached.

Northwest Texas Council

Nick Oeschner IV (T13) attended Philmont during 1949 as a Junior Geologist. He was one of three scouts selected from Northwest Texas Council for a geological exploration

expedition. Troop 509, Troop 97, Troop 497, and a host of other units have taken on the challenge of the Philmont mountains successfully.



Circa 1960's. Fr. Francis Hardy presented the Parvuli Dei medals to the above Cub Scouts, Pack 34, of St. George Parish. L to R, back row, are: Bobby Bourland, Bill Gilliland, Mrs. Ray Circe, Den Mother, Fr. Hardy, Mike Wysattia and Kenneth Haidusek. Front row, L to R, are: Roy Soto, Gary Whitaker, Ron Circe, Donald St. John and Steven Behl. Kevin O'Kane who was not photographed, also rec'd the Parvuli Dei award.

Growth of the Boy Scout program was being fueled by the increase of the Cub Scout program. Since membership was growing, it was only natural that religious awards would also be extended to the Cub Scouts. When the Ad Altare Dei award had become well entrenched and the successful

emergence of the Cub Scout program was apparent, the Parvuli Dei award was unveiled during 1956 as a national Catholic religious award for Cub Scouts. Since the outset of the Cub Scout Awards program, they had always been treated on a separate level and administered within the local parish. Since the nature of scout adults participating in this program were always transitioning to Boy Scouts, there was never a cohesive group of adults available to organize. One of the early pioneers of this

award was a Den Mother of Pack 34 – Mrs. Ann St. John. Several of her Parvuli Dei “classes” appear in group pictures during the 60’s with Msgr. Hartnett of St. George’s Church, and include a number of scouts who would later excel at the Boy Scout level (Joe and Donald St. John, Ken Haidusek). For her early unprecedented work, Mrs. Ann St. John would be awarded the St. George Award before a major illness would restrict her work. Despite the emotional setback in the St. John family, her son Donald would later achieve the Altare Dei award, Eagle Scout and become Indian Dance Champion



Circa Feb. 1966. Boy Scout Week was highlighted in Wichita Falls by the presentation Feb. 13 of the Parvuli Dei Catholic scouting award to eight Cub Scouts of Pack 13, Sacred Heart Parish. Shown above with their pastor, Msgr. Vincent F. Micola, who made the presentation, the Scouts are, (L to R) Daniel Crommett, Alfred French, Patrick Mitchell, Michael Mitchell, Joseph Florot, Steven Moore, Daniel Ruddy and Michael Honkomp.



Eight Cub Scouts received the Parvuli Dei award
Pack 434. Circa 1972. Paul Arrambide, BSA National Director, presents Cub Scouts their Parvuli Dei awards.