



*KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
Fourth Degree
Saint Isaac Jogues Province
First New Jersey District*

2024 BIENNIAL MEETING

March 16th, 2024

The 2024 Biennial Meeting was called to order: 9:30am by James DeLuccia, District Master

- The Colors were presented by the Color Line, led by Joseph Bonafide, Color Line Commander.
- Kenneth Schmitt, District Marshal led the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- The Colors were posted by the Color Line, led by Joseph Bonafide.
- Opening Prayer – Led by Father Raymond Rodrigue
- The Worthy Master, James DeLuccia appointed the Secretary, Edward Kopec, and Pilot, Kenneth Schmitt.
- Roll Call of Assemblies was taken by Edward Kopec (see attached)
- 3 Resolutions were presented by Former Master, Paul Pinkman (see attached)
 1. Resolution to Amend the Color Corps Manual
 2. Resolution to Declare November “Veterans Month”
 3. Living our Faith
- The Credentials Committee Report was given where Edward Kopec confirmed all in attendance did have the proper credentials.
- Communication Report from Supreme- All were reminded to continue to send your reports on a timely basis, copy the District Master and continue the Newsletters so your Assembly can qualify for Star Assembly.
- Reading of the Minutes from the 2022 Biennial Convention.
A motion was made by SK Brian Christians and seconded by SK Anthony Forino to: Waive the Reading and to Accept the Minutes from the 2022 Biennial Convention as published. The motion was passed unanimously.
- The State of the District Report was presented by James DeLuccia:

Rev. Father, Faithful Navigators, and my Brother Sir Knights, I wish to welcome you to the First NJ District 4th Degree Biennial meeting. During my tenure as Master of the First New Jersey District for the past 2 years, I worked toward enhancing five significant areas, Church, Membership, Patriotism, Administration, and Service to those in need.



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The past 2 plus years have shown continuous improvement in the district in these areas. For the Church, we have enhanced our relationship with many parishes and the dioceses that we serve in. Our increased participation in the Church and Civic programs has resulted with many more call outs than in years past.

For membership, we have maintained the twice a year Exemplification of the Fourth Degree. This membership commitment has been reorganized towards a goal of recruitment year-round. One new focus of our Exemplifications of the Patriotic degree is to increase membership specifically among the Clergy, our most treasured brother.

This has been achieved by offering and conducting this degree during the week, 'remotely' at the convenience of our Clergy at their Parish to accommodate the Priest's Sunday Mass schedule and to ultimately ensure our Clergy attain their Sir Knight status. Over the past 2 years we have conducted 27 'Special Exemplifications' for our Clergy resulting in 27 Reverend Father Sir Knights.

To the goal of membership, we have attended every CUF degree in our District at the leadership of Executive Aide to the Master Edward Wilkin. He tracks, every CUF degree that is posted on the State's Website, assigns Aides or Marshals to attend, they speak on the 4th degree, record contact information, direct the 'new' brothers to their Assemblies, then ultimately follows up with their Faithful Navigator. This has been and will continue to be a very good tool in recruiting and ensuring these brothers do not get lost in the system and we move them into the highest degree in the Knights of Columbus.

Additionally, we have changed the honorees for the Military Ball to our U S Veterans, and going forward will add our First Responders to the list of honorees. This being the Patriotic Degree has enhanced the participation for all our brothers.

While we have achieved our goal of new Sir Knights each year for the past two years, we hope to improve our membership prospecting. Additionally, to be more inclusive and utilize the membership to its fullest we formed and Supreme adopted a new Assembly in Paterson, Assembly #3940, and currently are forming another new Assembly in Hewitt to be submitted to Supreme for adoption by the Supreme Council.



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The addition of the Star Assembly Award is an added incentive towards the growth of the Fourth Degree. Thank you to all the Navigators who have made recruiting a priority in your Assemblies.

The Patriotic Degree has been exemplified twice a year under the direction of Team Captain SK Jay Bohn. The team's performance has always been at the highest level and has been certified. District Marshal Kenneth Schmitt, with assistance from Executive Marshal David Cordero and Assistant Marshals James Meng, and Dan Germaine, Hector Jimenez, Vincent Lombardi, Mario Lepage and Color Line Commander Joseph Bonafide has directed the Color Corps and Color Line at the Exemplifications and have performed well under their leadership, in addition to their attendance at CUF degrees representing the Fourth Degree.

Our Team, worked to secure another Venue for our April Exemplification and I am honored to announce the Venue for the 2025 April Exemplification, with the honoree being our Associate District Friar Father Raymond Rodrigue, the Parish of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, in Lyndhurst.

I felt it was very fitting that the Exemplification of the Patriotic Degree, that being of honoring our Country and Church be conducted in the Church.

We also additionally, with our brothers in mind, changed the Day of the Exemplification from Sunday to Saturday to allow all to Celebrate Mass at their home Parishes on Sunday.

I must also thank the Associate State Chaplain Father Ernest Rush for his support and assistance in securing all that was needed to be put this in place. Also, our State Treasurer and FM Master Russell Petrocelli for his assistance in this endeavor.

The District Color Line has maintained stellar performance with Joseph Bonafide as its Commander and Lawrence Bogar his Assistant, at the Exemplifications, State Conventions, the Installation of the State Officers, Pride in our Priests Dinners, and many other functions throughout the District.

The First New Jersey District will share the responsibility of the Color Corps at the annual NJ State Council Convention in Wildwood, NJ this year, and with our District Colors being carried in at the Convention. Thanks in advance to all who will participate at this annual event. Your excellence in formations and drills are the pride of the District.



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Administratively, our achievements have moved the District beyond all expectations and well into the 21st Century. Our Webmaster, Brian Christiaens, has built a new web site that provides current and up to date information and fillable forms for all members of the district. This is an ongoing project and I wish to thank Brian for his efforts. We also created a '4th Degree Membership Application' and a QR code to expedite and facilitate Candidate signup and to replace the Form 4.

Additionally, the Candidate/Guest/Working Corpsman Dinner Reservation Form is now done digitally on our First New Jersey District website and has removed the mailing or emailing of paperwork. This has streamlined the Dinner Reservation process to one digitally submitted page. Another addition, we have just added a digital aspect to the submission of Ads for our Exemplification Ad Journal. This has removed the paper submission process which led to clerical errors, dropped, and missed Ads, and additional tedious paperwork.

Our District was advised because of everyone's perseverance and the Team's efforts, we no longer need to submit to Supreme 'paper Form 4s'. They request only the digital version. Thank you all for your dedication and cooperation, let us put the 'paper end' of the Knights of Columbus in the K of C Museum!

Email has been our major means of communications and continues to be an excellent source of information to our membership.

The District call out requests are now also done through the new website which has streamlined the tracking and distributing of our Call Outs. Most of our Assemblies also use email to communicate with their members and many maintain active Newsletters, a requirement for Star Assembly. We encourage Assemblies to use the computer-based resources available from Supreme especially the Membership Maintenance program for record keeping. All our district information is available on the State and District Website.

In the service area, many of our efforts are directed toward our programs for veterans. Under the direction of Sir Knight Angelo Scalo, and Raymond Lil, the District is still actively involved in the Tank Pull, a program started by Msgr. Stein Assembly and now a State Council program. Proceeds from this event are used for direct aid to Veterans and other Veteran affairs.



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The District Veterans' programs have supplied sweatpants and shirts, socks, jackets, caps, other clothing, and personal items to all the five hospitals and homes in the State. Where permitted, escort services have been provided for Chapel service along with social programs to improve the Veterans morale.

We are trying to maintain a Sir Knight as a liaison at the Veteran hospitals and homes in the 1ST New Jersey District in accord with the VTVS program. Former Master Paul Pinkman is at the forefront in organizing these efforts and we wish to express our gratitude to him.

Our Color Corps has made exceptional service to the District responding to over 400 call outs for the past year. The number of call outs continues to increase each year. To be able to handle all call outs we need to increase our Color Corps membership with emphasis on younger Corpsmen, as we are constantly trying to recruit new men.

Additionally, the State has repeatedly assisted with programs to embolden the Corp. The Corpsmen are continually being instructed in proper Uniform and drill procedures and have shown an excellent attitude in compliance with all procedures.

Thanks go to SK Michael Leyden, who is now part of State Secretary Jim Sweeney's Administration, for his assistance as Secretary for the District, Executive Secretary Edward Kopec, has done an exemplary job replacing Michael Leyden and has continued to further the district.

District Marshal Kenneth Schmitt for his leadership of the Color Corps and personnel. I would also like to thank Executive Assistant Marshal David Cordero, and Kenneth Mahouchick for their leadership with the Ad Journal, PSD Bruce DeMolli, for taking the lead in Membership, and Jay Bohn for serving as Captain of the Degree Team.

Although all have contributed to the workings of the district, without which nothing would have been accomplished, I am not going to mention other names as to avoid the danger of missing some.

My sincere gratitude and appreciation are extended to the members of the district staff and the Color Corps. Sincere thanks to all the Sir Knights, my brothers for their support, patience and cooperation you have given me and the District on this awesome journey.

My thanks to our District Friar Father William Smith and Associate District Friar Father Raymond Rodrigue for their service, friendship, and Spiritual guidance during the past 2 years.



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Your service, dedication and faithful shepherding are well appreciated especially with all the demands that are placed on our Parish Priests. I encourage all the Assemblies to support and respect your parish priests. Their help is important for the Order and your service to them is even more important.

My gratitude is extended to all of you for letting me lead this District as your Master for the past two years. And I hope and pray I am allowed to continue this journey to serve all my brothers, further our Order, our Veterans, Church, and God's neediest.

The First New Jersey District has remained "Second to None" in the State and Knights of Columbus due to your efforts and support. Our Assemblies continue to successfully function for their members, those we Serve and hopefully grow and remain strong. Remember the four principles of our order: Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. Keep up the good work and prosper.

Continue to be blessed and be a blessing to all those you encounter in your journey of faith.

A sincere "THANK YOU" from the bottom of my heart.

**Vivat Jesus,
James DeLuccia, Master
First New Jersey District**

- There was no Unfinished Business to present.
- At this time the gavel was turned over to Former Master and State Treasurer, SK Russell D. Petrocelli to present the New Business – Candidate (s) for District Master to be submitted to Supreme. The Former Master thanked James DeLuccia and reminded all that this is not an election, merely a recommendation to Supreme who makes the ultimate decision in accordance with the *Revised Procedures* noted: *Revised Procedures that will be followed, Article VI, Section 17 (a) for the selection of up to three names to be submitted to Supreme as recommendations for Master. We are not electing a new Master; only Supreme has the authority to appoint the Master. The convention will be recommending up to three names to the Vice Supreme Master, who will then add his comments on the recommendations and forward them to the Supreme Master who will make the appointment of Master.*



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The Former Master then asked the Delegates if there were any recommendations for Master of the First New Jersey District and Former Master Paul Pinkman recommended James DeLuccia. The Former Master, SK Russell Petrocelli, then asked the Delegates if there were any additional recommendations for Master of the First New Jersey District and there were none.

- The Gavel was returned to James DeLuccia who recognized the State Council Officers in attendance:
- Former Master and State Treasurer Russel Petrocelli shared: On behalf of the State, congratulations on the meeting today. The 4th Degree has evolved a lot in the last 10 years. The Order would not function without the 4th Degree. Urged the Assemblies to “Develop one new program”. Asked all Navigators: What have you done for your Assembly? What will be your Legacy? The Uniform is what people recognize. In closing thanked the Knights in attendance for all they do for the Veterans and our Priests.
- Closing Prayer and Reflection from Father Raymond Rodrigue:
This weeks Gospel discussed the story of Greeks coming to see Philip wanting to see Jesus. We know that *seeing* Jesus is not a “Spectator sport”, but a painful experience that makes us stronger/ wiser. Experience the ‘Holy’, that God is present in your life. Let go of Love of temporary, allows us to focus on Eternal Life with God. We wish to see Jesus.
- The singing of God Bless America was led by Kenneth Schmitt.
- The Colors were retired, led by Joseph Bonafide.
- James DeLuccia made a motion to adjourn at 10:15am.