

Cross and Flame Award winners

The Rev. Ron Mateer— Lifetime Scout

MARTINSVILLE, Va.—Last fall, at the request of the Council on Ministries, First UMC awarded their pastor his second Cross and Flame Award. His previous award was presented in 1998 by St. Luke's UMC in Danville, Va.

Mateer is a lifetime Scout. He attained the rank of Eagle as a youth. In 1964, he received a God and Country Award.

He entered the ministry in 1973 but continued in scouting at every church he served. He also served as chaplain at the Miami Valley Council Scout Camp.

He served as a Cub master in Fincastle, Va., and a scoutmaster in Danville, Va. In 1993, he was inducted into the Order of the Arrow.

"It is estimated that Ron has worked with over 250 Scouts on their God and Country Awards," said Bob Hopkins, scouting coordinator for the Martinsville Church. "It has been a real pleasure work with Ron over the last seven years."

Larry Gossett— Fifty-two years and counting

SUNNY SIDE, Ga.—The scouting coordinator for Sunny Side UMC received a Cross and Flame Award for 52 years of service to Boy Scout Troop 8. Gossett's service to the troop began when he became a charter member in 1955. He attained the rank of Life Scout and served as scoutmaster and assistant scoutmaster. He has been the scouting coordinator since 1990 and also serves as the treasurer of the troop committee.

Gossett was named a member of the



Ron Mateer

Order of the Arrow in 1975. He received the District Award of Merit in 1978 and the Silver Beaver Award in 1996.

A life member of Sunny Side church, Gossett has held various positions and now chairs the Administrative Council. He is also member of the church's Relay for Life Team.

"This is close to Larry's heart since his daughter lost her battle with cancer as a young mother," said Sylvia Avery, a church member.

Thomas Custer, a church member, presented the Scout leader with a flag that flew over the U.S. Capitol. The flag was flown for Gossett's "faithful service to Boy Scout Troop 8 and loyal dedication to Sunny Side UMC" at the request of U.S. Rep. Lynn A. Westmoreland.

Ruth Bradley— Fire builder who gets any job done

MACEDONIA, Ohio—"I have known Ruth Bradley for close to 40 years now, and I have come to know her well—as a friend and volunteer in the church," said Dan Walker, Macedonia UMC director of Christian education and youth.

Bradley received the Cross and Flame Award for her work in the Brownies, Boy



The Rev. David Sanders, pastor of Sunny Side UMC (left), presents a Cross and Flame Award to Larry Gossett (center). Thomas Custer presents the Scout leader with a U.S. flag that flew over the U.S. Capitol and a certificate.



Ruth Bradley

Scouts, Girl Scouts, the children's department, Vacation Bible School, the junior and senior high youth groups and the youth choir. "She is very dependable and can be counted on to be there and get things done," said Walker.

"I don't think I go too far in saying that out troop in Aurora would not be functioning without her as one of the core leaders," said Brian Pichola, committee chair of Boy Scout Troop 265. Bradley became involved with the troop in 2001 as a concerned mother. She stayed around to publish a monthly newsletter, chair a fund-raising effort and organize family-night activities at a summer camp. Even after her son became an Eagle Scout, she continued her involvement as troop secretary.

She was equally involved as a Girl Scout leader. "She can build a fire, cook over the fire, run a campsite and come up with fun things to do," said Jill Loeffler, a fellow Girl Scout leader. "Our Troop 972 earned a Bronze Award because of Ruth."

Harry Fox—Father and Scoutmaster

GREENSBURG, Pa.—The father of three Scouts, Fox became a scoutmaster in the 1980s and continued on the local troop committee. He also served on district committees.

Fox has served First UMC as a member of the Administrative Council and an usher. Frank Stillman, Western Pennsylvania Conference scouting coordinator, presented the Cross and Flame Award to Fox on Scout Sunday.

Page Dionne—Eagle Scout helps others attain same rank

ENTERPRISE, Ala.—First UMC awarded Dionne a Cross and Flame Award for serving as scoutmaster of Troop 99. During his 4-year tenure, Dionne, who is an Eagle Scout, helped seven young men attain the same rank. "He is a devoted Scout leader who instills the 12th point of the Scout Law (a Scout is reverent) in all scouting events," said Steve Rutland, First UMC scouting coordinator. Dionne takes his troop on monthly camping trips and acts as a merit badge counselor.

Bob Beamer and Bruce Carlson— Two leaders receive same honor

MULVANE, Kansas—Two Cross and Flame Awards were presented by Mulvane UMC to Beamer and Carlson. Beamer served as a finance chair for the local unit and the Kansas Lodge. He was also popcorn chair and chapter adviser. Carlson has been troop committee chair for 9 years and he chaired the food drive. Both men are members of the Order of the Arrow who have served as commissioners at Quivera Scout Ranch. They also help boys attain their merit badges, sponsor campouts, and supervise service projects. They have each helped their son attain the rank of Eagle Scout and have assisted 13 others to attain the same rank.

Bryan Fisk—Church and scouting leader

SCRANTON, Pa.—Elm Park UMC and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Council of the Boy Scouts presented a Cross and Flame Award to Fisk, a church leader and president of the council. Originally from Elmira, N.Y., he

serves the Elm Park Church as chair of the Administrative Council and he is the former chair of the Board of Trustees. He is also a member of the choir, teaches the adult Sunday school class and helps manage the church's endowment fund. He is an Eagle Scout and served as scoutmaster for several units. He is currently the assistant scoutmaster for Troop 251 in Clarks Summit. He is also the council adviser for the wood badge adult leadership course. Fisk is a civil engineer. He and his wife, Kathy, have raised three children: Patrick and Danny are Eagle Scouts, and Rebecca earned a gold award through the Girl Scouts. Gossett (center). Thomas Custer presents the Scout leader with a U.S. flag that flew over the U.S. Capitol and a certificate.



Bryan Fisk

Big Brother Robert helps La'Donte through difficult experiences

By Carly Southworth

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Two years ago, La'Donte moved from Illinois to Tennessee to live with his Aunt Sherry. His mother had been incarcerated on drug-related charges.

La'Donte was defiant, angry, and depressed.

Sherry enrolled La'Donte in the Big Brothers/Big Sister program in hopes of providing him with a positive male role model with whom La'Donte could express his feelings and talk about growing into a man.

La'Donte was matched with Robert. For the first several months, Robert reported that La'Donte was quiet and expressionless, and Robert was unsure if he was enjoying the match activities. With encouragement from Big Brothers/Big Sister staff, Robert continued to talk about himself and his feelings in hopes that La'Donte would join him in those discussions.

La'Donte grades began to drop and after incidents at school with another student, La'Donte pled guilty to assault and was placed on probation with mandatory community service. He was

also required to attend mandatory anger management and was moved to an alternative school.

The only positive outcome of these experiences was that La'Donte finally began to talk with Robert about his mom, her incarceration and other difficult experiences.

Today, La'Donte has completed his probation and all other court-mandated sanctions. He is expecting his record to be expunged. He is able to talk about what he has learned through his involvement with the justice system. La'Donte is looking forward to a trip back to Illinois to visit his extended family.

Big Brothers/Big Sister staff asked La'Donte if he was excited to go and see his family and friends. La'Donte said, "Yeah, but Robert is kind of sad though, I think."

Robert said he has to admit that La'Donte has become a regular part of his life, and he is right—he will be missed.

Southworth is a graduate of the University of Michigan and a staff member at Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee in Nashville.

Florida troop receives bishop's award

SPRINGHILL, Fla.— Boy Scout Troop 91 of Shady Hills UMC received the Bishop's Award of Excellence for distributing Christmas baskets and participating in the September feast, a "Trick-or-Treat" fall festival, the Christmas parade, a tree-lighting ceremony and Scout Sunday.

The 20-member troop has six Eagle Scouts. Scouts participated in Eagle projects to build a garden gazebo and a playground; they also re-designed the youth room. The troop has been sponsored by the church for 11 years.



Kenneth Harrison and Ted Kimmel, Eagle Scouts from Troop 91, remove old playground material prior to building a new one. The new playground was an Eagle project led by John Watson Jr.

Nudging a child away from a jail cell

More than 10 million children in the United States have at least one parent in prison. Seventy percent of these children will follow their parent unless they receive help from another adult.

That is the principle behind the Amachi program of Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

Amachi is a Nigerian Ebo word meaning "Who knows what God has brought us through this child?" The Amachi program was launched in 2001 by Wilson Goode, the former two-term mayor of Philadelphia and a child of incarcerated parents.

The General Commission on UM Men formed a partnership with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and launched pilot Amachi programs in seven annual conferences.

Studies show that children who receive positive one-on-one mentoring are 52 percent less likely to skip school, 46 percent less likely

to use illegal drugs, 33 percent less likely to strike someone in anger and 27 percent less likely to use alcohol. And most important, successful intervention reduces the likelihood that these children will end up in prison.

T. Charles Pierson, chief executive officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas, said his experience serving as an Amachi mentor to Jamar convinced him of the value of the program.

Jamar's father was arrested before Jamar was even born and he is now serving a life sentence for murder. "When I first met Jamar, he was troubled, angry and prone to violence," said Pierson. "Today, Jamar's attitude and behavior have dramatically improved -- and a boy who once idolized the prison lifestyle is looking toward a bright future that includes becoming a Big Brother himself."

The 2010 Boy Scout Jamboree

Boy Scouts of America will celebrate its 100th birthday at the 2010 National Scout Jamboree, July 26 through Aug. 4, 2010.

The jamboree will be held at Fort A.P. Hill, in Caroline County Virginia. The central Virginia site is 45 minutes southwest of Washington, D.C.

"We're going to have one heck of a party," said Chief Scout Executive Robert J. Mazza. "Not only will this gathering allow us to celebrate our glorious past, it will provide an equal opportunity to proclaim our glorious future. It will be the best, most exciting, fun-filled, and safest jamboree ever."

Chaplains needed

The Office of Scouting Ministry is looking for 20 UM clergymen and clergywomen to serve as chaplains for the event. A few certified lay leaders

with experience as a BSA summer camp chaplain will be accepted. BSA registration and BSA youth protection certification must be current. Candidates must attend a two-day training session in Nashville. Room and board for the training experience will be paid by the General Commission on UM Men; participants must pay their own travel expenses. Chaplains will also pay their own travel and room and board at the jamboree. Ethnic minority chaplains are especially needed. All appointments are made by the BSA. The office of scouting ministry only makes recommendations.

For a chaplain's information survey form or more information, contact: Larry W. Coppock, scouting ministries director (lcoppock@gcummm.org) or call 615-620-7261.

Boy Scout saves life of Maldivian President

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (A.P.)— A quick-thinking Boy Scout foiled an assassination attempt on the president of the Maldives in January. He grabbed an attacker's knife as the man leapt from a crowd and lunged at the leader, an official said.

President Maumoon Gayoom was unhurt, but his shirt was ripped as the attacker tried a second time to stab him before being overpowered by security guards, government spokesman Mohammed Shareef said.

"One brave boy saved the president's life," he said.

Mohammed Jaisham Ibrahim, wearing his blue Maldives scout uniform with a blue kerchief, was standing in the crowd to greet Gayoom on Hoarafushi, one of the 1,190 coral islands in the Indian Ocean that make up the Maldives.

The attacker hid a knife in the Maldivian flag as he awaited Gayoom's arrival, he then lunged at the president, Shareef said.

Ibrahim reached out and grabbed the blade, and he was cut on the hand, according to the government.

"There was blood on the president's shirt, but it was not his but the boy's," Shareef said.

"His wound was stitched, but later he complained that he could not move some of his fingers," Shareef said. The boy was flown to the Maldives' capital, Male, for treatment.

Boy Scouts in the Maldives are similar to their U.S. counterparts, receiving training in first aid and participating in activities like camping. Their motto is the same: "Be Prepared."

South Carolina Scout named American Legion's 'Eagle Scout of the Year'

Welland Dane Burnside, 19, is the American Legion's Eagle Scout of 2007, a national award that includes a \$10,000 college scholarship. Burnside is a member of Crew 312, chartered to Belin Memorial UMC in Murrells Inlet, S.C.



A senior honor student and star athlete at Maple Hill High School, Burnside earned his Eagle Scout rank by tackling a long list of conservation-related tasks at nearby Myrtle Beach State Park. These included clearing overgrown nature trails, removing unwanted plants and vines from the park pond, securing an ongoing supply of mulch for pathways, repairing and replacing neglected birdhouses, and installing redwood benches for park visitors.

Despite his youth, Burnside already has a long record of charity work and service projects, American Legion officials noted. Seven years ago, he and his sister, Aubyn, established a program called "Suitcases for Kids" to provide luggage for foster children. As they moved from place to place, many of those children had only plastic bags to carry their possessions. Today, the nonprofit program operates in all 50 states and 83 foreign countries.

Arizona Scout leaders name deceased Scout leader as a member of the John Wesley Society

MESA, Ariz.—Fred Osgood, 66, a member of St. Matthew UMC, died last August while in Chelmsford England for the 2007 World Scout Jamboree.

His friends and other Scout leaders wanted to honor Osgood for years of service as a Scout leader. They asked family, friends and scouting leaders to donate a total of \$1,000 for the UM Scouting Endowment fund, so they could posthumously present Osgood with a John Wesley Society award.

"Fred was an international ambassador for scouting," said David Girona, past chair of the Interfaith Religious Recognition Committee of the Grand Canyon BSA Council. "He served as the United Methodist representative at our council. When they closed Camp Geronimo off-camp hiking trails due to fire danger, Fred came up with the idea to have a Duty to God segment in lieu of trail patches earned by doing a few items on a list of activities. We all know his heart was in scouting."

KIDS IN CHURCH

3-year-old Reese:
"Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name. Amen."

A little boy was overheard praying:
"Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am."

After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I wanted to stay with you guys."

One particular four-year-old prayed, "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."

A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" "I wouldn't know what to say," the girl replied. "Just say what you hear Mommy say," the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

God and Country books now available from Cokesbury

Cokesbury will now handle God and Country religious awards from P.R.A.Y (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth).

"Cokesbury will make it so easy for congregations and pastors to order the God and Country booklets," said Mark Hazlewood, top staff executive of P.R.A.Y. "We are excited to partner with Cokesbury in this ministry."

The P.R.A.Y. series includes four programs: God and Me, God and Family, God and Church, and God and Life. These are Christian Education resources with special emphasis on community service and family interaction. You may order material online at <http://www.cokesbury.com>.