



The Rev. David Wild, pastor of Holy Cross Catholic Church of West Fargo, collects Boy Scout memorabilia. He's been involved with scouting for years. Associated Press

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WEST FARGO, N.D. — If you're a Boy Scout fan such as the Rev. David Wild, you probably are trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind and have Scout memorabilia coming out of your ears.

Wild, pastor of Holy Cross Catholic Church of West Fargo, is a collector of just about anything. "I'm a junker from way back," he says.

But above all, he collects Boy Scout items.

Anybody who's ever been a Cub Scout, a Boy Scout or a Scout leader will find nostalgia galore by hiking through Wild's living quarters in the church rectory.

He's loaned many Scout items for display, but he's retained many at the rectory. Those are kept in an unfinished upstairs room where he holds religious education classes.

The kids, he says, refer to the room as "Father's Attic."

A sash filled with merit badges, belt buckles, uniforms, neckerchiefs, handbooks, fire-building equipment, pins, pocket knives and mess kits — it's all there.

"I've got Scout stuff all over the place," Wild says, pointing out Order of the Arrow headdresses, a Norman Rockwell Boy Scout painting, bugles from the 1930s, national Scout jamboree patches and first aid kits.

He has dozens of novels about Scouts and a series of classic books published for Scouts, many of them dating from the early 1900s. He has international Scout pins, compasses, scripts for Scout plays, snapshots of early Scouters and an unopened Scout jigsaw puzzle.

And yet, this avid collector of Scout memorabilia was never a Boy Scout himself.

Wild grew up at Langdon. "We didn't have Scouts — 4-H — but no Scouting program," he says.

After his ordination, he was assigned to Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Fargo in 1953. "Part of my assignment was to keep an eye on the Scout troop the parish sponsored," he says. "Here I was, a newly ordained priest, who knew nothing about Scouting, keeping an eye on the Scouts."

But he became hooked — and then some. As he's been assigned to churches, he's often become

scoutmaster. That was the case in Forman, Oriska, Buffalo and Valley City. He's held several Scout offices and now is commissioner for the three West Fargo troops and coordinator for Troop 279, which is co-sponsored by Holy Cross and the Lutheran Church of the Cross.

He's guided several Scouts — 20 is a rough estimate — to their Eagle awards, the highest-ranking Scout honor. He's taken boys on countless camping trips, including four trips to Alaska. He's been to several national Scout jamborees. He's also received the Silver Beaver award, the local council's top honor for volunteer Scouts.

"Scouting is one of the very, very good programs in terms of establishing values," Wild says. "It supplements the program of the church, which we're trying to teach kids in religious education."

He's worked with hundreds of boys. Now, he says, "I run into kids I had, and they're 25-35 years old, and they talk about some crazy camping trip that I thought was a real loser at the time and have long since forgotten."