

Washington State, Baltimore, Maryland and the Indiana Connection

By Barrie Schwartz

My travel and lecture schedule for early 2013 was rather hectic, with trips to Washington State, Baltimore, Maryland and Indiana all within one six-week period. Since I met so many wonderful people, including the many organizers, sponsors and attendees of my lectures, I wanted to write an article in which I shared the events with our website viewers and thanked everyone out there for making the trips such memorable ones. To make things simpler, I have broken this article into three sections, each covering one of my three major destinations.

Washington State Lectures - March 2-7, 2013

My travel schedule this year began in earnest on March 1, 2013, when I arrived in Washington State to start a somewhat ambitious seven city lecture tour. Organized by John Sickelton, a long time friend and dedicated supporter of Shroud.com, and sponsored by several councils of the Washington Knights of Columbus, I started in Monroe, and then traveled to Bremerton, Vancouver, Everett, Seattle, Bellingham and Lynden, and all in just six days! An excellent article about my visit was written by Jean Parietti titled, [Shroud of Turin Researcher, Educator to Speak](#), and published in The Progress, the Archdiocese of Seattle newspaper and website a week before I arrived.

This was the first time any of my lecture tours was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Since my presentation is primarily a secular one (and I am Jewish, not Catholic), I was truly grateful and honored by their willingness to sponsor me. My sincerest thanks to Joe St. Hilaire of the Knights of Columbus Bellingham Council 829, for his ardent support and his friendship (and for attending at least five of my thirteen lectures)! Here is an excerpt from a gracious letter I received from him on March 12th:

“Thanks so very much! May God be with you and your great mission. I want you to know how grateful we all are for having you share your expertise and conviction on the Shroud. I make bold to state that this is undoubtedly the most worthwhile project our Knights of Columbus council has supported in its 110-year history... Since your departure I have spoken with many individuals who either expressed their deep gratitude and amazement after attending one of your lectures, or who missed the presentation and now have great regrets. I refer them, of course, to your website--a second best to seeing and hearing you in person but a way at least for them to make up for their loss.”

Joe St. Hilaire
K of C Bellingham Council 829

If you look at a map of Washington State, you will see that the cities we covered stretch from the southernmost part of the state near the Oregon border to the northernmost part of the state just five miles from the Canadian border. Needless to say, John Sickelton, who served as the organizer of the event and my driver, spent a lot of time behind the wheel of his car over that six day schedule! We started in Monroe on Saturday evening, where I spoke at the Seattle Men's Conference at St. Mary of the Valley Church. Early the next morning (Sunday), we drove to Bremerton where I gave two lectures at Our Lady Star of the Sea Church. Then we drove south to Vancouver (Washington) for an evening lecture at St. John the Evangelist Church.

The following morning (Monday), I spoke at St. Joseph Church in Vancouver. Then we made the drive to Everett, where I spoke at St. Mary Magdalene Church that evening. Early the next morning (Tuesday) I was at the St. Luke School, where I spoke to kindergarteners through 8th graders (the youngest audience I ever spoke to). Then it was off to down town Seattle where I finally got an opportunity to check my e-mail at a local coffee shop while waiting to give my next lecture.

That afternoon, John and I arrived at the Knights of Columbus Council 676 building a few hours early to set up the computer and projector and get some rest. The building, in the heart of down town, is 110 years old and the oldest Knights of Columbus hall in Washington State. At 7:00 pm I spoke to the Knights and their guests in their exquisite old building. After the lecture, we left Seattle, stopped for a quick supper along the way and made the long drive north to Bellingham that night.

The next morning (Wednesday), I spoke to a younger group at the Assumption School in Bellingham. That evening I gave another lecture to an adult audience at the Assumption Church. Fortunately, the following day's lectures would take place in Lynden, not far from Bellingham, so the long car rides were behind us.

Thursday was a big day since I was lecturing in Lynden, a small dairy farming town five miles from the Canadian border and the home of John Sickelton, who organized the entire tour. We started at 9:00 am at the Lynden Christian School and I gave my first lecture of the day to a large group of high school students. The next lecture was scheduled for 1:00 pm so we left the school and went to the next venue to set everything up.

As is so often the case, the organizers of these events always get nervous before any of the main presentations and John was no exception. He had rented the local Rotary Building near the Lynden Fairgrounds and was very concerned that no one would show up for the lectures. I assured him everything would be fine, since he had done a very good job of publicizing the entire tour and we had been speaking to full auditoriums in every city. The room was large enough to accommodate around 400 chairs so John and the volunteers decided to set up 300 for the first lecture.

Shortly before 1:00 pm, the room started filling up. People kept arriving and ultimately, we had to set up even more chairs. The first lecture was very well received and afterwards, we locked the building and went for a quick lunch. That evening, I gave the last lecture of the tour to a fully

packed room. In fact, I was very pleased to see some of the same people return for the evening lecture that had attended the earlier one that afternoon.

The tour was a great success thanks to the careful planning and organization of John Sickelton, the wonderful support and friendship of Joe St. Hilaire and the Washington State Knights of Columbus and the many priests and ministers of the various churches I spoke at. Each had to give their approval and the same was true for the administrators of every school I lectured in. And of course, there are the many unnamed volunteers behind the scenes who supported us in every city and every venue. My thanks to you all for such a warm and gracious welcome and a truly memorable week! I am already looking forward to coming back.

Baltimore, Maryland Lectures - March 15, 2013

I returned home the evening of March 8, 2013 and was back on a plane to Baltimore, Maryland on March 14th. Thankfully, this was a much shorter trip and was organized by Julian Bauer, another long time Shroud.com viewer and supporter, and sponsored by the Catholic War Veterans Charles Carroll Post 1961.

Julian and I had been discussing this for more than a year and his enthusiasm for the project was amazing. He did explain that the chapter of the Catholic War Veterans sponsoring this event was a new one and this was one of their first ventures. In fact, instead of staying in a hotel, I was graciously invited to stay at the home of one of the CWV members, William Wood. Bill was a wonderful host and truly made me feel at home.



Answering questions at the Church of the Resurrection - ©2013 J. Harlowe

On March 15th I gave an afternoon lecture for around 300 children (above) at the Church of the Resurrection in Ellicott City. Over the years I have come to learn that the best questions always come from the youngest students. They seem to be totally uninhibited and have no hesitation to ask whatever is on their minds. However, by the time they reach junior high school age, peer pressure and the fear of asking a “dumb” question and being embarrassed in front of their friends becomes a real issue. I always tell them that the only “dumb” question is the one you didn’t ask, but it doesn’t seem to make much difference. However, this group was great and kept asking questions until we ran out of time!

That evening, I made my final presentation to a completely full house at the Church of the Resurrection in Ellicott City. I started my lecture with a compliment to the Baltimore Ravens football team’s and their amazing Super Bowl victory a month earlier. I pointed out that it was a very special compliment coming from me, since I am from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, home of the Pittsburgh Steelers who are the arch-rivals of the Baltimore team. They really appreciated that coming from a Steelers fan!

You can generally tell after a lecture whether it was successful or not by the number of people that come up and want to speak with you. This audience was wonderful and I got to meet and speak with many of them personally after the presentation. (There were even a few Steelers fans in the audience)! A little while later, we celebrated with a wonderful dinner at a local restaurant that was attended by many of the Catholic War Veterans that sponsored the event. All in all, it was a short but very sweet trip.

The next day I returned home to Colorado and dedicated the rest of the month to writing the new lectures I would teach in Rome in April, finishing my TEDx presentation and updating the website with the breaking news of the television exposition of the Shroud, the new Shroud app and a controversial new Shroud book. It was pretty busy!

The Indiana Connection - April 9-14, 2013

(But first, an introduction)

Before I start this next part of the story, I want to first explain why I call this section the Indiana Connection. It is my way of recognizing the importance of Indiana to the world of Sindonology, acknowledging the part that Indiana has played in the past thirty years of Shroud studies and focusing on the part that it continues to play today.

In 1981, Dorothy Crispino founded the Indiana Center for Shroud Studies and began publishing **Shroud Spectrum International**, the first and only peer-reviewed journal dedicated solely to the study of the Shroud of Turin. This journal would become the de facto gold standard for English language publications about the Shroud. And Dorothy did it all right in Indiana. The journal ceased publishing in 1993, an untimely victim of the 1988 radiocarbon dating, and Dorothy eventually retired and moved to Cavour, Italy, about 90 minutes from Turin.

Throughout that same period, my dear friend Prof. Dan Scavone of Evansville, Indiana, produced a significant body of historical research on the Shroud, which culminated in the publication of his book, *The Shroud of Turin*, in 1989. Without doubt, Dan is a world class expert on its history and his work on the Shroud continues to the present day. More recently, Dr. Chuck Dietzen and Dr. Joe Bergeron have begun lecturing on the medical aspects of the Shroud in the Indianapolis area and Dr. Bergeron recently had a paper published on the medical aspects of the Shroud and the crucifixion in the [Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine](#).

Now, in 2013, Richard Orareo has moved his spectacular Boston Collection of Shroud Art to Wabash, Indiana, and is about to officially open his National Shrine of the Holy Shroud in a beautiful, historic old building. This will certainly breathe even more life into Indiana Sindonology. Also, for many years, Alex Fiato, proprietor of the Italian Connection restaurant in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, has been an ardent student and supporter of the Shroud, even sponsoring a radio program that has interviewed many Shroud researchers. So, in honor of all those from Indiana who have in the past and continue in the present to promote the Shroud, I give you the Indiana Connection!

(And now, on with the story)

On Tuesday, April 9th, in the middle of a Colorado blizzard, I boarded a flight for my next lecture destination, Indiana. The flight was delayed about four hours by the weather so I missed my connecting flight to Indianapolis at O'Hare airport in Chicago and was going to have to spend the night there and miss the following day's first lecture. That forced the event's organizer, Kirk McClure, to make the three hour drive from Kokomo to Chicago that evening, pick me up and drive me back to Indiana personally.

This tour was sponsored by the [Shiloh United Methodist Church](#) in Kokomo and its wonderful pastor, Zach Washler. Kirk is a member of the church and he too is an avid supporter of STERA, Inc. and Shroud.com and was the driving force behind my visit. I initially met him at the end of 2011 when I first spoke in the Indianapolis area. He attended my lecture at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Kokomo and afterwards, came up to speak with me. He asked if I would be willing to come back to the area and speak at his Methodist church and I immediately agreed. I had never spoken in a Methodist church before.

On our drive back to Indiana that night, Kirk and I had some quality time to talk and get to know one another. I learned he was an engineer working in the automobile industry and a fellow geek! We connected immediately. Eventually, we stopped for a quick meal and then continued on our way, getting into Kokomo quite late that night.

Early the next morning (Wednesday), we drove to the nearby YMCA where I spoke at a monthly, Christian Men's Huddle. I am typically used to speaking in a darkened room with my PowerPoint presentation projected on the screen, but this was different. I was in a large, brightly lit banquet room with several hundred men sitting at tables before me. So I just got up and spoke extemporaneously. Amazingly, one of the attendees audio recorded the entire event and it is now available at [YMCA Huddle.mp3](#) if you'd like to listen to it. (See photo next page)



Men's Huddle at Kokomo YMCA - ©2013 Kirk McClure

After the Huddle, we drove to Danville, Indiana, to the Danville United Methodist Church where the evening's lecture would be held. It was there I met the pastor, David L. Powell, and we hit it off immediately. It turns out that he is an avid photographer and collector of old cameras and photo equipment, with some of his extensive collection actually on display in several different museums and libraries. We had a great meal at his home before the evening lecture and I spent some time looking through his amazing collection. Then it was off to his church for the evening lecture, which also was a great success.

At this lecture, I was also able to meet Donna Ward and her husband Ken for the first time. Donna is a Methodist pastor from Muncie, Indiana, who had been corresponding with me for the past year or two. In fact, she took the course on the Shroud that I taught this year in Rome via the internet, so she was also one of my students! It was great to finally put a face with the name.

The next morning (Thursday), I was picked up by Dr. Chuck Dietzen (or as he is fondly referred to by his friends and colleagues, Dr. Chuck), and we drove to the Indiana University Medical School where I gave a highly abbreviated 30 minute presentation to a lecture hall full of medical students.

That afternoon Dr. Chuck and I met with Kirk and several others, loaded into several vehicles and drove to Wabash, Indiana, to visit Richard Orareo's new National Shrine of the Holy Shroud. On the road I gave Richard a call and he revealed to me that long time Shroud scholar and old friend Mark Borkan had flown in from back east and was already at Richard's new facility, waiting to surprise me. Richard kind of spoiled the surprise, but I was thrilled, as I had not seen Mark in about five years, although I had spoken on the phone with him more recently. We also found out that we would soon be joined by Dan Scavone and his lovely wife Carolyn, who were driving up from Evansville, Indiana. It was going to be a mini Shroud reunion!

We arrived at Richard's Shrine, poured out of our vehicles and were greeted by Richard and Mark at the door! The beautiful old historic building was amazing. Unfortunately, it was raining rather hard and I was unable to make any photographs of its exterior. We quickly went inside and were given a guided tour of the facility by Richard. It was truly awesome, more like an art gallery or museum, and will be a wonderful place for Shroudies to visit when it opens officially later this year.



One room in Richard Orareo's National Shrine of the Holy Shroud - ©2013 Kirk McClure



Richard Orareo (left) and one of the many galleries displaying his extensive collection

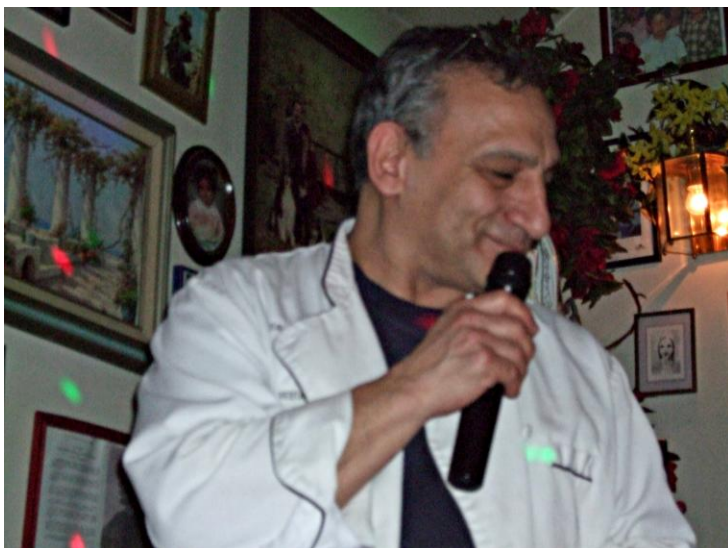
Our visit to Richard's had to be cut short however, as we were due to be in Ft. Wayne that evening for a dinner hosted by Alex Fiato at his Italian Connection restaurant. Alex had been promising all of us an Italian dinner for years, and he was finally going to get the opportunity to

keep that promise. Again, we all piled into the vehicles and made the drive to Ft. Wayne. I was excited when we arrived at the restaurant and couldn't wait to get inside and finally meet Alex in person. However, when we walked in, we were ushered to a special table that had been reserved for us, but Alex was nowhere in sight. In fact, he was busy in the kitchen, preparing our meal!

Eventually, Alex appeared from the kitchen to greet us and lots of hugs were exchanged. After all those years, we were finally here! One of Alex's guests that evening was Dave Franke, the host of the Ft. Wayne radio program that many of us had appeared on. It was great to meet Dave in person as well, as I had appeared on his show twice by telephone over the past year.



Mark Borkan, Richard Orareo, Alex Fiato, Dave Franke, Dr. Chuck Dietzen and Barrie Schwartz at the Italian Connection restaurant in Ft. Wayne, Indiana - ©2013 Kirk McClure



Needless to say, the meal was amazing and Alex certainly lived up to his promises! We spent several hours around that table, talking about the Shroud, eating great food, drinking great wine and enjoying each other's company. At one point, Alex turned on his karaoke machine, grabbed a microphone and started serenading us with some Italian songs! We were all caught by surprise, but definitely enjoyed his impromptu performance.

Another of Alex's guests that evening was Kevin Kilbane, a staff writer for the local Ft. Wayne newspaper. Kevin had only come for an interview, but we convinced him to stay for dinner too. I don't think he regretted it either. I am including a link to the excellent article Kevin wrote that appeared on April 15th in the [Ft. Wayne News-Sentinel](#).

It was really difficult for all of us to leave the restaurant that evening, but all good things must come to an end and I still had more lectures to give. The next afternoon (Friday), Kirk brought me to the St. Joan of Arc Catholic School to speak to a class of their students. Coincidentally, their teacher was Cindy McClure, Kirk's wife! Once again I made my presentation and again, to my surprise, the students asked so many questions I spent more time answering them than I spent showing them my PowerPoint slides. I was truly impressed by their depth and enthusiasm.

That evening we had a wonderful dinner at the home of Melvin and Joanne Lytton, Kirk's close friends in Burlington, Indiana, who put on a major spread for about thirty of us. It was there that Dan and Carolyn Scavone finally joined the group. And once again, we were all well fed.



Dinner at the Lytton's - ©2013 Kirk McClure

After dinner, I was driven to Northwestern High School, where I addressed area teenagers attending a "Transformers" meeting. This is a local student Christian group that meets in the high school every Friday evening at 9:00 pm. About one hundred students were there and provided a very attentive audience, considering the rather late hour of my lecture.

The next day (Saturday), was the first easy day in the itinerary. There were no formal lectures to be given so I was able to stay in my hotel room and answer some of the many e-mails that were accumulating in my mailbox. The only thing on the agenda for the day was a wonderful pot luck dinner held that evening at the Shiloh United Methodist Church (my primary sponsor) and

attended by many members of their congregation. Although no formal presentations were made, a number of us were asked to make short, informal speeches. That gave me the opportunity to introduce everyone to Richard Orareo and Prof. Dan Scavone. Richard had brought with him some of the wonderful items from his Shroud collection and these were on display at the front of the dining hall. Dr. Chuck Dietzen brought his lifesize Shroud replica and had it on display as well. Also speaking was Dr. Joe Bergeron and of course, Kirk McClure.

The next morning (Sunday), began with breakfast at the Shiloh church itself, after which we attended two consecutive morning services. Pastor Zach Washler introduced all of us to the members of the congregation and Dr. Chuck and Dr. Bergeron both made short presentations during the services.



Shroud exhibits in the lobby of the auditorium at Northwestern High School - ©2013 Kirk McClure

That afternoon was the “main event,” which again was being held in the beautiful auditorium of Northwestern High School where I had spoken to the students on Friday night. Richard and Dr. Chuck had set up an expansive display of Shroud materials in the lobby of the auditorium, giving

attendees an opportunity to learn about the Shroud from the various historical materials on display and see the lifesize replica and lifesize black and white photographs up close.

At 2:00 pm that afternoon, I was introduced to the audience and the program began. It was a great pleasure to look out to a nearly full auditorium and see some very familiar faces of some very old friends in the front row, including Dan and Carolyn Scavone, Mark Borkan and Richard Orareo, along with some “new” friends like Alex Fiato, Dr. Chuck and Dr. Bergeron. It sure provided me with some great motivation and I believe that was reflected in my presentation that afternoon. After a short Q & A session, everyone took a 20 minute break.

After the break, Dr. Joe Bergeron and Dr. Chuck Dietzen presented their in-depth CSI investigation that examines the medical aspects of the Shroud and crucifixion, followed by another Q & A session, which brought the event to a close.

With a great feeling of satisfaction on the part of the speakers, organizers and everyone involved, we adjourned to a nearby restaurant for a final meal and fellowship hosted by Pastor Zach and the Shiloh United Methodist Church. My sincere thanks to Kirk McClure, Pastor Zach Washler, Pastor David Powell, Dr. Chuck Dietzen and all the many administrators, supporters and volunteers who contributed their time and resources to make this a truly memorable event. You did a great job!