



Journal

January 2025



An informational sign for the Republic of Czechia. It features a map of the country and the text 'REPUBLIKA ČESKÁ' and 'REPÚBLICA CHECA'. The sign is placed on a table in front of the Christmas tree.



Angel Tree
Page 22



Fraternal Basket
Competition
Page 29



Food for Families Drive
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On the Cover

The Museum of Science and Industry celebrates Christmas Around the World annually with more than 50 different countries represented. CSA member John Pritasil, along with the Moravian Cultural Society, decorated the Czech tree. See more photos and a complete article on page 17.

President's Piece

Happy New Year to Everyone!

Brothers and Sisters,

Happy New Year to everyone. I hope 2025 turns out to be fruitful and healthy for all, and the winter season isn't too rough on us all.

As we come up to our 171st Anniversary, we continue to help our members with their financial needs, and we also continue to provide our wonderful array of Fraternal offerings and programs. From Annual Scholarships that we award to our young adults, to matching funds that we offer through our CSA Serves program, to Lodge Recognition Awards (with a cash prize for highly productive lodges!), to bowling events, Photo Contests, and volunteering within the community, we have a ton of things going on. Of course, we have our social events as well, such as having CSA's Annual Get-Together which includes our National Miss CSA Contest, and local lodge and District events as well! From finances to philanthropy, to fun, we have a bunch of things going on! That said, we continue to strive to not only keep CSA active and strong, but to evolve,

and grow as well. Our evolution is always changing, and 2025 will no doubt bring new things to CSA.

A handful of us Home Office employees have been able to get out to lodge and agent events, and we look forward to doing the same in 2025. So you'll see either me, Nick Kosmas, Kelly Deegan, Julie Souza, Anna Trush, Molly May, or others from our Home Office staff in the months ahead. It's always wonderful to get a chance to visit with members.

This year, our Annual Get-Together will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, one of our hot beds for membership. I know the committee running the GTG is plugging away with the set up, so if you can, make plans to be there in the first part of August. We'll continue passing along updates on the GTG goings on in future months.

Needless to say, there are a number of good things happening within CSA.

We'll continue to keep them going and make them better.



Thanks again for your support over the years.

Happy New Year to all!

*Until next month,
Fraternally,
John J. Kielczewski, CLU, FLMI
President/CEO
CSA Fraternal Life*



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 2, 2025

Miss CSA Application Available (website)

January 2, 2025

CSA Scholarship Application Available (website)

January 2, 2025

Home Office Closed for New Year's Day

January 20, 2025

Home Office Closed for MLK Day

January 31, 2025

Deadline: 2024 Lodge Recognition Program submissions

February 1, 2025

Deadline: 2024 President's Report Forms due in Home Office

February 17, 2025

Home Office Closed for President's Day

March 15, 2025

Deadline: CSA Scholarships Application and Transcript

March 31, 2025

Deadline: Lodge Financial and Election Forms due in Home Office

April 18, 2025

Home Office Closed for Good Friday

May 3, 2025

Join Hands Day

May 26, 2025

Home Office Closed for Memorial Day

Journal Themes for 2025

| | |
|---------------|--|
| February - | Lodge Recognition Program |
| March - | Happy Birthday, CSA! |
| April - | Get Ready for the Get-Together |
| May - | Join Hands Day |
| June - | Flag Day |
| July/August - | Czech and Slovak Festivals |
| September - | Recap of the Annual Get-Together |
| October - | Photo Contest Winners |
| November - | Honoring Those Who Have Served and Bowl-o-Rama |
| December - | Lodge Recognition Program |

All articles are due on the 13th of the month **prior** to the publication date.

CSA Journal

Volume 138 No. 1 January 2025



A Dynamic Magazine "Dedicated to Our Membership"

ÚŘEDNÍ ORGÁN JEDNOTY ČESKOSLOVENSKÝCH SPOLKŮ V AMERICE

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CSA MISSION STATEMENT

CSA Fraternal Life is a fraternal benefit Society that provides families with financial security while promoting community involvement with volunteerism.

CSA Leadership

National Officers

John J. Kielczewski, *President*

Nick Kosmas, *Secretary/Treasurer*

National Directors

Tom Ledvina

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Ken Dvorsky and Cary Mentzer

Northern Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin

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Diane DiBianca

Northern Ohio and Michigan

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Missouri and Southern Illinois

Terry Placek

Southeastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania

Carol Tranter

Florida, Maryland, Virginia, D.C.,
Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Paul Vavrsek

New York State and Connecticut

Home Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

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Today's Fraternal

Get the Credit You Deserve

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters,

What an exciting and busy end to the year it has been! Thank you to Lodge Bratri Od Sazavy No. 211 for hosting such a fantastic Christmas Lunch. Your hard work and the delicious food made the event truly memorable. I also had the pleasure of joining District Council No. 12 for their Christmas Party, and as always, it was an excellent opportunity to catch up with everyone. I'm incredibly grateful for all the generous donations to the Essentials Drive. Thanks to your support, we were able to donate many much-needed items to the Crisis Center, and they are incredibly appreciative.

The pictures on Facebook showcasing the various lodge activities were wonderful to see. Witnessing the efforts and celebrations happening across our community is always inspiring. Thank you for sharing and continuing to keep the spirit alive.

Now that we're officially into the New Year, I want to remind everyone that all forms on the website have been updated. Please check the deadlines carefully, as some have shifted this year. Your lodge's activities and achievements are important to us, so ensure your forms are completed with a legible signature to receive the credit you deserve.

Remember to include the 88th Annual Get-Together in your summer plans. This year, Lodge Cleveland will host a weekend filled with fun activities and great opportunities to connect with fellow members. We look forward to

seeing you all there.

Additionally, please consider nominating an eligible daughter, granddaughter, or niece to run for Miss CSA. It's an incredible opportunity to make new friends, visit exciting places, and connect with amazing people. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions about the contest.

I can't wait for another year full of shared experiences and achievements, and I look forward to all the exciting moments ahead.

*Fraternally,
Kelly Deegan*

*Fraternal Programs Manager
Lodge DuPage Pioneers/Edison No. 409*



Please send lodge articles to:
csajournal@csalife.com
by the 13th of the month prior.

*(You will receive a
confirmation email.)*

**Please address all
Fraternal inquiries to:**

Kelly Deegan at
kdeegan@csalife.com
1.800.543.3272 x 4307

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY/TREASURER

CSA HELPS WITH FINANCIAL GOALS



Greetings, brothers and sisters,

Happy New Year! I hope you and your families had a great holiday season. We had a wonderful time in the Kosmas household. Our boys, daughter-in-law, and my brother's family visited for Christmas. We went to only one Christkindlmarket (Aurora) this year.

The annual Home Office staff Christmas party was a blast, as usual.

Unfortunately, I could not enjoy the festivities as much as I would have liked to; I was still recovering from rotator cuff surgery the week before.

Convention and Get-Together 2026 planning meetings have begun. Once more details are available, we will share them with members in *the Journal* and on our Facebook page.

This is a repeat of my January 2024 article, which is important as we start the New Year. January is a good time to look back at 2024 and reflect on the changes you may have had in 2024. Think about things like a new addition to the family, the loss of a loved one (my dad passed in January 2024), a trip you went on (Lisa and I are going on a riverboat cruise on the Danube at the end of March for our 35th wedding anniversary, in May), or a change in employment status. This is a perfect time to reflect on your financial goals for 2025 and beyond, especially for those who are turning 65 (me, March) and need to sign up for Medicare. Our annual meeting with our financial plan-

ner is scheduled to review and adjust our financial goals. Now is the time to see how CSA can help you with your financial goals.

In my *Journal* article last month, I forgot to mention that CSA hosted the Annual Slovak Consular Days in Chicago. We thank the Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in New York for donating to our Scholarship Fund.

January 1 (1993) is the Day of the Establishment of the Slovak Republic (Deň vzniku Slovenskej republiky), which marks the day Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. During our riverboat cruise, Lisa and I will visit both Prague and Bratislava.

A happy and healthy 2025 to all.

*Fraternally,
Nick V. Kosmas
Secretary / Treasurer*



Miss National CSA

Looking Forward to Showing Off My Kroj

Greetings, brothers and sisters,

This month has been a very busy but very fun one! I am officially finished with my third semester of college and ended with all A's! I am super proud of myself and the hard work I put in this semester.

Between my study sessions, I was able to do some fun activities at school. One night, my school hosted a gingerbread-house-making event and my friends and I made the cutest little house along with gingerbread men decorated to look like us! I added a picture of me and Hannah holding our masterpieces.

Also, for the first time since mid-August, my sisters and I are all reunited! Gwen had been in Georgia for grad school and it has been tough on Jo and me because we were really missing her. Now that we're all back together, we have a list of things we are planning to do together. We have boba dates to go on, movies to make, makeovers to do, and songs to blast on car rides.

My boyfriend is also back in town and we've been going on some really fun dates! We're just about to go to Illumination and the Morton Arboretum to celebrate five months together!

My last exciting update of this month is my kroj! I asked my grandma to make me a kroj because I wanted to feel more authentic and connected to my culture! I am so excited to have a chance to wear this out and about and proudly show off my Czech heritage!

*Fraternally,
Delaney Schretter,
Miss National CSA 2024-2025*





2025 CSA FRATERNAL LIFE

GET-TOGETHER

REGISTRATION FORM

CSA Get-Together
c/o Diane DiBianca
213 Best St
Bedford, OH 44146

PLEASE FILL OUT AND POSTMARK BY JUNE 1ST, 2025 TO:

PHONE: 216-392-9074

EMAIL: ddibianca.csalife@gmail.com

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

DISTRICT COUNCIL #10 CSA

(Please write "Get-Together Registration" in the notes on payment form.)

PLEASE PRINT BELOW:

One form per guest

NAME: _____ LODGE (if applicable) _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST CSA GET-TOGETHER? _____

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ROCK SONG? _____

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

MEMBER (\$150) _____ GUEST (\$150) _____

YOUTH MEMBER OR GUEST UNDER 18 (\$125) _____ YOUTH AGE: _____

DINNER ONLY FRIDAY (\$30) _____ SAT. (\$60) _____ SUNDAY (\$60) _____

SATURDAY DINNER: (PLEASE CHOOSE ONE)

BRAISED SHORT RIB _____ LAKE ERIE WALLEYE _____ VEGETABLE STRUDEL _____

DAY TRIP (PLEASE CHOOSE ONE)

ROCK HALL MUSEUM (\$30) _____ AGES 6 -12 (\$20) _____

GOOD TIME III LUNCH CRUISE (\$55) _____ AGES 5 -12 (\$45) _____

TOTAL (\$) _____ PAID: _____ CHECK # _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

HANDICAPPED: YES _____ NO: _____ DIETARY NEEDS: _____

DRIVING _____ FLYING _____ OTHER _____



CSA Get-Together 2025



ARE YOU READY TO ROCK?



AUGUST 1st, 2nd, 3rd

**Double Tree by Hilton Hotel
Cleveland Downtown
1111 Lakeside Ave.E
Cleveland, Ohio 44114**

Room rates start at \$159/night +tax,
includes breakfast.

Parking available in the attached garage
for \$30/day.

(Some free meter/street parking
available Sat. & Sun)

BOOK YOUR ROOM:

Call 1-800-445-8667 code CSA

link: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/clelsdt->

[csa-0dd1e9fc-a165-47c5-a792-fd305fa8be61/](https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/clelsdt-csa-0dd1e9fc-a165-47c5-a792-fd305fa8be61/)

TRIP #1

ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME



Experience Hands On, Immersive Exhibitions on Your Favorite Artists at The Rock Hall. The Rock Hall is a Tribute to the Music of Our Lives and a One of a Kind Experience.



A Must Visit Museum

Styles: Rock & Roll, Pop & Rock, Indie Rock & Roll, Reggae, Memphis Soul, Classic Rock & Roll, Hip Hop, Funk, Bluegrass & Rock, Country Rock.

Rock Hall Visitors can enjoy the cafe on level 1; choose from a variety of menu items freshly prepared in the cafe or from the grab-and-go station with salad, wraps, and snacks. You'll also find a select number of tap beers and wines available at the custom bar.



TRIP #2

GOODTIME III

"CLEVELAND'S LARGEST EXCURSION SHIP"

FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED SINCE 1958

Narrated Luncheon Cruise 2025



GOODTIME III LUNCH MENU

Boarding 11 AM

Lunch served on ship, dockside at 11:00 AM

Cruising 12PM (Noon) - 2:00 PM

(Served on China w / Silverware)

House baked Focaccia Bread with butter

Chicken Piccata with creamy lemon caper sauce (GF)

Roasted Smashed redskin potatoes

with fresh herbs (GF DF)

Buttered whole top baby carrots (GF)

Fruit Cup

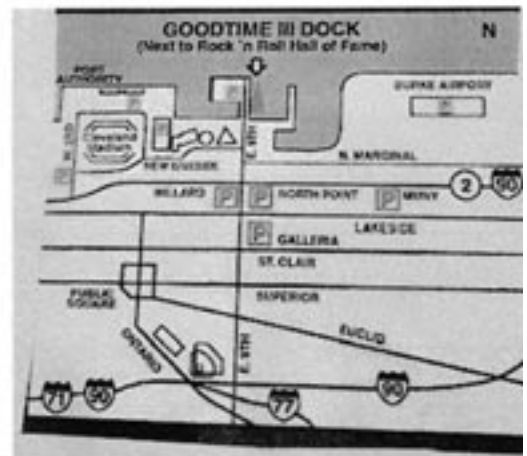
House baked Cookie assortment

***vegan option available upon request**

Adults \$55

Children Ages 5-12 ~ \$45

**The Goodtime III is a
SMOKE - FREE and
VAPE - FREE vessel**



Slovak Independence Day and Beyond

The Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic went their separate ways on January 1, 1993, an event sometimes called the Velvet Divorce, after 74 years of joint existence disrupted only by World War II. Slovakia has, nevertheless, remained a close partner with the Czech Republic. The two countries are close European allies and both cooperate with Hungary and Poland in the Visegrád Group. The first President of the Slovak Republic was Michal Kováč, elected by the National Council of Slovakia in February, 1993. Slovakia became a member of the United Nations on January 19, 1993, and on March 31, 1993, ratified the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, making its historical sites eligible for inclusion on the UNESCO list. On April 15, 1993, they joined GATT (current World Trade Organization).

After the fall of communism and the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the country was unprepared for organized crime. Crime rates in Slovakia soared in the 1990s. The first post-communist gangsters emerged and mafia became the major problem in the country. Most of the law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges had no experience in investigating, trying, or sentencing criminals. Many officials lacked even basic knowledge of the leading criminal operators in their communities. Between the years 1994–1998, during the government of Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar, organized crime became well-established and it penetrated the highest political positions. One of the major crime events was the kidnapping of Slovak president's son Michal Kováč Jr. in 1995, organized by Slovak intelligence service and the government of Vladimír Mečiar.

In the 1990s, Slovakia had central Europe's worst-performing economy and least democratic government. Madeleine Albright, the U.S. Secretary of State, referred to it as "a black hole in the heart of Europe". This time period in Slovakia is also known as the "Wild 90s".

In March 1998, the country was 14 months without a head of state, when the National Council of Slovakia multiple times failed to elect the new president, which led to the introduction of a direct presidential election in 1999.

After the 1998 parliamentary election, Mikuláš Dzurinda went on to replace Vladimír Mečiar as Prime Minister, and during two successive governments between the years 1998–2006, relaunched the transformation processes that had stalled under Mečiar. The country embarked on a reformist course that saw the introduction of a flat tax, liberalization of the labor market, deregulation of business, and partial privatization of social security. Mikuláš Dzurinda led Slovakia into OECD, NATO, and the European Union. In 1999, Rudolf Schuster became the second President of Slovakia, and the first directly-elected president.

Slovakia became a member of the European Union in 2004

and signed the Lisbon Treaty in 2007.

The country used to be dubbed the "Tatra Tiger" in the 2000s as it achieved, on average, roughly 6% per capita GDP growth each year from 2000 to 2008. Ivan Gašparovič became the third president of Slovakia in 2004, and in 2009 was the first and the only Slovak re-elected president.

In 2006, Robert Fico became Prime Minister, and during his first government, Slovakia joined the Schengen area on December 21, 2007, allowing visa free travel. On January 1, 2009, Slovakia adopted the Euro as its national currency at 30.1260 korunas to the euro. The Slovak economy was involved in a major slowdown during the Global financial crisis in 2008 and 2009, experiencing the deepest economic decline in history.

Between the years 2010 – 2012, Slovak government was led by first female Prime Minister, Iveta Radičová. Her government lasted only two years. Radičová combined the vote on the strengthening of the European Financial Stability Facility – a key anti-crisis mechanism in the Eurozone – with a vote of confidence for her cabinet. Slovak parliament rejected the EFSF, which led to the collapse of the government.

In 2012, Robert Fico became second time Prime Minister when his political party Direction – Social Democracy won the election and collected 83 of 150 seats in National Council, becoming the first single party to win a clear majority in the Slovak parliament since the fall of communism. In 2014, Andrej Kiska became the fourth President of Slovakia. This was the first time an entrepreneur and first-time politician was elected as President. International crisis, such as Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in neighboring Ukraine in 2014, or the European migrant crisis in 2015, impacted Slovak politics and quickly started dominating the country's political life and media coverage.

After the parliamentary election in 2016, Robert Fico became third time Prime Minister, making him longest-serving prime minister in Slovak history, if the years are counted cumulatively. The third term of Fico's government was characterized by social and political turmoil. On February 21, 2018, Slovak investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée, were killed in their home in Veľká Mača. Thousands of people protested in the streets across Slovakia for independent investigation of journalist's murder and a 'trustworthy' government in largest demonstrations in the country since the Velvet Revolution. Due to protests, Robert Fico resigned and the government continued under a new Prime Minister, Peter Pellegrini.

In 2019, Zuzana Čaputová became the fifth President of Slovakia; the first female president.

Slovak Independence Day and Beyond

After the parliamentary election in 2020, Igor Matovič became new Prime Minister of Slovakia. Matovič and his government, with little or no previous government experiences, was dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and COVID-19 recession. During the global COVID-19 pandemic, between the years 2020–2023, more than 21,000 people died in Slovakia, the worst death toll in the country since the end of World War II. Due to pandemic in 2020, the Slovak economy faced the worst economic crisis since the global financial crisis and fell into recession. At the beginning of 2021, Matovič signed an agreement to acquire two million doses of Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine, which had not been cleared by European Union regulators. Matovič orchestrated the deal despite disagreement among his coalition partners, which led to government crisis and his resignation.

The government continued under a new Prime Minister Eduard Heger. Heger and his government faced many challenges, such as ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Russian invasion in neighboring Ukraine, Ukrainian refugee crisis, the global energy crisis, and an inflation surge. After a strong economic recovery in 2021, growth slowed down markedly in 2022 and 2023 as a result of the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, notably the subsequent EU sanctions on Russia and Global energy crisis. Slovakia became one of Ukraine's largest donors of military aid during Heger's government in 2022 and 2023. The government crisis in Slovakia

continued with various disputes in the coalition. At the end of 2022, Heger's government collapsed, after a lost no-confidence vote in parliament.

After the parliamentary election in 2023, Robert Fico became a fourth time Prime Minister. The new government halted military aid to Ukraine, while still providing humanitarian aid. On May 15, 2024, Prime Minister Robert Fico was shot several times and wounded in an assassination attempt. The suspect during interrogation stated that he acted primarily because of the Fico government's opposition to military assistance to Ukraine.

In 2024, Peter Pellegrini became the sixth President of Slovakia. Pellegrini is the first Slovak politician to have held all three highest constitutional posts (President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of Parliament) in the country.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovakia>

*Below: Ruins of Spis Castle,
a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Slovakia,
Central Europe*



District Council

Annual Christmas Lunch



District Council No. 10, Northern Ohio and Michigan – Members from District Council No. 10 braved the snowfall to meet for the Annual

Christmas Lunch. A handful of us gathered at Ruma's in North Royalton. Most attending ordered breakfast, but a few had sandwiches. We missed the ones

who could not attend, and talked about many who have already passed. Remembering all these members brought back many happy memories. I brought up the delicious love knots Camille Shima used to bake every year. Maybe Freddie will share the recipe with us.

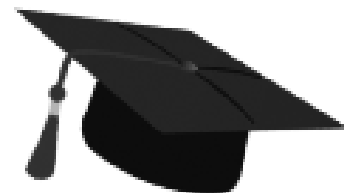
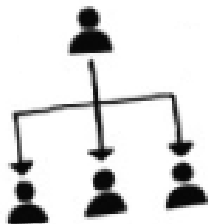
We are working hard on the 2025 Get-Together, and hope there will be a record breaking number of attendees. Look for the registration form and hotel information in *the Journal*, pages 8 – 11.

We wish all the lodge members and CSA staff a Happy New Year.

*Fraternally,
Diane DiBianca*



Have you considered a donation to
the *Scholarship Fund* as
one of your CSA Serves choices?



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Sharing Heritage Over the Holidays

Lodge Mile-Hi Czechs No. 432, Lakewood, Colorado – November was a busy month for our lodge. Lucky member Sandy Maresh Doe was in Palm Springs, California at the Pacific and Ancient Modern Language Association during the snowstorm that canceled our November meeting. The pictures she shared with us made all of us wonder why we did not go with her.

On November 13, Irma Farrell and Maryellen Vialpando made pinecone reindeer with members of a garden club. They were delivered to Clear Creek Care Center for Christmas. The residents always enjoy our lodge Christmas decorations.

Our lodge has rented a closet at St. Bernadette Church for years. It was decided to clean it out as we no longer have festivals and pork dinners. They were fun but lots of hard work for all our members. Some ethnic things will be given to the Home Office or a museum in Omaha. It is hard to believe we still had cookbooks left over from the events.

On November 21, a lovely fall day with no snow made it possible to meet for our lodge meeting held at St. Bernadette Church. We conducted an Election of Officers for 2025, and, surprisingly, we have the same ones as last year. President Irma Farrell, Vice President Mary Campe, Secretary/Treasurer Maryellen Vialpando, and Guide Sandy Doe.

The program was to celebrate our heritage. Janet Farrar put together a photo album of some of her mother's pictures. Janet's blood grandfather went back to Slovakia in 1937; he took with him a copy of a picture of her four year old mother, two year old aunt, and her grandmother. Her grandmother had a copy and "cut out" her grandfather from the photo. The grandfather remarried in Slovakia and had two more children. Janet went to Slovakia in April and she visited her half cousins, and they had the same picture with her grandmother "cut out." The cousins gave her the photo, and through the wonders of Adobe Photoshop, a friend put the two pieces back together. The friend did a wonderful job. Janet has only seen three photos of her blood grandfather, and she found them all after her mother's death.

Maryellen Vialpando read an article about her great-grandfather Vaclav (James) Hruska.

Irma Farrell showed us two Czech dolls. Her neighbor lady, Mrs. Sokol, gave her the dolls on return from a trip she took to Czechoslovakia in the early 1950's. Irma thinks they are from the late 1800's.

Sandy Doe brought a white square Czech

plate with white cherries embossed at the corner. She said every person in the-then Czechoslovakia at one time had a fruit tree for their retirement. Her parents purchased the two plates during a trip to Czechoslovakia during the 1970s with her brother, Ed Maresh. Ed's and Sandra's father and mother (Gerald and Ethel) were searching for Vaclav Maresh's burial place. Vaclav came to Iowa City, Iowa, and opened Maresh Sheet Metal Works. He did metal work all over Europe, even in Russia, it is said in family lore. The plates were stamped with a Czechoslovakia mark. Sandy dropped one plate, but the other hangs in her kitchen as a remembrance and visible sign of her family's Czech heritage. Edward Maresh remarked that a priest in the town could not believe they came 8,000 miles to visit a grave.

The lodge purchased toys for the Action Center Christmas Toy Drive. Irma Farrell went shopping and got a wonderful variety for all ages. I am sure it lit up some children's faces at Christmas.

The lodge members enjoyed a rich Christmas dinner at the home of George and Maryellen Vialpando on December 8, 2024. Even though a "Merry Grump Mas" doormat greeted the faithful lodge members, the inside was anything but grump. "Deck the Halls" transformed into "Deck the House" as lodge members were greeted with many wonderful holiday decorations. In the living room, a collection of nutcrackers dominated the table below the picture window. The dining room (also in George's office and in the basement) table was set with green cloth and festival holiday napkins. The front bedroom held a sleigh filled with toys at the bottom of the guest bed! The bathrooms held Christmas towels and, on the counter, a parade of Christmas flip-flops. Red and green ornaments did not make it to the tree! (Maryellen wears flip flops in all seasons and in every weather.) The family room held a Christmas tree that the Grinch had decorated.

To start the afternoon, there was a baby naming ceremony that was held for the newest member, Robert Giovanni Lantz (pictured). He is the son of Robert Thomas Lantz and Brittney Mahaffey, grandson of Mike and Jo Ellen Lantz, and great-grandson of George and Maryellen Vialpando. Irma Farrell conducted the ceremony and presented the award to him.

Lodge members enjoyed a feast of ham, pickled relish, and green beans (thanks to Irma Farrell), a cranberry gelatin salad (thanks to Janet Farrar), a fruit salad (thanks

to Sandy Doe), mac and cheese casserole (thanks to Mary Campe), lettuce salad (thanks to Ron and Dot Fox), and potato salad (thanks to Maryellen Vialpando). We are sure we have forgotten some dishes because Joie and Nicole Lantz had a dish as they came through the front door. The dessert table had Kolaches (thanks to Irma Farrell), Houska (thanks to Maryellen Vialpando), and some wonderful snowball-looking cookies (thanks to Brittney Mahaffey).

At the dining room table, members wore festive Christmas-themed shirts and talked about Christmas traditions. Sandy Doe wore a white tunic embroidered with red flowers made by her part-Swedish mother, and she told of a Christmas Saint, Swedish Saint Lucia. A maiden, adorned in a white robe with a red sash, walks down the church aisle wearing a crown of lighted candles. Boys wear black vests, white shirts, and black caps. When asked if she speaks Swedish, Sandy said, "No!" Janet Farrar remarked that her grandparents and her parents spoke Slovak, but they did not teach her. Mary said no one spoke anything but English at her house. Irma said she learned some Czech. Maryellen told a story of spending summers with her grandparents and learning Czech swear phrases by ear from her grandfather. She did not know what they meant, but she soon figured out never to say those words!

In whatever language, Christmas is celebrated throughout the world, and our Lodge Mile Hi Czechs members have joined in the festivities and the feast. Lodge members will not meet in January but gather in February to install officers at the home of John and Irma Farrell, where they will enjoy Irma's cooking - a traditional Czech dinner of roast pork, gravy, knedlik, and kolaches. They will swear in new officers who happen to be the old officers.

*Fraternally,
Sandra Maresh Doe
Maryellen Hruska Vialpando*



Gingerbread Cookies / Perníčky (Petra Burianová)

Ingredients:

4 eggs

2 cups powdered sugar (250g)

4 ½ tablespoons butter (about ¼ cup, 65 g)

5 tablespoons honey (about ⅓ cup, 100g)

5 ¼ cups all-purpose flour (650g)

1 ½ teaspoons gingerbread spice mix (23g)

2 teaspoons baking soda

cocoa powder (optional, for additional dough coloring – Petra didn't use any for the gingerbread we were decorating during the workshop)

Whisk the whole eggs with sugar until a thick, foamy mixture forms.

Melt the butter with the honey carefully, stirring occasionally, and let it cool to body temperature. Pour the cooled honey-butter mixture into the egg foam and gently whisk together. Measure the remaining dry ingredients into a large bowl, mix well, and sift at least once. Combine the wet and dry mixtures and knead until a dough forms.

The specified amount of flour is approximate. Sometimes this amount is enough to achieve the right dough consistency, but other times you may need to add up to 100 g more. This depends on the size of the eggs and the absorbency of the flour. The dough should be of a semi-firm consistency—not too runny, but not rock-hard either. Then wrap the dough in plastic wrap and let it rest in the refrigerator overnight.

After resting, roll out the dough to a thickness of about 0.5 cm and cut out shapes. Place them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and bake at 160°C (320°F) for about 10-12 minutes, depending on the size of the shapes. Right after removing the gingerbread cookies from the oven, brush them with a beaten egg while they are still hot.

Egg White Icing for Gingerbread

Ingredients:

1 egg white

powdered sugar (as needed)

lemon

Strain the lemon juice several times. Then, using a wooden spoon (do not whisk!), mix the egg white with three heaping tablespoons of sifted powdered sugar until it reaches a thin, white paste consistency. Gradually add about 1 tablespoon of lemon juice and slowly thicken with more sifted powdered sugar until the desired consistency is reached.

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Christmas Tree Tradition

Lodge Lincoln No. 7, Berwyn, Illinois – Happy New Year 2025 from Lodge Lincoln to all of you!

The members of Lodge Lincoln have been busy carrying on their family traditions of celebrating Christmas in a variety of ways. The Museum of Science and Industry, here in Chicago, started a tradition of decorating a single tree, newly decorated every day for 12 days to represent the countries fighting alongside America during World War II back in 1942. The tree represented hope during uncertain times and has brought together many ethnic people and their customs. Over the years, this tradition has evolved into Christmas Around the World with more than 50 different countries represented! John Pritasil, along with the Moravian Cultural Society, decorated the Czech tree. This year's tree was beautifully decorated with wooden *perniky* (gingerbread), along with fruit, and painted ceramic ornaments. Alix Fron, along with a group of dancers, performed Czech folk dances while dressed in their Czech *kroj*. Alix and her one-year-old son, Garrett, are also pictured below carrying on her family tradition of performing annually at the Museum of Science and Industry.



Another holiday tradition that many of us enjoy is baking Christmas cookies! Some of us enjoy eating cookies more than baking them. Lodge members Diane Rezabek and John Pritasil, along with Carol Kala (also a CSA member from another lodge), are pictured with famous Czech celebrity baker, Petra Burianova. They had so much fun while attending the Pernik (gingerbread) baking and decorating class, which was held at T.G. Masaryk Czech School. On page 16 is a gingerbread recipe that has been passed on to us from Petra Burianova.

Lodge Lincoln came together to celebrate the holidays with a party and business meeting that was held in December at the Grand Duke Restaurant in Darien. During the business meeting, a motion was passed that our current officers continue their jobs for another year. They all agreed and will be sworn in at our January Zoom meeting. In the February *Journal*, I will tell you all about the fun we had at our Christmas celebration and share some photos that were taken at the party.

Our next meeting will be a Zoom meeting on January 16 at 7:00 p.m. We plan to meet on February 16 at 1:00 p.m. We will meet at Vera Wilt's new home: 377 DesPlaines Ave., Riverside, Illinois, and she will have a pot of chili waiting for us. Until then, stay warm!

Fraternally,
Pat Smolucha
(s.smolucha@sbcglobal.net)





Fraternal Calendar

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|---|
| January | 2 | Miss CSA Application available (website) |
| | 2 | CSA Scholarship Application Available (website) |
| | 2 | Home Office closed for New Year's Day |
| | 20 | Home Office closed for MLK Day |
| | 31 | Deadline - 2024 Lodge Recognition Program submissions |
| February | 1 | Deadline - 2024 President's Reports forms due in Home Office |
| | 17 | Home Office closed for President's Day |
| March | 15 | Deadline - CSA Scholarship Applications and Transcript |
| | 31 | Deadline - Lodge Financial & Election forms due in the Home Office |
| April | 18 | Home Office closed for Good Friday |
| May | 3 | Join Hands Day |
| | 26 | Home Office Closed for Memorial Day |
| June | 6 | Deadline - Miss CSA Application and Photos |
| | 27 | Deadline - Fraternalist of the Year Nomination Application |
| July | 2 | Deadline - Kropik Scholarship Application |
| | 2 | Deadline- Receipt information form for CSA Scholarship |
| | 4 | Home office closed for 4th of July |
| August | 1-3 | 88th Annual Get-Together in Cleveland Ohio |
| September | 1 | Home Office closed for Labor Day |
| | 26 | Deadline - Photo Contest Entries |
| | 26 | Deadline - Bowl-O-Rama Entries |
| October | 13 | Home Office closed for Indigenous Peoples' Day (Columbus) Day |
| | 15 | Deadline - Veterans Names/Articles for November Journal |
| | 31 | Deadline - Bowl-O-Rama Scores |
| November | 27-28 | Home Office closed for Thanksgiving Holiday |
| December | 1 | Deadline - CSA Serves Matching Funds Request |
| | 24-25 | Home Office closed for Christmas Holiday |

**Deadline for articles - 13th of every PRIOR month; ex: articles for February Journal should be submitted by January 13th.



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Soup Cook Off Funds Christmas for Foster Kids

Lodge Independence Liberty Bell No. 408, St. Louis, Michigan – On December 15, 2024, we had a Soup Cook Off and raffled off a booze basket, along with a woman's, men's, and youth Lions sweatshirts and a youth Lions hat. We raised \$605.00 for a foster family of six. We got all three boys and all three girls a pair of pants, a shirt, and shoes. They all got two toys and two books, plus a \$50.00 gift certificate for Meijer. We are so thankful for everyone who donated for this to happen! Jill McClintic won first prize with her soup, Rod Hartman won second prize, and Maggie Fowler won third place.

*Fraternally,
Teresa Butcher*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Come to a Meeting

Lodge Paramount/Southgate No. 372, Maple Heights, Ohio – It was a very brisk, 33 degree day for our meeting on November 21, at the DTJ in Taborville, Ohio.

We hope everybody had a nice Thanksgiving and a very merry Christmas. Best wishes for a great New Year!

Congratulations to our 50/50 winners. Donna was picked twice and said pick again. Diane was picked and thanked her. Then she, too, was picked again, and said to pick again! Kris thanked her when her ticket was pulled.

Remember to save the date: August 1 – 3, for the Get-Together 2025! The hotel will be The Double Tree in downtown Cleveland. A reservation link has been created and can be found in this *Journal* on page 9. Remember to have your favorite band or concert T-shirt when you come!

Thank you, Mary Ann, for our snack of pizza, veggie tray, salad, potato chips, and, as always, the delicious desserts: brownies and pumpkin cake. Thank you also for providing the prizes and the Thanksgiving puzzle that made us think!

Our next meetings for 2025 will be: January 23, February 27, March 27, May 22, June Bus Trip (TBA), July 24, August 28, September 25, October 23, November 20, and December 18, our Christmas luncheon. Come to a meeting, reconnect with friends, and have a tasty snack. We would love to see you!

*Fraternally,
Annette Reichman*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Holiday Games and Giving

Lodge Woodrow Wilson No. 377, Brookfield, Illinois – Our end-of-year holiday meeting was filled with so much laughter and fun! After enjoying a bountiful and tasty potluck supper, it was “game time.” Our annual competition, complete with prizes for those who excelled, was a throwback to childhood for many of us. Everyone in attendance took part in our own version of ‘Bozo Buckets,’ with plenty of smiles as corks flew toward, past, and occasionally into the buckets. Pat Satek took first place with her expert tosses; Beth Hemzacek and Anna Ramirez tied for second. A

good time was had by all!

Our ‘Join Hands’ project for 2024 once again served community members in need for the holidays. Our lodge raised \$600, which was used to purchase gift cards for families, designated as the preferred type of donation for this project. Thirty each of Jewel grocery cards and Target gift cards, all \$10 value, will make the holidays so much brighter for local families who are struggling. This project ‘joined hands’ with the Health Services Office and Social Worker, as well as the rest of the Park Junior High School Community in LaGrange Park,

Illinois, where Savannah Porter attends school. Thanks so very much to Savannah and her mom, Jamie, who served as the primary coordinators of this project for our lodge involvement, and thanks to every lodge member who so generously contributed.

My wish for all is that the new year ahead keeps everyone safe and well. I also hope that you will stay in touch to let us know how you are doing!

*Jean Hemzáček Laukant
hemzacek.j@gmail.com
630-915-9745*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Angel Tree for Home Instead

Lodge Prokop Velky No. 137, Cedar Rapids, Iowa – December has been a busy month for our lodge. We decided to do an Angel Tree for our service project so we contacted Home Instead in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to get angels from their tree. Home Instead helps many shut-ins and people who have no close family with assistance from caregivers. It is a wonderful organization headed up by Sherrie in the Cedar Rapids office. We picked 20 names from their tree and then the shopping began. Thank you to Peg Zach and Sue Mihal-Melvin for doing the shopping. The gifts were delivered to Home Instead and then four lodge members (Peg Zach, Sue Mihal-Melvin, Barb Pulkrab, and Rai Ann Stratton) went to Home Instead and volunteered to wrap gifts for four hours. This wonderful organization received many, many donations to fill their tree. During the week of Christmas, the local firemen of the CR Fire Department delivered these gifts. It was a very rewarding service project.

On Friday, December 6, we held our Annual Christmas Party. We enjoyed a meal of ribeye steaks, party potatoes, cauliflower medley, and chocolate fluff for dessert. The party

was held at Parlor City in Cedar Rapids. Everyone brought a wrapped gift to share and drawings were held after the meal. We had our annual Christmas toast with a video going to Marj Nejd. Unfortunately, the evening was dampened with the absence of Marj. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

In November, we held our Election of Officers. The following officers were elected: President Mike Papich, Vice President Vern Rompot, Treasurer Phillip Nejd, Secretary and Scribe Rai Ann Stratton, Sentry Peg Zach, and Guide Barb Pulkrab. Congratulations to all the officers.

We will not be having meetings in January and February 2025.

Our lodge wishes you and yours a very prosperous New Year.

*Fraternaly yours,
Rai Ann Stratton*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Happy New Year!

Lodge Pingree No. 366, Dearborn Height, Michigan – Happy New Year, Sisters and Brothers! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and is well and happy.

Congratulations to our returning lodge officers: Marie Palmer as Vice President/Lodge Secretary and me as Lodge President/Treasurer. We still need a Guide and a Sentry. Anyone wishing to fill these positions, please contact me or Marie. One person can fill both.

We still do volunteering for the Food Pantry on the third Saturday of every month at H.I.S. Church Anglican on Six Mile Rd., Livonia, Michigan, just west of Farmington Rd. We have a very brief meeting immediately after. Please join us for good will and good Fraternalism.

My phone number is 734-751-8013. I don't have any more news to share, but I wish everyone a healthy and prosperous 2025.

*Fraternally yours,
Jeff Teichman*

Fraternal Well Wishes

Delores Clark
Lodge Cleveland Chapter
No. 219

Marj Nejd
Lodge Prokop Velky
No. 137

Elmer Soos
Lodge Cleveland Chapter
No. 219

Brazos Valley Food for Families Food Drive

Lodge Svetlo No. 277, Caldwell, Texas – On Wednesday, December 4, 2024, members of Lodge Svetlo No. 277, Caldwell, Texas, made our annual dona-

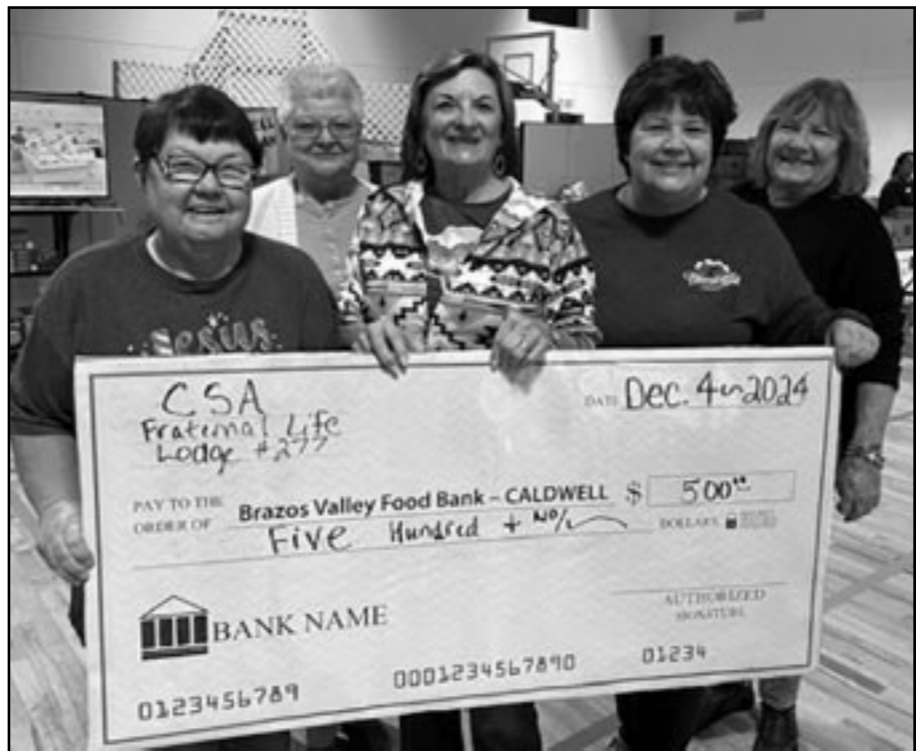
tion to the Brazos Valley Food for Families Food Drive. We also assisted in sorting and boxing food donations. This year, our small county of just over 10,000 people donated over 12,000

pounds of food and \$64,800 in cash donations.

*Fraternally,
Susan Skrabanek*



Caldwell Mayor and Food for Families Chairman Janice Easter shows off our contributions.



Pictured are L to R: Betty Suehs, Patsy Story, Carolyn Doonan, Susan Skrabanek, and Shirley Vavra.

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Wishing You All the Best

Lodge Kruh Osvojenych Zen a Panu No. 121, Dillonvale, Ohio – Greetings! Hello to all our brothers and sisters nationwide and a very Happy New Year! It's hard to believe, but another new year is upon us once again! Did you make any resolutions? Do you have new aspirations? Have you set personal or professional goals for yourself? For me, I think those are the best things about beginning another new year... the symbolic chance to start over. We all need a reset at different times in our lives, whether it be at the beginning of a new calendar year or any time at all. My wish for you is that this new year will be a great beginning for all things positive, peaceful, happy, and healthy!

Our group met in early December at Naples Spaghetti House in Steubenville, Ohio. We all enjoyed delicious soups, salads, and a variety of pasta dishes. We met on a Sunday, and it might have just been one of their busiest days! Lucky for us, we had a sweet waitress, and our group was very patient, to say the least. One of the highlights of our luncheon was seeing

all the families and friends out together enjoying each other's company and ready to celebrate the holidays. Our secretary, Sister Mariann Ebright, even enlisted the help of a kind passer-by who graciously took a group picture of us on the side of the restaurant. We hope you enjoy viewing it. The business part of our meeting was rather short since we were wrapping up the activities of 2024, including documenting our volunteer hours. To help get their holidays started off merrily, members were given some Christmas goodies and spirits from the lodge. (Yummy! And, you're welcome!) We truly enjoyed our time together and were grateful that all of us could be there for the luncheon.

In next month's *Journal*, we will be reporting on our CSA Serves charities of choice for our volunteer hours. Our members were asked to consider whether they would like to stay with our current charities or consider some different ones. We'll let you know what we decide.

In addition, if any youth members would like to bowl in this year's upcoming

Junior Bowl-O-Rama, please register via the registration form found online at csalife.com, or call Lodge President Wendy Lovell at (740) 827-4572 to get registered.

Lodge No. 121 members meet monthly at 1:00 p.m. on the second Sunday of the month at various "meeting friendly" venues or in the Dillonvale Presbyterian Church Social Hall.

Please call Secretary Mariann Ebright at (740) 733-8158 or President Wendy Lovell at the above number or (740) 769-7511 for further information and to RSVP, if that is needed at our venue of choice. We would love for you to attend our meetings and bring any ideas you wish to share! Please consider meeting with us. We will make you feel most welcome!

Once again, we wish all of you a very happy, healthy, prosperous New Year! May 2025 be your best year yet! Remember to check on someone you love today.

*Blessings in the New Year,
Sister Wendy Kurtz Lovell*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Christmas Kicks on Route 66

Lodge DuPage Pioneers/Edison No. 409, Westmont, Illinois – Lodge members met for their holiday party at the iconic Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket on Route 66. This was our third luncheon here and the food and service were better than ever.

Our members included Jim and Judy Wozniak, Ed Cervenka, Anthony Cervenka, Rosemary Thiel, Annmarie Antos, Lisa Cassai, D.C. No. 12 President Ken Dvorsky, and Gerri Romanelli. Unfortunately, health issues prevented a handful of our brothers and sisters from attending. We wish them a speedy recovery along with our best wishes for enjoyable holidays.

After a brief meeting, members enjoyed the famous Chicken Basket fried chicken and many other offerings on their bountiful buffet. No member left hungry!

After lunch, a cover-all Bingo was played with members vying for the array of Christmas goodies donated by Annmarie Antos and brothers Ed and Anthony Cervenka. Thank you for the pretty, funny, and unusual prizes. Who knew Coke had Oreo flavored cola? Thanks, too, to Lisa Cassai for her gifts of chocolates and cookies in decorative tins featuring winter scenes of Germany. John and Joann Nekolny, unable to attend, were kind enough to provide candies and other sweets for each member to take home along with greetings for the holidays. Ken Dvorsky brought a

bag-full of snacks to share.

Our traditional Christmas Card Exchange is always a big hit. Many beautiful Christmas cards are given and displayed in our homes. It's always fun to see how many different themes are depicted on the cards – snowmen, cardinals, Santa, of course, decorated trees, Peanuts characters, and many other holiday standards.

Members left for home filled with good food, sweet treats, prizes galore, and the making of another Christmas memory for the brothers and sisters of Lodge DuPage Pioneers.

Happy New Year! May 2025 bring prosperity, good health, and joy!

*Fraternally,
Gerri Romanelli*



Scholarship Fund Report

November 10 - December 10, 2024

IN MEMORY OF HELEN GAYDUSEK

Lodge Brookfield No. 475
Marion Varga
District Council No. 12

IN MEMORY OF BETTIE MONTGOMERY

Lodge Brookfield No. 475

IN MEMORY OF ANTHONY GALLO

Lodge Brookfield No. 475

IN MEMORY OF CHUCK JANDA

Raymond Riha

IN MEMORY OF GERALDINE COATES

Linda Bareis

**TO CONTINUE CSA'S TRADITION OF
THANKING A DRIVER**

Lodge Brookfield No. 475

**TO CONTINUE CZECH HERITAGE AND CSA'S
TRADITION OF ASSISTING OUR YOUNG
MEMBERS IN PURSUING THEIR EDUCATION**

Lodge Brookfield No. 475
Robert and Mary Wicenski
Lodge Benjamin Franklin No. 002
Linda Lilly

IN MEMORY OF DECEASED MEMBERS

Lodge Yankee-Jungmann No. 77
Lodge Laurel No. 452
Lodge Century of Progress No. 231

Total Donations

\$1,800.00

Lovely Holiday Luncheon

Lodge Cleveland Chapter No. 219, Cleveland, Ohio – We had a lovely meeting/holiday luncheon at Max and Erma's Restaurant on December 10, 2024. Ten members attended, including June Karecki's daughter, Kathy! Our meeting was short so we could enjoy the lunch. One thing we did was

nominate Freddie Shima as our Fraternalist of the Year.

Nine CSA members attended the District Holiday Party on December 5 at Ruma's Restaurant in North Royalton. It was a lovely time and they had very good food.

We will install our officers in January and chose two charities to donate to. We welcome any lodge members to attend. We will be at the Parma Heights Library on Pearl Road, the second Tuesday of the month at 10:30 a.m.

We hope everyone had a happy, healthy, and blessed Christmas and New Year. We hope everyone has a healthy and prosperous New Year.

*Fraternally yours,
Judy (Sevcik) Genco
Scribe*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Christmas Stockings for Soldiers and Veterans

Lodge Yankee-Jungmann No. 77, Lombard, Illinois – Our November meeting included quite a few additional attendees. Due to a schedule conflict, Lodge Woodrow Wilson No. 377 had to change meeting nights. After a call from Cary Mentzer, our two lodges agreed to hold November's meeting together at the Home Office. Mary Ellen Janda, Lodge Yankee-Jungmann No. 77, presided and called the meeting to order. The two groups separated for a short time to hold elections and conduct lodge business and when we reconvened, we were treated to a presentation by Anna Ramirez, Lodge Woodrow Wilson No. 377. She had been asked by her genealogy group to prepare an article for CGSI's publication. Members enjoyed hearing her speak about the "Little girl growing up in Little Village." Anna's story and the photos she shared triggered many happy childhood memories of life in the old neighborhood. After we adjourned, members enjoyed social time and delicious home-baked goodies brought to share.



Four generations of Eunice Semple's family gathered this October in Louisville, Kentucky, to take advantage of her niece's family's visit from London. Eunice's three children, several grandchildren, and her nine great-grandchildren were among those attending, traveling from California, Michigan, and Chicago. One young relative modeled Eunice's 1949 wedding dress... still stylish and elegant! Eunice made the dress herself and wore it for her big

day in 1949.

Our lodge members participated in "Christmas Stockings for Soldiers & Veterans." We collected items for the stockings that we donated based on a list provided of the troops needs. Kuratko-Nosek Funeral Home shipped the stockings at their expense to the troops abroad in time for Christmas.

The lodge would like to wish everyone a healthy and Happy New Year!

*Fraternally,
Mary Ellen Janda*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

St. Nicholas, Angel, and Devil Visit Market

Lodge Missouri No. 1, St. Louis, Missouri – Members of Lodge Missouri No. 1 and others began their holiday season with the Winter Market at the American-Czech Educational Center. The day featured various foods like chebicky, baked goods including cookies and rohlicky, other various gifts such as T-shirts, garnets, nutcrackers, painted glass ornaments, pernicky, and much

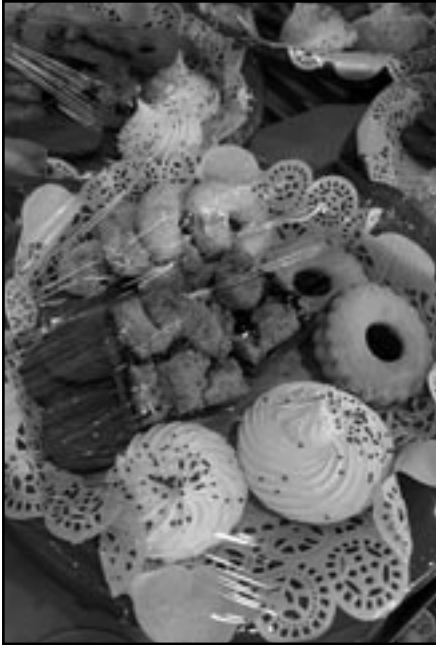
more for visitors to purchase. There was ornament making and face painting, hot chocolate, mulled wine, and more.

The day also featured a visit with St. Nicholas and the Angel and the Devil, who were handing out lumps of coal. The event was a success and we even got a visit from a local television crew and were featured on the evening news. Thanks to all the ACEC, CSA, Sokol

members, and others who worked the event or attended and made it a fun-filled afternoon.

We are wishing you all a wonderful and Happy New Year!

*Until next time,
Marla Breidenbach*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Memorial Service, Annual Competition

Lodge Laurel No. 452, Ashford, Connecticut – We held our Annual Memorial Service on October 13 at Westford Hill Cemetery in Ashford. Deacon Brother Lawrence Goodwin led the ceremony. We remembered those Lodge Laurel members who passed this past year as well as past members who

are buried in this cemetery. We then placed flowers on the graves of those buried in this cemetery.

Following the Memorial Service, we went to St. Philip's Center for a pizza lunch, to hold our monthly meeting, and to complete our annual competition. For our competition, we each did

research on, and then created, a centerpiece which focused on one of the twelve Fraternal Benefit Societies that belong to the New England Fraternal Alliance. Before voting, we each talked about what we learned and why we included what we did in our centerpieces.

Voting was not easy, but we came up with winners. The pictures show all the centerpieces and the winners of the competition. First place went to Brother Larry Goodwin who created his for Luso American Financial, which is a Portuguese society. Second place went to Sister Jill Goodwin who created hers for the National Slovak Society. Third place went to Sister Laura Varga-Knowlton who created hers for the William Penn Association, which is a Hungarian society. The idea for creating these centerpieces came from the fact that Lodge Laurel members were taking part in and supporting the New England Fraternal Alliance's 100th Annual Meeting and Banquet on November 9. The pieces were used on the evening banquet tables. Sister Marion Varga is President of NEFA and sincerely appreciates all the support of our Lodge Laurel members. A group of seven lodge members and one guest entertained at the banquet by singing several Czech/Slovak songs. More about the NEFA 100th Annual Meeting with pictures to follow in next month's *Journal*.

Wishing everyone a blessed and Happy New Year!

*Fraternally,
Marion Varga*



In Memoriam

| Claim | Name | Lodge | Location | Date of Death | Age |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| 55780 | Verbos, Leonard | 004 | VERONA, PA | 10/11/2024 | 80 |
| 55834 | Whigham, Neil T. | 004 | ELLSWORTH, PA | 11/08/2024 | 89 |
| 55802 | Prosecky, Julia J. | 007 | BOLINGBROOK, IL | 10/05/2024 | 95 |
| 55821 | Sirovy, Helen A. | 007 | N. RIVERSIDE, IL | 11/21/2021 | 98 |
| 55824 | Vach, James F. | 007 | NAPERVILLE, IL | 11/28/2024 | 76 |
| 55831 | Serdiuk, Claire J. | 007 | BERWYN, IL | 04/16/2021 | 50 |
| 55791 | Christel, Charles C. | 013 | MANITOWOC, WI | 10/20/2024 | 95 |
| 55792 | Zellermayer, Raymond | 077 | LINCOLNWOOD, IL | 10/26/2024 | 82 |
| 55823 | Vach, James F. | 099 | NAPERVILLE, IL | 11/28/2024 | 76 |
| 55838 | Sedivy, Sharon A. | 099 | WESTERN SPRINGS, IL | 11/26/2024 | 85 |
| 55784 | Sandoval, Arlene | 151 | MAPLE FALLS, WA | 10/13/2024 | 80 |
| 55787 | Rulec, Evelyn T. | 210 | SUN CITY, AZ | 10/27/2024 | 87 |
| 55789 | Slavik, Juraj L. J. | 210 | ALEXANDRIA, VA | 06/10/2022 | 95 |
| 55808 | Harris, Lula M. | 211 | POUGHKEEPSIE, NY | 08/27/2023 | 80 |
| 55811 | Brown, Christine | 211 | TRENTON, NJ | 11/16/2024 | 85 |
| 55822 | Sutton, Annie | 211 | JERSEY CITY, NJ | 10/26/2024 | 85 |
| 55786 | Weaver, Phyllis C. | 219 | STRONGSVILLE, OH | 09/30/2024 | 81 |
| 55812 | Holan, Janet F. | 219 | MEDINA, OH | 08/07/2024 | 90 |
| 55795 | Price, Andrea Y. | 231 | CHICAGO, IL | 10/21/2024 | 41 |
| 55813 | Bibbee, Marcella A. | 251 | GAHANNA, OH | 10/25/2024 | 96 |
| 55810 | Williams, Juanita | 302 | CHICAGO, IL | 10/27/2024 | 74 |
| 55797 | Newell, Duane G. | 310 | GLENCOE, OH | 10/12/2024 | 75 |
| 55835 | Lococo, James A. | 310 | BELLAIRE, OH | 04/17/2024 | 60 |
| 55790 | Sevela, Dennis F. | 372 | ALBUQUERQUE, NM | 07/28/2024 | 71 |
| 55803 | Brdicka, Jerry J. | 372 | OLON, OH | 10/20/2024 | 96 |
| 55825 | Vach, James F. | 378 | NAPERVILLE, IL | 11/28/2024 | 76 |
| 55782 | Ducker, Joy L. | 404 | MATTOON, IL | 09/18/2024 | 83 |
| 55832 | Salkauskas, Diane | 409 | LEMONT, IL | 11/23/2024 | 69 |
| 55781 | Chesak, Gregory D. | 419 | SAN PIERRE, IN | 10/20/2024 | 68 |
| 55820 | Sienkowski, Edward J. | 419 | NORTH JUDSON, IN | 11/07/2024 | 76 |
| 55793 | Quinn, Marlene A. | 422 | GRAY, TN | 09/30/2024 | 91 |
| 55794 | Andrini Jr., Reinaldo | 422 | BRONX, NY | 10/02/2024 | 83 |
| 55818 | Minar, Jana | 422 | NEW LONDON, CT | 08/31/2024 | 86 |
| 55804 | Scheuing, Garry F. | 428 | BALTIMORE, MD | 10/26/2024 | 83 |
| 55836 | Pukis, Emil F. | 429 | ALBANY, NY | 07/17/2024 | 83 |
| 55788 | Farrar, Anne D. | 432 | LAKWOOD, CO | 12/07/2021 | 91 |
| 55839 | Carson, Larry A. | 450 | ROCHESTER, NY | 05/09/2024 | 84 |
| 55840 | Hobson, Alvin M. | 450 | NEW YORK CITY, NY | 03/29/2024 | 66 |
| 55801 | Watzl, Robert E. | 458 | TUSTIN, CA | 05/12/2024 | 94 |
| 55799 | Novak, Thomas F. | 463 | JACKSONVILLE, FL | 10/18/2024 | 76 |
| 55785 | Snajd, Mary A. | 479 | GALENA, OH | 09/12/2024 | 98 |
| 55807 | O'Donnell, Dennis P. | 479 | CELINA, TX | 10/22/2024 | 68 |
| 55814 | Kuffner, Mary | 479 | CORAOPOLIS, PA | 09/19/2024 | 97 |
| 55817 | Caruso, John R. | 479 | NORTH HUNTINGDON, PA | 10/20/2024 | 88 |
| 55833 | Whigham, Neil T. | 479 | BENTLEYVILLE, PA | 11/08/2024 | 89 |
| 55783 | Mcghie, Valma R. | 481 | LAKELAND, FL | 09/30/2024 | 88 |
| 55796 | Byrd, George M. | 481 | NEWARK, NJ | 08/17/2024 | 77 |
| 55798 | Weinbel, Ronald | 481 | BAYVILLE, NJ | 10/25/2024 | 78 |
| 55816 | Jean-Gilles, Pierre | 481 | ELIZABETH, NJ | 11/27/2024 | 88 |
| 55779 | Cole, Nancy R. | 484 | SHERRILLS FRD, NC | 04/14/2024 | 71 |
| 55837 | Jirack, Rena M. | 484 | MEMPHIS, TN | 06/12/2024 | 85 |

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Join Our Meetings - Your Input is Welcome!

Lodge Century of Progress/Bila Hora, No. 231, Cicero, Illinois – We hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We also hope you remembered to be safe and aware while going to Grandma's house and to that New Year's Eve party!

In December, our lodge met for Christmas lunch at PJ Klem's in Lyon's, Illinois. We had a brief meeting with an approval for a contribution to the Friends of the Bohemian National Cemetery. In addition, we heard that District No. 12 members met for their meeting and holiday dinner. As a matter of business, the group agreed that a meeting of District No. 12 members should be conducted quarterly. Following our meeting and lunch, we joined in for several games of Bingo.

Ed Slavik and Dolores Klejko shared activities of their sister Mary Ann in Puerto Rico. She has been volunteering to help children with mathematics and English homework assignments at Casa Juan Bosco Center. She also has been chauffeuring and visiting with the Missionaries of Charity. Kudos to Mary Ann!

Also, you are aware that our lodge meets at the T.G. Masaryk School in Cicero, Illinois. Those of you in the vicinity could take part in many of the activities sponsored by the school and those others of you can take advantage of the many child and adult classes online by checking the website at: czechschoolchicago.org/classes/for-adults. As for the aforementioned activities at the school, a screening of the documentary *Czech Mechanical Nativity Scenes* was held in early December. The film celebrates the masterpieces of

Czech craftsmanship plus so much more. Sign up for their monthly newsletters.

Our meetings are generally held at the T.G. Masaryk School on the second Wednesday of the month at noon. We invite you, our members, to join us and welcome your input. Please join us at the school at 5701 W. 22nd Place, Cicero, Illinois. For more information, contact Ed Slavik at 708-423-5267.

*Fraternally,
Elaine Tejcek*



Czech Courses for Adults Winter Quarter Schedule

The registration for the Winter Quarter for the T.G. Masaryk Czech courses is open!

Whether you're looking to brush up on your Czech language skills or take your proficiency to the next level, the courses offer something for everyone.

Here is what you need to know:

- ✳ Registration Deadline: Thursday, January 2, 2025
- ✳ Levels: All levels are welcome
(this quarter, courses range from Beginners II to Advanced)
- ✳ Format: Choose between online or in-person classes.

Find the schedule, registration form, and additional details on the website:

<https://czechschoolchicago.org/classes/for-adults/>

Don't miss out on this opportunity to immerse yourself in the Czech language and culture!
Register now and join a vibrant community of learners.

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Looking Forward to Exciting Fraternal Activities



Lodge Brookfield No. 475, Brookfield, Illinois – Our annual December year-end meeting was held at Stevens Restaurant in Downers Grove, Illinois. The first order of business was to elect

officers for 2025. Newly elected are President Barb Deig, Vice-President Joyce Nemeč, Treasurer Dolores Chiapetta, Secretary Jerry Silhan, Sentry Dan Wenzler, Guide Joyce Nemeč, and

Scribe Kimberly Silhan. Following this, we held a brief moment of silence for members we lost during the previous twelve months.

After conclusion of pending lodge business, everyone enjoyed a fine meal. As is our custom, we conducted some rousing fun games for nominal prizes. Lodge Brookfield is looking forward to another year of exciting fraternal activities in 2025!

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at the CSA Home Office in Lombard, Illinois. Members and guests are welcome.

*Fraternally,
Kimberly Silhan*

Winter Market Featured in Local News

Lodge Washington No. 30, St. Louis, Missouri – Lodge members gathered for our December meeting and a small holiday celebration. We always enjoy our traditional pizza dinner and the camaraderie, which included the gift exchange – and we come up with some really creative gift ideas!

We held our official Election of Officers, with all our current officers retaining their positions for another year. We thank President Jenny Zeman, Vice President Deborah Zeman,

Secretary Gail Petelik, Treasurer Karen Ditz, and Guide and Sentry Ericka Ryals for accepting these responsibilities. We look forward to a new year of activities for our lodge. There will be no meeting in January, so on the second Friday of February, we'll talk about what we'll do for "CSA Serves" in 2025 and how to get more members involved in our charitable work. Join us!

Our ACEC held its Winter Market in December, featuring all kinds of Czech food (love those cookie plates!) and gift items, plus a visit from Svatý Mikuláš (St. Nicholas). Our "angelic" member Anna Ryals was tapped to accompany Mikuláš, and we'll let you guess which one she is. We even made it to the local news, with a cameraman stopping by to film some of the activities! This has been a big success for two years now, and the date for the next one is December 6, 2025.

There are two things to be excited about in the new year. The first is the Czech Festival at our ACEC on Saturday, April 26, with traditional Czech food, music, beer and other refreshments, and fun for the whole family. The other is the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society's Conference, to be held in Kansas City, on October 30 through November 1. There's a lot more information to be found on their website, and our lodge and the ACEC are pleased to be supporters of the event.

In the meantime, here's wishing everyone a very healthy and Happy New Year!

*Fraternally,
Deborah Zeman*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Here's to a Wonderful 2025!

Lodge Groveton No. 4, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania – Hello, Brothers and Sisters. Happy New Year! May we heal the past, live the present, and dream the future. Here's to a wonderful 2025!

Back in October, Jean Placek celebrated her 88th birthday! Jean had a girls' afternoon with her sisters and daughter to celebrate. Happy birthday, Jean! We wish you a blessed year and hope you had an amazing day!

Several members of our lodge were able to support a local bar and restaurant that unfortunately burned down. Thanks to Mickey, Tammy, and Little Mick for supporting their fundraiser!

Congratulations to Chet Yurkovich, Terry Placek, Jack Bradley, Jenn Eisenhower, and Deann Amundsen! They are the first half champions of their bowling league. Way to go!

Our December meeting and Christmas dinner was held at Napoli's Restaurant in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania. Members

enjoyed a delicious meal while discussing lodge happenings. Special thank you to President John Kielczewski for joining us!

Lodge meetings will continue to be at Groveton Firehall on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Any date change will be announced ahead of time. There will be food and refreshments at every meeting, so please arrive a little early to enjoy what is available. There is also an attendance raffle with a monetary prize! We hope to see you at a meeting!

Happy Valentine's Day to all!

*Fraternally,
Sis. Hunter Rae Yurkovich*





Winter Word Search

A J I T N A M W O N S C U B F
 D E A E X T F D A S A Z J K N
 F O X X E P T K T R E C J U M
 C U V D F K P O R L E Q R G F
 V S N D T D R O X I G T S C S
 R I T S B M T A A S Y K N Q N
 W S W O U H Y T S P B Q E I O
 D S O K O M U M C D O X T C W
 P E N O F B A U A H A T T J F
 Y Q S H O V E L R C T Y I Q L
 L T D C S U F S F Z L I M U A
 K B T U O L L A B W O N S M K
 Q S S P F A M Q N G B O N E E
 Z X V Z Z I L P V N P E W P B
 X W S P C M H V P J B F E M E

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| BOOTS | CARROT | COAL |
| COAT | FUN | HAT |
| MITTENS | SCARF | SHOVEL |
| SNOW | SNOWBALL | SNOWFLAKE |
| SNOWMAN | STORM | WIND |

Just Kids

Send Just Kids your stories, riddles, etc.

Mail: Just Kids, c/o the CSA Journal,

P.O. Box 249, Lombard, IL 60148

Email to: CSAJournalEditor@gmail.com

Czech to English

Happy New Year

šťastný nový rok

Be happy and healthy

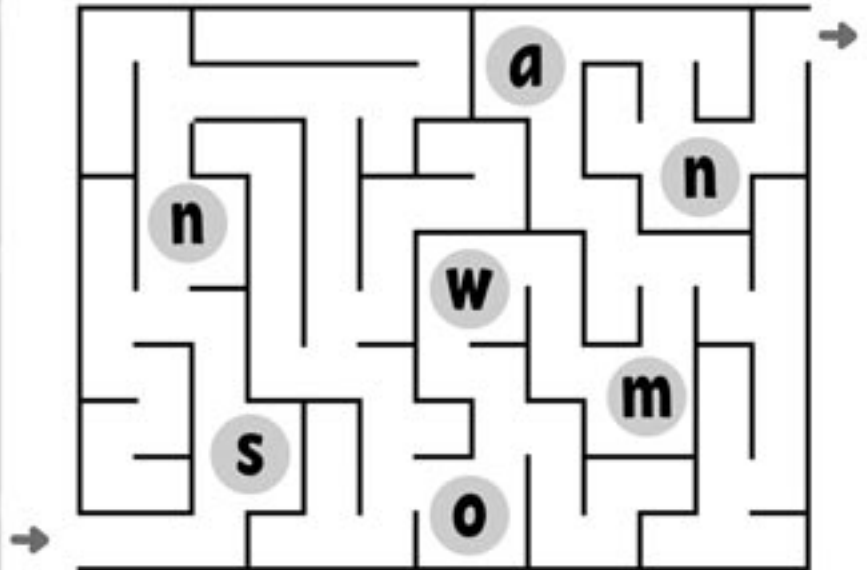
být šťastný a zdravý

We will see you soon!

Brzy se uvidíme

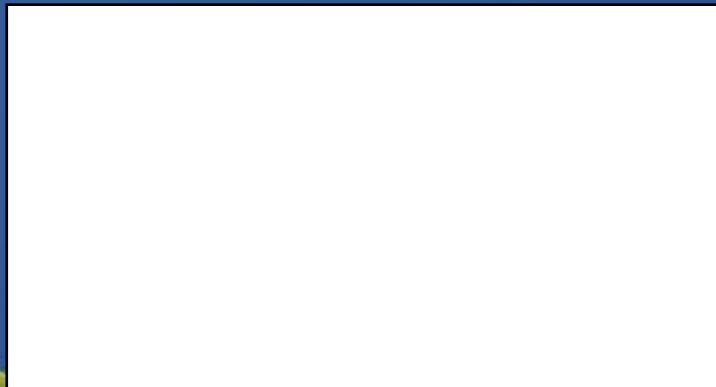


**ABC game
for kids**



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2025
CSA Scholarships



Applications available 1/2/25 at csalife.com.