

CSA Fraternal Life
By Your Side. Commitment. History of Distinction.

Journal

July/August 2026





**Jerry Silhan Plays “Taps”
at Memorial Day Service
Page 24**



**JHD Clean-Up
Page 20**



**Mr. D’s Musical Legacy
Page 27**

On the Cover

“Mr. D,” Otto Dolansky, (seated, right) was honored to have his original compositions featured at events in our Czech community. Anna Ramirez (also seated) wrote the lyrics for his song, “Elegy for Lidice.” Lodge President Andy Bultas is standing with the Illinois Czech Slovak Queen. See page 27 for full details.

In this issue

- 3 Membership Matters**
- 4 Upcoming Events**
- 5 Today’s Fraternal**
- 6 Miss CSA**
- 15 Kropik Scholarship Application**
- 16 Member in the Spotlight**
- 18 Bowl-O-Rama Scores**
- 18 District Council No. 10**
- 19 CSA Serves**
- 20 Lodge Happenings**
 - Lodge No. 372, Page 20
 - Lodge No. 434, Page 22
 - Lodge No. 121, Page 23
 - Lodge No. 475, Page 24
 - Lodge No. 219, Page 25
 - Lodge No. 409, Page 26
 - Lodge No. 377, Page 27
 - Lodge No. 231, Page 28
 - Lodge No. 4, Page 29
 - Lodge No. 378, Page 33
 - Lodge No. 77, Page 33
 - Lodge No. 1, Page 33
- 21 Scholarship Donation Form**
- 30 In Memoriam**
- 31 Photo Contest**
- 32 Scholarship Fund Donation Report**
- 32 Fraternal Calendar**
- 34 Just Kids**

Membership Matters

The Get-Together is Upon Us!

Brothers and Sisters,

Here we are, and as we move into July / August, you know what that means...

Yes, the Annual CSA Get-Together is upon us.

This year, the 89th Annual Get-Together will be in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area over the July 31 – August 2 weekend.

I know that the Get-Together committee has been working hard planning out the events, which begin with a registration and a hospitality reception, and conclude with a Sunday brunch. In between, we'll have a couple of dinners, we'll help with a volunteer event, and go to either a Brewery Tour (we'll be in Wisconsin, so we kind of have to have that as an option!), or the Harley Davidson tour.

On that Saturday, of course, we'll find out who our Fraternalist of the Year is, along with the announcement of our 2026 National Miss CSA. There's still time to register, so if you're interested, do so now!

In the "man, wow how time flies category", this will be the 15th GTG that my wife and I have attended. Love every one of them, and very much looking forward to being in Milwaukee with many of you.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Until next month...

Fraternally,

*John J. Kielczewski
Senior Vice President
BetterLife*



John J. Kielczewski
Senior Vice President
Fraternal Development
BetterLife



Leadership

Board of Directors

Chris Campbell
Madison, WI

Mary Bradley
Frankfort, MI

Michael Hosek
Lincoln, NE

Duane Jirik
New Prague, MN

Daniel L. Shinnich
Mount Horeb, WI

Maria Ferrante-Schepis
McKees Rocks, PA

Bradley Bodell
Chicago, IL

Russell Denk
Madison, WI

Daniel Biank
Blanchardville, WI

Terry Placek
Lawrence, PA

Executive Leadership

Chris Campbell
CEO and Chairman of the Board

Leanna Letuchy
Chief Financial Officer

Dudley Simmons, CLF
Chief Distribution Officer

Matt Mikulcik
Chief Operating Officer

Kaye DeMartino
Senior Vice President,
Talent Management

Member & Community Engagement Leadership

Jake Manne
Senior Director of
Member & Community Engagement

John J. Kielczewski
Senior Vice President,
Fraternal Development

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 2, 2026

Kropik Scholarship Application Deadline

See page 15.

Visit csalife.com

July 31 - August 2, 2026

89th Annual Get-Together

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Visit csalife.com

CSA Journal

Volume 139 No. 7 JULY/AUG 2026



*A Dynamic Magazine "Dedicated to Our
Membership"*

ÚŘEDNÍ ORGÁN JEDNOTY ČESKOSLOVENSKÝCH SPOLKŮ V
AMERICE

Phone: 800-543-3272

FAX: 630-472-1100

Email CSA: fraternaldept@csalife.com

Website: www.csalife.com

Editor: Cynthia Hall, CSAJournalEditor@gmail.com

CSA MISSION STATEMENT

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

Home Office Hours

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

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

CSA Journal (ISSN 0195-9050)

Published monthly—except bimonthly July/August by CSA
Fraternal Life, 2050 Finley Rd., Suite 70, Lombard, IL 60148.
Periodical Postage paid at Lombard, Illinois, and at additional
mailing offices. Subscription Rate: \$12 per year, U.S. only.

Postmaster: send address changes to:

CSA Journal, P.O. Box 249, Lombard, IL 60148.

Today's Fraternal

The Countdown is On!

The countdown is on—the CSA Get-Together is almost here! It's hard to believe how quickly summer is flying by. The Get-Together is always one of my favorite events of the year, giving us a chance to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and enjoy time together as part of our CSA family. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone and sharing another great weekend together.

It's not too late to make your mark! The Fraternalist of the Year nomination is a great opportunity to recognize a fellow member who goes above and beyond for CSA. Nomination forms are available on the CSA website, or you can contact me, and I'll be happy to help.

We are also still accepting applications for the Kropik Scholarship. Applications can be found on the CSA website and on page 15. If you know an eligible student, encourage them to apply.

Mark your calendars! Our Photo Contest will be here before we know it, and we can't wait to see your entries. Photos from either 2025 or 2026 are eligible, so start looking through your favorites and choose the ones you'd like to share. The submission deadline is September 26. It's always fun to see the special moments, beautiful scenery, and memorable experiences captured by our members throughout the year. (See page 31.)

I hope you're enjoying a wonderful summer and making plenty of great memories with family and friends.

I can't wait to see everyone at the Get-Together. Safe travels, enjoy the rest of your summer, and I'll see you soon!

*Fraternally,
Kelly Deegan*



Kelly Deegan
Fraternal Programs Manager

A graphic for the 89th Annual Get-Together event. At the top, a banner reads "89th ANNUAL". Below it, the text "GET-TOGETHER" is written in large, bold, block letters. Underneath, the dates "JULY 31 - AUGUST 2, 2026" and the location "MILWAUKEE, WI" are listed. In the bottom left corner is the "CSA Fraternal Life" logo, which includes a star. On the right side, there is a cartoon illustration of a pig wearing a striped shirt and riding a motorcycle. The background features a large, stylized flame or sunburst shape.

Miss National CSA

Passion for Preserving Our Czech Heritage

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters,
Happy Summer, everyone!

I am currently writing this from a remote cabin tucked away in the Rocky Mountains, where I have been enjoying my fair share of fishing and the peacefulness that comes with being surrounded by nature. Spending time in the mountains is something I will always treasure, and staying in a cabin is an experience I will never turn down.

Outside of enjoying the outdoors, I have been making the most of this summer by attending more concerts, spending quality time with friends, and celebrating Father's Day with my family. Along with traveling, I feel incredibly grateful and lucky to experience another summer in Colorado. I am also excited to

be visiting Wilson, Kansas soon, before our big Get-Together!

I am beyond excited for the Get-Together in Milwaukee later this summer. I have been looking forward to reconnecting with familiar faces, sharing meaningful conversations, and creating more memories together. Through my travels with the organization, I have learned valuable lessons and discovered new things about myself that I never expected.

At last year's Get-Together, I was incredibly nervous to speak in front of a crowd. This year, I am returning with excitement and confidence, knowing I will not just be speaking to a crowd, but to friends, family, and role models who have become such an important part of my journey.

A year ago, I never could have imagined the experiences I would have had. I

had never traveled alone before this opportunity, and being able to travel with Kelly Deegan was one of the highlights of my experience. I have grown so close to her and am truly grateful for the friendship and guidance she has given me.

While I am sad to see this chapter coming to an end, I know this is not goodbye. I will continue to stay involved and look forward to the new opportunities that come my way through this organization. Beyond meeting inspiring and influential adults, I have also built incredible friendships with people my own age, including other pageant queens from Czech organizations across the country.

I am so thankful for the memories, friendships, and experiences this journey has brought me. Being part of this organization has allowed me to step outside of my comfort zone, discover more about myself, and connect with so many incredible people who share a passion for preserving and celebrating our Czech heritage. I look forward to continuing these relationships, embracing new opportunities, and seeing where this journey takes me next. I cannot wait to reunite with everyone in Milwaukee and celebrate the friendships and connections that make this organization so special.

Fraternally,
Cassidy Payer





Celebrating the
United States'
250th Anniversary

Moving Toward Independence

The clearest call for independence up to the summer of 1776 came in Philadelphia on June 7. On that date in session in the Pennsylvania State House (later Independence Hall), the Continental Congress heard Richard Henry Lee of Virginia read his resolution beginning: “Resolved: That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.”

The Lee Resolution was an expression of what was already beginning to happen throughout the colonies. When the Second Continental Congress, which was essentially the government of the United States from 1775 to 1788, first met in May 1775, King George III had not replied to the petition for redress of grievances that he had been sent by the First Continental Congress. The Congress gradually took on the responsibilities of a national government. In June 1775, the Congress established the Continental Army as well as a continental currency. By the end of July of that year, it created a post office for the “United Colonies.”

In August 1775, a royal proclamation declared that the King’s American subjects were “engaged in open and avowed rebellion.” Later that year, Parliament passed the American Prohibitory Act, which made all American vessels and cargoes forfeit to the Crown. And, in May 1776, the Congress learned that the King had negotiated treaties with German states to hire mercenaries to fight in America. The weight of these actions combined to convince many Americans that the mother country was treating the colonies as a foreign entity.

One by one, the Continental Congress continued to cut the colonies’ ties to Britain. The Privateering Resolution, passed in March 1776, allowed the colonists “to fit out armed vessels to cruise [sic] on the enemies of these United Colonies.”

On April 6, 1776, American ports were opened to commerce with other nations, an action that severed the economic ties fostered by the Navigation Acts. A “Resolution for the Formation of Local Governments” was passed on May 10, 1776.

At the same time, more of the colonists themselves were becoming convinced of the inevitability of independence. Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense,” published in January 1776, was sold by the thousands. By the middle of May 1776, eight colonies had decided that they would support independence. On May 15, 1776, the Virginia Convention passed a resolution that “the delegates appointed to represent this colony in General Congress be instructed to propose to that respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and independent states.”

It was in keeping with these instructions that Richard Henry Lee, on June 7, 1776, presented his resolution. There were still some delegates, however, including those bound by earlier instructions, who wished to pursue the path of reconciliation with Britain. On June 11, consideration of the Lee Resolution was postponed by a vote of seven colonies to five, with New York abstaining. Congress then recessed for three weeks. The tone of the debate indicated that at the end of that time the Lee Resolution would be adopted. Before Congress recessed, therefore, a committee of five was appointed to draft a statement presenting to the world the colonies’ case for independence.

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-history>

“Resolved: That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.”

The Committee of Five

The Committee of Five consisted of two New England men, John Adams of Massachusetts and Roger Sherman of Connecticut; two men from the Middle Colonies, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and Robert R. Livingston of New York; and one southerner, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia. In 1823, Jefferson wrote that the other members of the committee “unanimously pressed on myself alone to undertake the draught [sic]. I consented; I drew it; but before I reported it to the committee I communicated it separately to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams requesting their corrections. . . I then wrote a fair copy, reported it to the committee, and from them, unaltered to the Congress.” (If Jefferson did make a “fair copy,” incorporating the changes made by Franklin and Adams, it has not been preserved. It may have been the copy that was amended by the Congress and used for printing, but in any case, it has not survived. Jefferson’s rough draft, however, with changes made by Franklin and Adams, as well as Jefferson’s own notes of changes by the Congress, is housed at the Library of Congress.)

Jefferson’s account reflects three stages in the life of the Declaration: the document originally written by Jefferson; the changes to that document made by Franklin and Adams, resulting in the version that was submitted by the Committee of Five to the Congress; and the version that was eventually adopted.

On July 1, 1776, Congress reconvened. The following day, the Lee Resolution for Independence was adopted by 12 of the 13 colonies, New York not voting. Immediately afterward, the Congress began to consider the Declaration. Adams and Franklin had made only a few changes before the committee submitted the document. The discussion in Congress resulted in some alterations and deletions, but the basic document remained Jefferson’s. The process of revision continued through all of July 3 and into the late morning of July 4. The Declaration had been officially adopted.

The Declaration of Independence is made up of five distinct parts: the introduction; the preamble; the body, which can be divided into two sections; and a conclusion. The introduction states that this document will “declare” the “causes” that have made it necessary for the American colonies to leave the British Empire. Having stated in the introduction that independence is unavoidable, even necessary, the preamble sets out principles that were already recognized to be “self-evident” by most 18th century Englishmen, closing with the statement that “a long train of abuses and usurpations . . . evinces a design to reduce [a people] under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.” The first section of the body of the Declaration gives evidence of the “long train of abuses and usurpations” heaped upon the colonists by King George III. The second section of the body states that the



Thomas Jefferson

colonists had appealed in vain to their “British brethren” for a redress of their grievances. Having stated the conditions that made independence necessary and having shown that those conditions existed in British North America, the Declaration concludes that “these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved.”

Although Congress had adopted the Declaration submitted by the Committee of Five, the committee’s task was not yet completed. Congress had also directed that the committee supervise the printing of the adopted document. The first printed copies of the Declaration of Independence were turned out from the shop of John Dunlap, official printer to the Congress. After the Declaration had been adopted, the committee took to Dunlap the manuscript document, possibly Jefferson’s “fair copy” of his rough draft. On the morning of July 5, copies were dispatched by members of Congress to various assemblies, conventions, and committees of safety as well as to the commanders of Continental troops. Also on July 5, a copy of the printed version of the approved Declaration was inserted into the “rough journal” of the Continental Congress for July 4. The text was followed by the words “Signed by Order and in Behalf of the Congress, John Hancock, President. Attest. Charles Thomson, Secretary.” It is not known how many copies John Dunlap printed on his busy night of July 4. There are 26 copies known to exist of what is commonly referred to as “the Dunlap broadside,” 21 owned by American institutions, two by British institutions, and three by private owners.

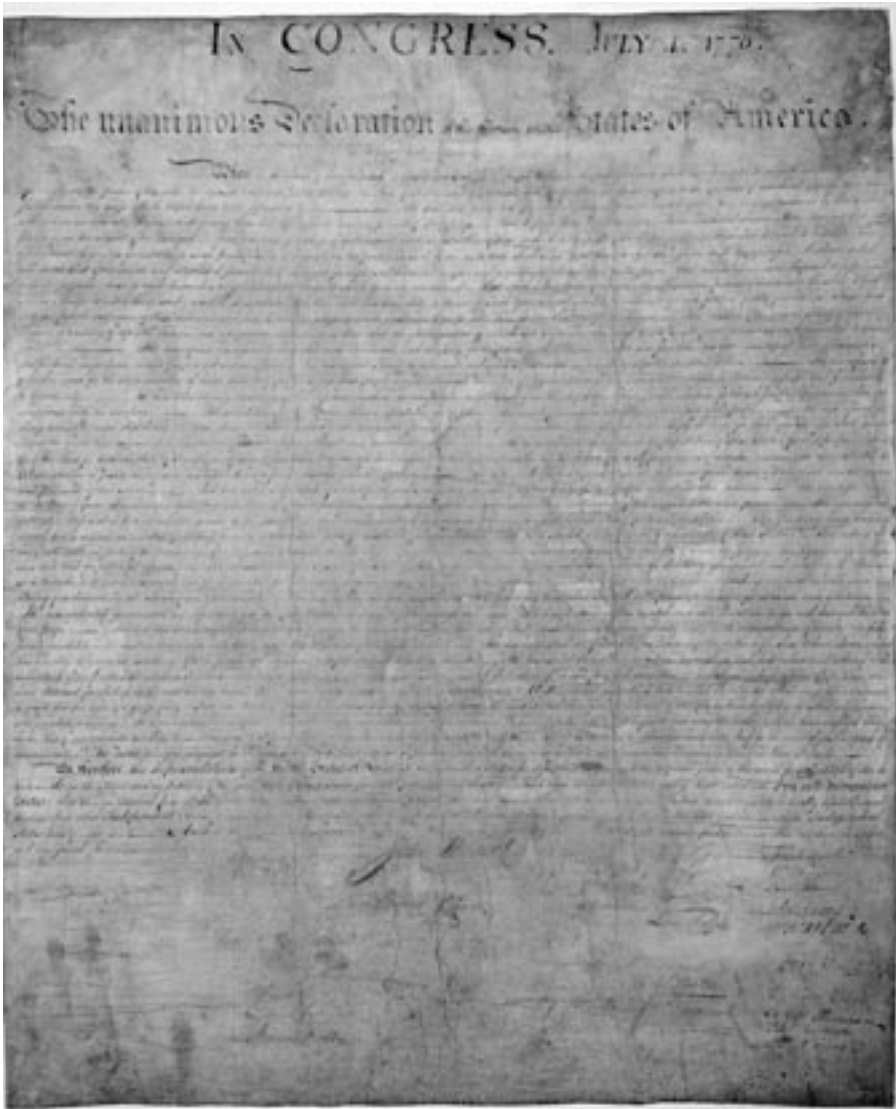
<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-history>

56 Signatures, One Revolution

On July 4, 1776, representatives from the 13 colonies gathered in Philadelphia to declare independence from Great Britain. The Continental Congress had voted two days earlier to make the break and to write a Declaration of Independence.

John Hancock signed the Declaration first on that fourth of July. Many of the others signed over the ensuing days and weeks. Their signatures — 56 names added to the official parchment copy — transformed a revolutionary decision into a public pledge.

Declaration of Independence



<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration>
<https://stories.state.gov/declaration-of-independence/>

These are the names of the people who signed the document:

John Hancock
Samuel Adams
John Adams
Robert Treat Paine
Elbridge Gerry
Josiah Bartlett
William Whipple
Matthew Thornton
Stephen Hopkins
William Ellery
Roger Sherman
Samuel Huntington
William Williams
Oliver Wolcott
William Floyd
Philip Livingston
Francis Lewis
Lewis Morris
Richard Stockton
John Witherspoon
Francis Hopkinson
John Hart
Abraham Clark
Robert Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benjamin Franklin
John Morton
George Clymer
James Smith
George Taylor
James Wilson
George Ross
Caesar Rodney
George Read
Thomas McKean
Samuel Chase
William Paca
Thomas Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton
George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Thomas Jefferson
Benjamin Harrison
Thomas Nelson Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carter Braxton
William Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn
Edward Rutledge
Thomas Heyward Jr.
Thomas Lynch Jr.

The Declaration's Early Travels

Once the Declaration was signed, the document probably accompanied the Continental Congress as that body traveled during the uncertain months and years of the Revolution. Initially, like other parchment documents of the time, the Declaration was probably stored in a rolled format. Each time the document was used, it would have been unrolled and re-rolled. This action, as well as holding the curled parchment flat, doubtless took its toll on the ink and on the parchment surface through abrasion and flexing. The acidity inherent in the iron gall ink used by Timothy Matlack allowed the ink to “bite” into the surface of the parchment, thus contributing to the ink’s longevity, but the rolling and unrolling of the parchment still presented many hazards.

After the signing ceremony on August 2, 1776, the Declaration was most likely filed in Philadelphia in the office of Charles Thomson, who served as the Secretary of the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1789. On December 12, threatened by the British, Congress adjourned and reconvened eight days later in Baltimore, Maryland. A light wagon carried the Declaration to its new home, where it remained until its return to Philadelphia in March of 1777.

On January 18, 1777, while the Declaration was still in Baltimore, Congress, bolstered by military successes at Trenton and Princeton, ordered the second official printing of the document. The July 4 printing had included only the names of John Hancock and Charles Thomson, and even though the first printing had been promptly circulated to the states, the names of subsequent signers were kept secret for a time because of fear of British reprisals. By its order of January 18, however, Congress required that “an authentic copy of the Declaration of Independency, with the names of the members of Congress subscribing to the same, be sent to each of the United States, and that they be desired to have the same put upon record.” The “authentic copy” was duly printed, complete with signers’ names, by Mary Katherine Goddard in Baltimore.

Assuming that the Declaration moved with the Congress, it would have been back in Philadelphia from March to September 1777. On September 27, it would have moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, for one day only. From September 30, 1777, through June 1778, the Declaration would have been kept in the courthouse at York, Pennsylvania. From July 1778 to June 1783, it would have had a long stay back in Philadelphia. In 1783, it would have been at Princeton, New Jersey, from June to November, and then, after the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the Declaration would have been moved to Annapolis, Maryland, where it stayed until October 1784. For the months of November and December 1784, it would have been at Trenton, New Jersey. Then in 1785, when Congress met in New York, the Declaration was housed in the old New York City Hall, where it probably remained until 1790 (although when Pierre L'Enfant was remodeling the building

for the convening of the First Federal Congress, it might have been temporarily removed).

In July 1789, the First Congress under the new Constitution created the Department of Foreign Affairs and directed that its Secretary should have “the custody and charge of all records, books and papers” kept by the department of the same name under the old government. On July 24, Charles Thomson retired as Secretary of the Congress and, upon the order of President George Washington, surrendered the Declaration to Roger Alden, Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs. In September 1789, the name of the department was changed to the Department of State. Thomas Jefferson, the drafter of the Declaration, returned from France to assume his duties as the first Secretary of State in March of 1790. Appropriately, those duties now included custody of the Declaration.

In July 1790, Congress provided for a permanent capital to be built among the woodlands and swamps bordering the Potomac River. Meanwhile, the temporary seat of government was to return to Philadelphia. Congress also provided that “prior to the first Monday in December next, all offices attached to the seat of the government of the United States” should be removed to Philadelphia. The Declaration was therefore back in Philadelphia by the close of 1790. It was housed in various buildings - on Market Street, at Arch and Sixth, and at Fifth and Chestnut.

In 1800, by direction of President John Adams, the Declaration and other government records were moved from Philadelphia to the new federal capital now rising in the District of Columbia. To reach its new home, the Declaration traveled down the Delaware River and Bay, out into the ocean, into the Chesapeake Bay, and up the Potomac to Washington, completing its longest water journey.

For about two months the Declaration was housed in buildings built for the use of the Treasury Department. For the next year, it was housed in one of the “Seven Buildings” then standing at 19th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Its third home before 1814 was in the old War Office Building on 17th Street.

In August 1814, the United States being again at war with Great Britain, a British fleet appeared in the Chesapeake Bay. Secretary of State James Monroe rode out to observe the landing of British forces along the Patuxent River in Maryland. A message from Monroe alerted State Department officials, in particular a clerk named Stephen Pleasonton, of the imminent threat to the capital city and, of course, the government’s official records. Pleasonton “proceeded to purchase coarse linen, and cause it to be made into bags of convenient size, in which the gentlemen of the office” packed the precious books and records including the Declaration.

Continued on page 12.

The Declaration's Early Travels

A cartload of records was then taken up the Potomac River to an unused gristmill belonging to Edgar Patterson. The structure was located on the Virginia side of the Potomac, about two miles upstream from Georgetown. Here, the Declaration and the other records remained, probably overnight.

On August 24, the day of the British attack on Washington, the Declaration was on its way to Leesburg, Virginia. That evening, while the White House and other government buildings were burning, the Declaration was stored 35 miles away

at Leesburg.

The Declaration remained safe at a private home in Leesburg for an interval of several weeks - in fact, until the British had withdrawn their troops from Washington and their fleet from the Chesapeake Bay. In September 1814, the Declaration was returned to the national capital. With the exception of a trip to Philadelphia for the Centennial and to Fort Knox during World War II, it has remained there ever since.

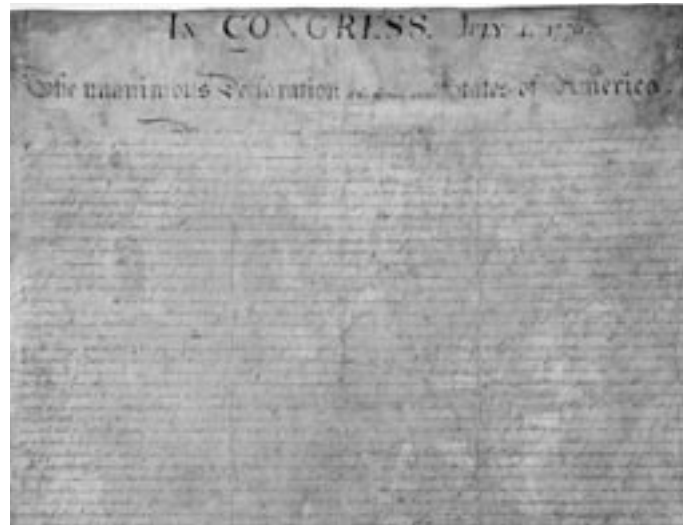
Physical Condition

One factor that had no small effect on the physical condition of the Declaration was recognized as interest in reproductions of the Declaration increased as the nation grew. Two early facsimile printings of the Declaration were made during the second decade of the 19th century: those of Benjamin Owen Tyler (1818) and John Binns (1819). Both facsimiles used decorative and ornamental elements to enhance the text of the Declaration. Richard Rush, who was Acting Secretary of State in 1817, remarked on September 10 of that year about the Tyler copy: "The foregoing copy of the Declaration of Independence has been collated with the original instrument and found correct. I have myself examined the signatures to each. Those executed by Mr. Tyler, are curiously exact imitations, so much so, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the closest scrutiny to distinguish them, were it not for the hand of time, from the originals." Rush's reference to "the hand of time" suggests that the signatures were already fading in 1817, only 40 years after they were first affixed to the parchment.

One later theory as to why the Declaration was aging so soon after its creation stems from the common 18th-century practice of taking "press copies." Press copies were made by placing a damp sheet of thin paper on a manuscript and pressing it until a portion of the ink was transferred. The thin paper copy was retained in the same manner as a modern carbon copy. The ink was reimposed on a copper plate, which was then etched so that copies could be run off the plate on a press. This "wet transfer" method may have been used by William J. Stone when in 1820 he was commissioned by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams to make a facsimile of the entire Declaration, signatures as well as text. By June 5, 1823, almost exactly 47 years after Jefferson's first draft of the Declaration, the (Washington) National Intelligencer was able to report "that Mr. William J. Stone, a respectable and enterprising Engraver of this City, has, after a labor of three years, completed a facsimile of the original of the Declaration of Independence, now in the archives of the government; that it is executed with the greatest exactness and fidelity; and that the Department of State has become the purchaser of the plate."

As the Intelligencer went on to observe: "We are very glad to hear this, for the original of that paper which ought to be immortal and imperishable, by being so much handled by copyists and curious visitors, might receive serious injury. The facility of multiplying copies of it now possessed by the Department of State will render further exposure of the original unnecessary." The language of the newspaper report, like that of Rush's earlier comment, would seem to indicate some fear of the deterioration of the Declaration even prior to Stone's work.

The copies made from Stone's copperplate established the clear visual image of the Declaration for generations of Americans. The 200 official parchment copies struck from the Stone plate carry the identification "Engraved by W. J. Stone for the Department of State, by order" in the upper left corner followed by "of J. Q. Adams, Sec. of State July 4th 1823." in the upper right corner. "Unofficial" copies that were struck later do not have the identification at the top of the document. Instead, the engraver identified his work by engraving "W. J. Stone SC. Washn." near the lower left corner and burnishing out the earlier identification.



<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-history>

Celebrate Independence: Six Savvy Ways to Ensure Grilling Success This Summer

(Feature Impact) There's just something timeless about a summer cookout with friends, family, or neighbors. Whether it's the sound of burgers sizzling on the grill or the smell of your favorite seasonal sides, the event invokes nostalgia and camaraderie.

While the spotlight may land on the burgers and barbecued fare, seasoned grill masters know the supporting cast matters, too. Makers of soft, delicious hamburger and hot dog buns fit to be the foundation of summer gatherings for more than 100 years, the bun experts at Wonder suggest a few ways to ensure your entertaining ventures are successful throughout the season.

Do What You Can Ahead of Time

Stick to a mix of easy favorites and make-ahead sides to keep prep manageable while offering something for everyone to enjoy. When possible, prep ahead of time so you can keep your focus on the fun and your attention on the hot grill. Chop vegetables, wash lettuce for burgers, make sure you have picked out the perfect buns, form and season beef patties and mix marinades the day before the big bash to avoid last-minute rushes around the kitchen.

Prep the Grill

Patience is key when it comes to grilling, as a properly heated grill is the foundation for good cooking. Give gas grills enough time to come to temperature, around 10-15 minutes, and allow charcoal to ash over completely. When grilling different types of food, it's especially helpful to set up cooking zones – direct and indirect – so you can cook meat, veggies and buns differently or move finished food to one side, as needed.

Additionally, to help prevent sticking, lightly oil the clean grill grates before cooking. Using tongs and a paper towel dipped in oil is often more effective than coating foods with oil.

Use a Meat Thermometer

You may be a seasoned grill master, but guesswork can lead to mistakes, especially when cooking for a crowd. Avoid overcooked (or worse, undercooked) chicken and burgers by using an instant-read thermometer to help ensure meat is cooked safely while retaining its juicy flavor.

Grill Buns Correctly

Burgers and hot dogs are classics for a reason, but avoiding soggy buns and mid-bite fallout requires the right bun for the job. Striking the perfect balance of pillowy softness with the structure to hold their shape through every loaded topping, condiment, and bite is key when choosing the right bun for the job. More than just a vehicle for grilled favorites, Wonder Classic Hamburger and Hot Dog Buns are a familiar taste that

makes cookouts delicious and have held it together, literally and figuratively, for more than a century. In continuing its longstanding partnership with the USO through the annual Deploy the Joy campaign, you can keep an eye out through September 12 for special packaging on select products with scannable QR codes for a chance to win a \$10,000 Birthday Bash.

For great grilled buns, follow a few easy steps:

1. Brush cut sides of buns with softened butter, mayo, or both to help the bun brown evenly.
2. Lightly salt the buttered side before grilling.
3. During the last 2 minutes of cooking burgers or dogs, place buns cut-side down over medium-low heat for 30-60 seconds. Look for a light golden toast, crisp enough to hold up.

Let Food Rest Before Serving

After grilling, give meat a few minutes to rest before serving or slicing. This allows juices to redistribute throughout the food for better texture and flavor.

Layer Burgers, Condiments and Toppings

After toasting buns, add a thin layer of sauce to coat the bun then lettuce that's been patted dry to remove moisture. Add cheese to the opposite bun and be sure to place the burger and other toppings in the center to keep moisture away from the bread, preventing sogginess.



From simple, practical menus to crave-worthy twists on classics, you can find more ways to host a successful summer barbecue by visiting WonderBread.com/recipes.

Photo courtesy of Shutterstock (grilling hamburgers)

Celebrate Independence: Easy Backyard Recipe Featuring Fresh Corn

(Feature Impact) Whether you're grilling in the backyard, at a picnic, or simply relaxing poolside to celebrate America's 250th anniversary, this summer is sure to be filled with special celebrations. Throughout those 250 years, food has brought people together – and continues to do so.

From barbecues to patios, fresh foods are at the heart of American celebrations. Healthy, fresh ingredients help elevate classic recipes with sweet corn taking center stage in many iconic summer dishes.

While corn on its own is a classic side dish – with Americans consuming approximately 1.4 billion bushels per year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture – you can put a twist on tradition by serving Elote, also known as Mexican street corn, as a bold and delicious way to enjoy fresh corn at its best. Cooked to perfection then slathered in a creamy, zesty mix of mayonnaise, lime juice, cheese, and chili powder, Elote transforms a simple ear of corn into an irresistible snack or side.

You can add its vibrant flavor and fun to your table with a number of easy cooking methods:

- **Grill:** For the traditional method of cooking Elote, preheat your grill to medium-high heat. Place the corn directly on the grill grates then cook 10-15 minutes, turning every 2-3 minutes until nicely charred and cooked through.
- **Boil:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add corn and cook 5-7 minutes until tender.
- **Roast:** Preheat the oven to 400 F. Place corn on a baking sheet and roast 20-25 minutes, turning halfway through.
- **Air Fryer:** Preheat the air fryer to 400 F. Cook corn for 12-15 minutes, turning once.



Easy Elote Corn

Recipe courtesy of The Produce Moms on behalf of Duda Farm Fresh Foods

- 1 Dandy Sweet Corn Tray (4 count)
- 1 lime, juice only (about 2 tablespoons)
- 1 cup mayonnaise or Mexican crema
- 2 tablespoons Elote seasoning
- 1 cup cotija cheese, crumbled
- fresh cilantro, chopped, for garnish
- hot sauce or chili powder (optional)

Heat grill to medium-high heat.

Place corn directly on grates and cook 10-15 minutes, turning every 2-3 minutes, until charred and cooked through.

While corn is still warm, squeeze lime juice on all sides. Brush or spoon mayonnaise on each ear, ensuring all sides are coated.

Evenly sprinkle Elote seasoning over coated corn. Using hands, gently press seasoning into mayo.

Arrange Elote on serving platter, sprinkle with cotija cheese and garnish with fresh chopped cilantro. Serve with hot sauce or chili powder for extra heat, if desired.

Visit DudaFresh.com to find more ways to elevate your patriotic celebrations.

MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Judy Vondracek

Lodge Prokop Velky No. 137 Cedar Rapids, Iowa – Our member spotlight is Judy Vondracek. Judy's connection to our lodge runs deep, beginning in childhood when either her grandparents or her parents bought her a policy. She became a very active member after her father, Joseph Vondracek II, passed away. He asked his children to continue his active memberships in various Czech organizations. Judy accepted the challenge and is the President of Sokol Cedar Rapids Gymnastic & Fitness Center, the Alternate President for CSA Lodge Prokop Velky, the President of the Czech School of Cedar Rapids, a Board Member for the First Federal Community Credit Union, a Board Member for the Czech Heritage Foundation, and she volunteers for the St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus. She has also participated in Egg Decorating Classes at the National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library. Judy provides the float for the Houby Days parade, decorates it, and decommissions it each year. It is no wonder she was nominated and placed second for the CSA Fraternalist of the Year in 2016.

In addition to all her volunteer work, Judy also works full time as a rural carrier for the United States Postal Service. She plans to retire in the next 10 months after over 25 years of service.

Like many Czech families in Cedar Rapids, Judy's family was sponsored to come to the United States by the meat pack-

ing businesses in Cedar Rapids. Her grandmother worked for Stusak's Meat Market and met her grandfather at the meat packing plant. She remembers going to businesses in Czech Village and "on the Avenue" including Coast to Coast, the ice cream shop, Ulrich's Meat Market, Bartunek's Maytag Home Appliance Center, and her uncle, Lumir Vindracek, had the 16th Avenue Meat Market. He was also a founding merchant of the Czech Village Association.

Judy's family has been a fixture in the Czech Village and Judy has worked in many capacities for these businesses. This includes the Meat Market on 3rd Street, Blimpie Subs and Salads on 1st Avenue, and Sign Tech of Iowa. During the 12 years she worked at Sign Tech, Judy spent her lunch hours helping her family with the rush hour lunch crowd at Blimpie Subs and Salads.

Many of these businesses were impacted by the Flood of 2008. Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, Iowa faced catastrophic damage when the Cedar and Iowa Rivers shattered 500-year flood records. The entire area was devastated. Judy's father had passed by this time and her mother, Jean Marie (Bennett) Vondracek, had retired. So Judy's family decided not to rebuild Blimpie's or the rental properties they owned in the area. Her family has continued their entrepreneurial spirit and owns other businesses in the area.

Judy's brother, Joseph Vondracek III, lives in Robins, Iowa and has two daughters, Lauren and Mia. Judy's sister Joanne Ulch lives in Solon, Iowa and has one daughter and two sons, Evan, Owen, and Ethan. Her other sister, Janice Bishop, lives in Mt. Vernon, Iowa and has two stepchildren, Eva and John Jr. The three sisters live within 10 miles of each other and Joseph is only about 30-45 minutes away. Attending the activities of her nephews and nieces keeps Judy very busy.

In the late 1970's, when Judy was in high school, she and several family members spent 12 weeks in the Czech Republic. Four

weeks were spent visiting relatives living in the Czech Republic, mostly in and around Prague, and the other eight weeks were spent touring the Czech Republic. She remembers being cautioned to be very quiet and respectful. This was a much different culture than being a rambunctious American teenager. While sharing stories and history, they learned how hard it was for Judy's grandmother to get out of the country as the Russians were invading. It was a very interesting visit and one she will always remember. Judy still has relatives living in the Czech Republic.

Judy has lived in and around the Czech Village her whole life. She attended All Saints Parish School and later, Regis Catholic High School. She and her sister walked from All Saints to Sokols for gymnastics class. Sokol is a Czech social and gymnastics organization with a 150-year history in Cedar Rapids built on the Czech philosophy of "a strong mind in a sound body." It is a holistic approach to fitness, culture, and community.

Judy was very active in sports through school and Sokols. She reached Level 3 in gymnastics before shifting her concentration to sports and activities through school. As the President of Sokol Cedar Rapids Gymnastics and Fitness Center, Judy said she enjoys continuing the program for the children. She participates in and arranges the club's participation in slets as well as gymnastic meets and AAU tournaments. Slets are both a competition and a show and are held throughout the world. It is a mass gymnastics festival and cultural gathering that serves as the ultimate expression of the Sokol movement, a gathering that unites participants for a common purpose. Judy has been involved in slets in Nebraska and Illinois. The focus of Sokol is not on competition but on fun and fitness. A healthy mind and body through physical fitness. It is not just a slogan; it is a way of life.



MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Judy Vondracek

When asked how she can be involved in so many activities, Judy said she likes the people. Many of Judy's volunteer activities blend together. The CSA meetings are held at the Sokol Cedar Rapids Gymnastics and Fitness Center building. The Czech Heritage Foundation sponsors Houby Days. Judy prepares the float, CSA members ride on the float, and Czech School and Sokol Cedar Rapids gymnasts hand out candy during the parade.

In addition to her full-time position with the Post Office and her volunteer activities, Judy also enjoys animals and her life on her acreage. She said she always wanted to be in the Wild West, so she moved to the country! She has four horses – two foals arrived just recently. Judy has loved riding horses since she was a child. Whenever she was near the horses, she would jump on their back and ride bareback. Her grandfather could see her passion and purchased her first horse for her. When she was in her 20's, she would clean stalls and help set up trail rides so she could board her horses at Vern Upmier's Stables. She also enjoys participating in horse show games. The games are often held before the horse show begins. Examples of horse show games include riding a horse with an egg on a spoon in your mouth while maneuvering and guiding one's horse around various obstacles including barrels. Don't drop the egg! Another activity was to have two riders on the horse. The rider with the reins would steer the horse to a tire hanging on a rope, similar to a tire swing, while the second rider would climb off the horse, onto the tire, and sit on it. The horse and first rider complete various skills and obstacles before returning to pick up the second rider from their position on the tire. It may be like a tire swing, but it is much more difficult!

One of Judy's friends broke horses. They often purchased horses at a horse auction in Kalona, Iowa. Sometimes these horses hadn't been broken for riders or possibly were mistreated and afraid of humans. They would work with the horses and a whole group, maybe seven or eight of them, would ride the horses from Upmier's Stable to a bar in Shueyville, Iowa. This would help the horses familiarize themselves with having a rider, walking on gravel, being around people and other horses, as well as the sights and sound of town, including car noises. This was such a common occurrence the bar in Shueyville put up a horse rail to tether the horses!

A Department of Natural Resources Park,

600 acres built when the Coralville Reservoir was created, was a great place to ride horses. Judy spent many hours riding on trails throughout the park. The park was separated into areas for horses and areas for motorized vehicles. Judy had an Egyptian Arabian horse named Dinger, these were endurance horses, known for their strength and elegance. She would ride 50 to 75 to 100 miles in a day. She trained Dinger for these rides. She would get up and ride at 4:00 a.m. before work, then go to work at 8:00 a.m. and come back and ride until 1:00 a.m. She and her friends spent many weekends at Vern Upmier's Stables. They would pitch a tent, stay with friends, or sleep in the barn. Weekends full of horses, friends, and fun! She also had Paint and Quarter Horses. They tend to be a bit more laid back than the Arabians.

Judy still enjoys riding horses and will often rent a horse to ride while on vacation. She has ridden on the beaches in Hawaii, at the Garden of the Gods in Colorado, and in Jackson County, Wyoming, just to name a few.

In addition to her love of horses, Judy also attends the Knoxville Nationals in Knoxville, Iowa each year. Knoxville is known internationally as the sprint car capital of the world and Judy has been attending these races since her junior high and high school days.

Judy also vacations in Hawaii each year with a group of 10-14 people from grade school, high school, and college. They attend the Iowa State Fair as a group which makes sampling all the unique food at the Iowa State Fair a little less daunting since they can share portions and pick and piece. Deep fried Twinkies anyone?

She participates in The Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa as part of Team

Budweiser. RAGBRAI is the oldest, largest, and longest recreational bicycle touring event in the world and people come from all over the world to ride in it.

Although she likes to go exploring, we are very grateful Judy has stayed near Czech Village and is a treasured member of Lodge Prokop Velky No. 137. We are proud to call her our friend and fraternal sister!

*Fraternally,
Michelle Nejd*



Bowl-O-Rama Scores

| BOY'S DIVISION AGE 8-11 | | DIVISION #2 | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------|
| NAME | LODGE NAME & # | SCORE | PLACE |
| Colby Breidenbach | Missouri #001 | 264 | 1st |
| BOY'S DIVISION AGE 12-14 | | DIVISION #3 | |
| NAME | LODGE NAME & # | SCORE | PLACE |
| Finn Michalek | Yankee Jungman #077 | 278 | 2nd |
| Reed Michalek | Yankee Jungman #077 | 359 | 1st |
| BOY'S DIVISION AGE 15-17 | | DIVISION #4 | |
| NAME | LODGE NAME & # | SCORE | PLACE |
| Colin Graveen | Yankee Jungman #077 | 497 | 1st |
| Tyler Sullivan | Woodrow Wilson #377 | 328 | 2nd |
| GIRL'S DIVISION AGE 8-11 | | DIVISION #2 | |
| NAME | LODGE NAME & # | SCORE | PLACE |
| Kalani Michalek | Yankee Jungman | 240 | 1st |
| GIRL'S DIVISION AGE 12-14 | | DIVISION #3 | |
| NAME | LODGE NAME & # | SCORE | PLACE |
| Vanessa Graveen | Yankee Jungmann #077 | 272 | 1st |
| | | | |

District Council

The Great Swear In!

District Council No. 10, Northern Ohio and Michigan – Our meeting on May 7 was the Great Swear In! Tony Genco swore in the District Officers: President/Vice President Diane DiBianca, and Treasurer/ Secretary/ Scribe Annette Reichman.

Diane DiBianca swore in the Cleveland Chapter No. 219 Officers: President Freddie Shima, Vice President Sue Garafolo, Treasurer Tony Genco, and Secretary Jan Russell.

Then Tony swore in the Paramount/ Southgate No. 372 Officers: Vice President Annette Reichman, Treasurer Diane DiBianca, and Secretary Kris Marek. President Mary Ann Toncar will

be sworn in at a later date. Congratulations to all!

We are discussing what to do with the money from the Sports Committee; several ideas were brought up.

As there are no District Councils in BetterLife, we have decided to have two meetings (a summer picnic and Christmas luncheon) in 2027, to keep up with our two lodges.

Diane informed us that BetterLife has partnered with Sons of Norway.

Happy January Birthday to Johnny, Mary Ann, and Donna. Annette celebrated in February. Tony's birthday was in March. Freddie and Bruce had April birthdays, and Sue and Karen celebrated

in May.

Tony and Judy celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in May and Diane and Gooley enjoyed an anniversary as well.

Congratulations to the 50/50 winners: Karen and Jan!

Thank you, Diane, for providing the cookies, donuts, and cupcakes for the refreshments.

Our next meeting will be at the DTJ on September 3 at noon.

*Fraternally,
Annette Reichman*

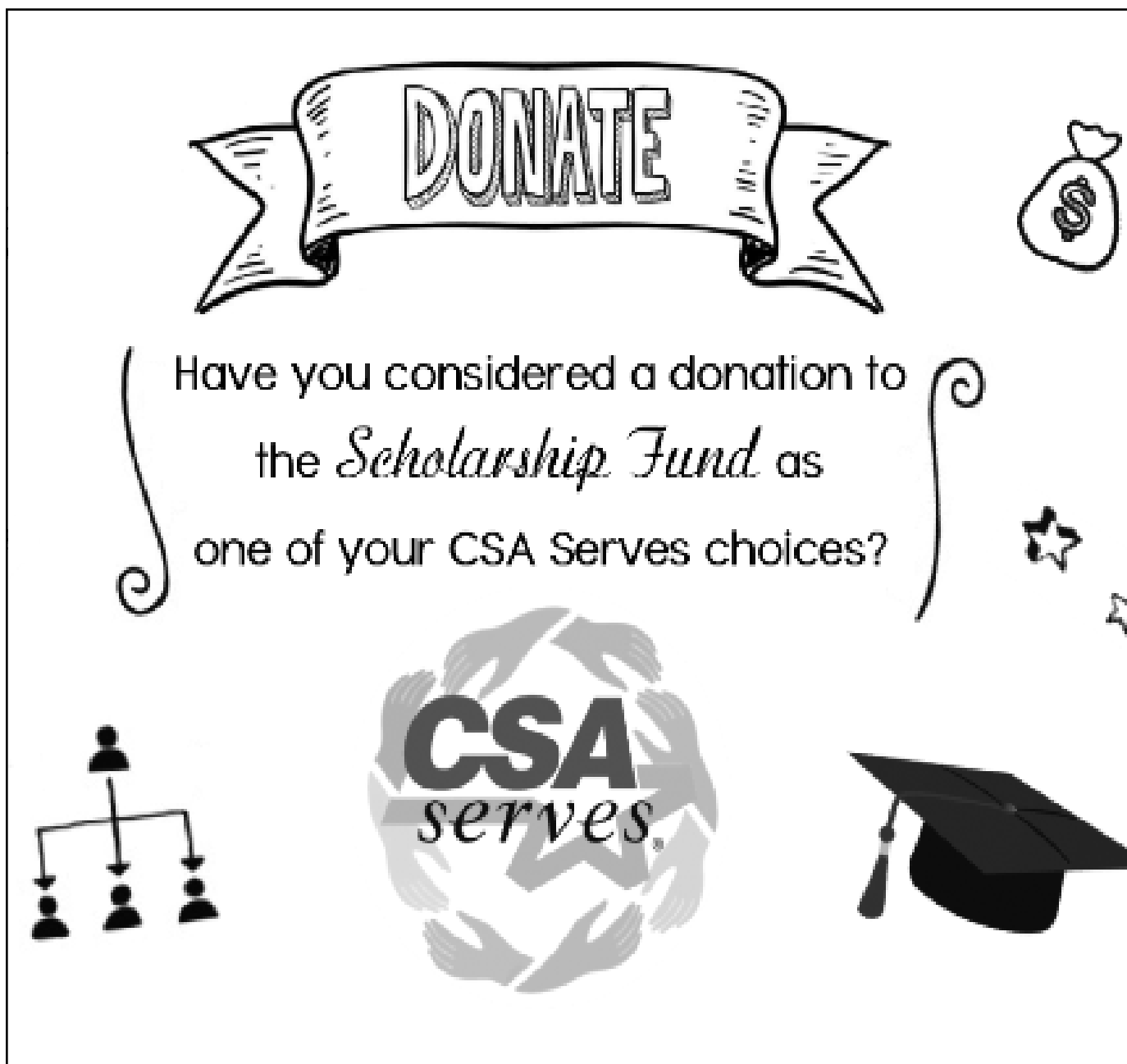
CSA SERVES

CSA SERVES is a lodge activity that encourages support for a local group or organization which fits the criterion of a common topic. The CSA SERVES project allows lodges across the country the option of selecting one or more charities or community agencies to devote their time and/or monetary donations.

As has always been CSA's policy, any monetary donations made by a lodge are matched by 50 percent as well as \$2.50 per volunteer hour.

In the past, lodges have chosen food pantries, helping our military, donating to and volunteering at local schools and libraries, cleaning up parks, planting flowers and trees, and many other good works benefiting their neighborhoods, churches, and schools.

CSA is proud of the dedication of its members and equally proud to partner with them in their efforts.



The graphic features a central banner with the word "DONATE" in bold, block letters. To the right of the banner is a money bag with a dollar sign. Below the banner, the text "Have you considered a donation to the *Scholarship Fund* as one of your CSA Serves choices?" is enclosed in a decorative, curly bracket. To the right of the text are two stars. At the bottom center is the "CSA serves" logo, which consists of the words "CSA" in a bold, sans-serif font and "serves" in a script font, both set against a circular background of hands. To the left of the logo is a simple organizational chart with one person at the top and three people below. To the right of the logo is a graduation cap.

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Come to a Meeting!

Lodge Paramount/Southgate No. 372, Maple Heights, Ohio – Our meeting was on May 28 at the DTJ in Taborville, Ohio. We have been enjoying some great weather here in Ohio; it's been in the 70's, with no humidity!

President Mary Ann Toncar is still sidelined; we miss her, and hope she will be able to attend our meetings soon.

Our small but mighty group: Kris, Bruce, Donna, Johnny, Diane, and I, completed our Join Hands Day by sprucing up the DTJ. We dusted, cleaned, and swept the inside, and Donna got the flower pots outside ready for flowers.

Kris received a thank-you card from the Community Christmas Connection in Nordonia; they had a very good turn

out and helped a lot of people.

The DTJ in Taborville, Ohio will have their Chicken or Duck Dinners July 26, August 23, October 4, and November 1. All dinners require reservations and are served noon to 2 p.m. For reservations, call Kris Marek at (440) 543-8489. Reservations must be in by Wednesday before the dinner. Meet up with friends and have a great meal.

The 103rd Cesky (Czech Day) is July 12 (also at Ceska Sin & Bohemian National Halls). The 92nd Obzinky (Harvest Festival) is August 9; the parade starts at 2 p.m. Both are a \$5 donation with bands playing all day. Where else can you go and have fun for \$5? Food, drinks, and bakery will be

available for sale. For more information, go to their website: www.dtjtaborville.com.

Happy Anniversary to Diane and Gooley!

Congratulations to the 50/50 winners: Johnny, Donna, and Bruce!

Bruce prepped and grilled to perfection our burgers for this month's snack. We also enjoyed pasta and potato salads, baked beans, and chips.

Our meetings for 2026 will be: July 23, August 27, September 24, October 22, November 19, and December 17. We would love to see you! Come to a meeting, reconnect with friends, and have a tasty snack.

*Fraternally,
Annette Reichman*



Scholarship Fund Donation Form

With the price of higher education rapidly increasing, scholarships continue to be an important fraternal benefit. The CSA Scholarship Fund assists young adults, not only with their education, but with their professional goals. We appreciate your generous donations and your continued support!

Fill and send this form with donation. Please make checks payable to CSA Fraternal Life Scholarship Fund.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

For the general Scholarship Fund or In Memory of _____

Send acknowledgement of contribution to _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Donor's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

“ We were delighted to donate \$5,000 from our t-shirt and mug sales to the CSA Scholarship Fund! ”
— the 83rd Annual CSA Get-Together Committee



www.csalife.com



2050 Finley Rd. Ste. 70, P.O. Box 249, Lombard, IL 60148 • Phone: 630-472-0500 • Fax: 630-472-1100

SCHFDONFRM02242020



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Commemorations and Celebrations

Lodge Sokol Pilsen No. 434, Oak Brook, Illinois – On June 7, Lodge Sokol Pilsen held its meeting at Belvedere Banquets, 1170 West Devon Ave., Elk Grove Village, Illinois. It was held here for a dual purpose: our lodge

meeting and a graduation party for our Vice President's grandson, Joseph Pemberton.

The first order of business was discussion on the 89th Annual Get-Together; which is going to be held in

Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We discussed the cost of going to the Get-Together, how long the stay would be, and what was required of lodge members who want to go.

We went over the Memorial Day program at Bohemian National Cemetery and the CSA members' participation. T.G. Masaryk School also participated. Speeches were made by the Czech Council and others. "Taps" was played by Jerry Silhan of Lodge Brookfield. There was also a color guard provided by the U. S. Military. It was a great program that the cemetery held.

We also discussed the 75th Anniversary of St. Cletus Church in LaGrange, Illinois. Cardinal Cupich said mass at 5 o'clock on June 6, 2026. Sokol Pilsen President Andrew Bultas participated in the well-attended mass.

After all the discussion was over, the party for Joe began. The party was great and everyone had a great time.

*Fraternally,
Andrew Bultas*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

250 Years: 1776 - 2026!

Lodge Kruh Osvojenych Zen a Panu No. 121, Dillonvale, Ohio – As we celebrate Independence Day this July, Americans across the nation will gather with family and friends for picnics, parades, fireworks, and community festivities. July 4th marks the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, when the thirteen colonies declared their freedom from British rule and laid the foundation for the United States of America.

In 2026, our nation commemorates its 250th birthday—a remarkable milestone known as the semi quincentennial. This historic anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on the courage, sacrifice, and vision of our nation’s founders, while also celebrating the freedoms and opportunities we enjoy today.

Members of Lodge No. 121 continue to demonstrate the fraternal spirit through volunteer service within our local communities and churches. Throughout the year, members have generously donated countless hours assisting with church maintenance and cleanup projects, preparing and serving church dinners, providing music for worship services, ushering during services, and contributing both labor and food donations for funeral dinners. These acts of kindness and service help strengthen our communities and reflect the values upon which our organization was founded. We continue to seek additional opportunities to serve and make a positive difference wherever a need exists.

We would like to extend our warmest wishes to everyone attending the BetterLife/CSA gathering in Wisconsin later this summer. While our members are unable to attend this year’s event, we will certainly be with you in spirit. We hope you enjoy a wonderful weekend filled with friendship, fellowship, memorable activities, and beautiful weather. May the gathering provide many opportunities to reconnect with old friends and create lasting memories.

As we observe Independence Day and our nation’s 250th Anniversary, we are reminded that freedom carries with it both privileges and responsibilities. The strength of our country has always depended upon citizens who serve others, support their communities, and work together for the common good. May this special Independence Day inspire us to appreciate the blessings we enjoy, honor those who came before us,

and continue building stronger communities through service, kindness, and fellowship. We wish everyone a safe, happy, and meaningful Fourth of July.

Remember to check on someone you love today.

*Fraternally,
Sister Wendy Kurtz Lovell*



As we commemorate America's 250th, we remember Guide/Sentry Charles "Chuck" Ebright, proud member of the American Legion Post #529 of Dillonvale, Ohio. See the In Memoriam article on page 30 for additional information about Bro. Ebright.

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Jerry Silhan Plays “Taps”

Lodge Brookfield No. 475, Brookfield, Illinois – We held our May meeting at BetterLife headquarters in Lombard. Following the meeting, we all enjoyed light refreshments and a rousing game of Left-Right-Center. Joyce Nemecek was the lucky winner.

Not only is late May the unofficial start of summer but it is also a time when people observe Memorial Day to remember and honor the veterans of the United States armed forces. Each year for many decades, a beautiful ceremony is conducted at the historic Bohemian National Cemetery in Chicago. This year, Lodge Brookfield member, Jerry Silhan, had the honor of playing “Taps” for the assembly and also at the Odd Fellows monument. He joked that four years of high school marching band really came in handy.

*Fraternally,
Kimberly Silhan*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Train Trip

Lodge Cleveland Chapter No. 219, Cleveland, Ohio – We had a lovely lunch/quick meeting at the Longhorn restaurant on June 9, 2026. Twelve members and one guest attended. That guest was Joan Sapp's daughter, Denise, who is going to join our lodge. Yay! We were all so glad to see Joan. Welcome back, Joanie!

We celebrated Mother's and Father's Days at the restaurant. We also celebrated June Karecki's and Jan Russell's June birthdays, by singing "Happy Birthday". Jan provided us with yummy birthday cupcakes for dessert. Thanks, Jan!

Carol Schroeder handed out fliers for our train ride on July 8. Be at the train station by 8:30 a.m. The train leaves

promptly at 9:00 a.m. The train waits for no one!

Our July meeting will be on the train.

We will go to the Winking Lizard Restaurant after the train ride.

On August 11, we will meet at the new Parma Heights Library at 10:30 a.m. We are to bring items for our charity, Community of Hope. We will have a list of items that they need at the "train" meeting.

The pork/chicken dinners at the Sokol building will be on September 23 and October 28. They are now \$18.00.

Jan Russell handed out three "Thank a Driver" certificates to our members. They will hand them out to some worthy drivers.

Jan's son, Kurt, married his sweetheart on June 6. It was a lovely wedding.

Tony and Judy went on a lovely

Mediterranean cruise for 10 days for their 50th wedding anniversary. They traveled with many family members and friends and saw many countries. It was a trip to always be remembered.

We're looking forward to our trip on the train, thanks to Carol Schroeder for arranging it.

Stay well, everyone, and have a wonderful summer.

*Fraternally yours,
Judy (Sevcik) Genco*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Happy Moms and Dads!

Lodge DuPage Pioneers/Edison No. 409, Lombard, Illinois – Lodge No. 409 held its annual Mother’s and Father’s Day lunch on June 10 at Grand Dukes Restaurant in Downers Grove. Thirteen members, plus District Council No. 12 President Ken Dvorsky, gathered on a hot, cloudy day to celebrate, break bread, and enjoy the camaraderie of our lodge brothers and sisters. President Linda Burton called a short meeting to order, greeted members, and asked for a motion to waive business until July. Motion was passed and members proceeded with the business of reading the menu of various Lithuanian ethnic dishes and delicacies, asking questions, and finally placing their orders.

There were so many funny stories of personal events, lodge history, discussions of BetterLife, descriptions of vaca-

tions past and present, family highlights, entertainment venues, and planned future activities for fun. Dale Burton celebrated a birthday. The talk and laughs were the hallmark of the day.

The Cervenka brothers, Ed and Anthony, asked members to sign a birthday card to their aunt, long-time member Martha Cervenka, and offer well wishes for another year. They distributed flags for our nation’s 250th anniversary along with treasures from their garden and various choices of bread loaves. Thank you, Ed and Anthony! You’re always so generous!

Bro. Ken reminded us the Sunky will be at the Hospitality Suite at the Get-Together. So don’t forget to make a small donation for a Sunky Pin, enjoy refreshments, and perhaps a little sip of Becherovka and/or Slivovitz deftly

poured by Bro “Uncle” Andy Bultas of Lodge Sokol Pilsen.

Finally, in recognition of the generous gift from John and Joann Nekolny, we toasted our thanks and wished them well. Officers Linda and Dale Burton and Gerri Romanelli delivered dinners to the Nekolny’s home. It was so good to see them after a long absence. John and Joann spoke with love and pride of their grandchildren’s academic accomplishments and career goals. Too, they were eager for updates on members and the various lodge chatter at the beautiful lunch they provided.

We will hold a brief meeting on July 13 and then on to the Get-Together!

Fraternally,
Gerri Romanelli



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Mr. D's Musical Legacy

Lodge Woodrow Wilson No. 377, Brookfield, Illinois – Our June meeting was a good chance to catch up with members about their own news, while enjoying a bounty of tasty treats provided by Jan DeValk. There were updates on Jan's family in North Carolina from her visit celebrating special events with them; current photos of Anna Ramirez's granddaughter Isla; news about Chris Laukant from my own visit to Utah; and just general updates on "how's everyone doing?"

The biggest news, though, comes from our member fondly known as "Mr. D." Otto Dolansky recently has been honored to have his original compositions featured at events in our Czech community. "Bless the USA", written for our country's 250th anniversary, was presented as the closing number of the Memorial Day tribute at Bohemian National Cemetery in Chicago; while "Elegy for Lidice" was shared during the wreath presentation at the Lidice Commemoration in Crest Hill, Illinois.

The organizers of the Lidice program were so moved that they plan to make his song a continuing tradition at each year's commemoration ceremony going forward, so Otto's legacy is secured! Anna Ramirez served as Mr. D's "sound crew" for the public debut of both pieces, and she even wrote the lyrics for the Elegy song. We're working on trying to get the songs posted on our Facebook page so that everyone will be able to enjoy and appreciate these tribute compositions; watch that space for an update soon!

Wishing everyone a safe and fun summer, doing all that you enjoy in the coming months; and hoping to hear from you about your own updates to share with us.

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



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Lidice Commemoration Held

Lodge Century of Progress/Bila Hora No. 231, Cicero, Illinois – Our lodge members met on June 10, 2026 at P.J. Klems. The venue changed because we were celebrating both Mother’s and Father’s Day. Following the usual protocol, a discussion ensued regarding thank-you communications received from organizations receiving donations from our lodge.

Raffle tickets and a quarter-page ad for the Annual Get-Together were purchased.

A District Council No. 12 meeting was held June 11, 2026.

Much of the conversation centered on the Lidice Commemoration held on June 7, 2026 at the Lidice Memorial Park in Crest Hill, Illinois. Our group gave particular attention to the young lady dressed in the Czech kroj who is learning the language. She is a member of the T.G. Masaryk School in

Cicero, Illinois. The children in the photo gave speeches on freedom and the history of Lidice, and she gave her presentation in Czech! Comments about the ceremony by our members were that the program was “very nice.”

Our meetings are generally held at the T.G. Masaryk School on the second Wednesday of the month at 12:30 p.m. 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*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

BetterLife Gets Approval to Sell in Pennsylvania

Lodge Groveton No. 4, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania – Hello, Brothers and Sisters, and happy summer to all! We hope all the mothers, fathers, and parent-like figures were well celebrated over the last couple of months. We also hope all graduates were celebrated, as they have much to look forward to!

Cheyenne Parker Smith was one of those high school graduates. She graduated from Milford High School in Milford, Delaware. Cheyenne will likely pursue a career in cosmetology. Cheyenne is the daughter of Krystle Roosa and the granddaughter of Mickey and Tammy Lewicki. Congratulations, Cheyenne, we are so proud of you! Cheyenne will have two graduation parties to celebrate, one in Delaware and one in Pennsylvania.

Lodge Groveton's May and June meetings were held in-person at Groveton Firehall. We were happy to hear that BetterLife has received approval to sell insurance in Pennsylvania. In addition, the lodge is thrilled to welcome Sons of Norway to activities! The lodge will also have representation at the 2026 Get-Together in Milwaukee. We voted to purchase a half-page ad for the registration booklet, as well as raffle tickets. We will have to decide what we will contribute to the Service Project at our next meeting!

Looking ahead, the next meetings will be July and September. There will be no August meeting due to members attending the Get-Together. Lodge Groveton meets on the first Wednesday of the month at Groveton Firehall at 7 p.m. Food and refreshments are available at each meeting, and there is also an attendance raffle with a monetary prize.

We hope you all enjoy the rest of summer and get to celebrate the big 2-5-0. If you're unaware, this Fourth of July, the United States will celebrate 250 years of independence. Friendly reminder that patriotism belongs to all of us, regardless of political party. We

can disagree on policies while still sharing a fundamental love for our nation. May you take your patriotism and celebrate accordingly!

*Best wishes,
Sis. Hunter Rae Yurkovich*



In Memoriam

Name

Michael Davis
Charles R. Ebright

Lodge

Lincoln No. 7, Berwyn, Illinois
Kruh Osvojenych-Zen A Panu No. 121, Dillonvale, Ohio

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of our Guide and Sentry, Brother **Charles “Chuck” Ebright**. Chuck was a faithful and dedicated member of Lodge No. 121 whose presence, friendship, and service touched many lives. He will be greatly missed by our membership, his family, and all who had the privilege of knowing him. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to his loved ones during this difficult time.

Chuck, age 85, passed away peacefully at his home on Friday, June 5, 2026, surrounded by his loving family.

Chuck was born on November 25, 1940, in Martins Ferry, Ohio. He devoted 35 years of service to Signode ITW Steel Strapping Corporation in Weirton, West Virginia, where he was respected for his strong work ethic and dedication. He proudly served his country as a member of the United States Army, an experience that remained a source of pride throughout his life.

Following his military service, Chuck became actively involved in numerous community and civic organi-

zations. He was a member of American Legion McCook Post 529, where he served as Vice Commander and Trustee. He was also a member of the Dillonvale Lions Club, a social member of the Firemen’s Club, a member of AARP, and an active participant/lodge officer in CSA Fraternal Life/BetterLife Lodge No. 121.

A faithful Christian, Chuck was a longtime member of Dillonvale Presbyterian Church, where he served as a trustee, elder, and usher for many years. His commitment to his church and community reflected the values by which he lived his life.

Chuck leaves behind his beloved wife, Mariann; sons Rusty (Paula) and Chris (Kelly) Ebright; grandchildren Bailey (Brad), Skyler, Chris Jr., Mindy, Tori, and Jordan; niece Wendy (Gary) Lovell; great-niece Amanda (Heather); and great-nephew Elijah Lovell; along with many other cherished family members and dear friends who will forever treasure his memory.

Visitation was held on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, and burial followed on June 10, 2026, with full military honors in recognition of his service to our nation.

Chuck’s service to CSA Fraternal Life/BetterLife Lodge No. 121 spanned many years and touched countless lives. He faithfully served the lodge as Guide and Sentry and was a familiar face at meetings, dinners, fundraisers, holiday celebrations, and Bowl-O-Rama events, where he especially enjoyed watching his grandchildren participate. Chuck’s sense of humor and joyful personality brought life to every gathering. He loved telling jokes, making others laugh, and ensuring everyone felt welcome. Members fondly remember that he was almost always the first to make a motion to adjourn a meeting, earning him the unofficial title of Lodge No. 121’s “official adjourner.”

Whether attending a fundraiser, par-

ticipating in a lodge activity, or simply sharing stories with fellow members, Chuck embraced every opportunity for fellowship and friendship. His kindness, laughter, and unwavering support of our lodge will not be forgotten.

Chuck will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him, especially his family and his brothers and sisters of CSA Fraternal Life/BetterLife Lodge No. 121. His legacy of service, faith, friendship, and humor will continue to inspire those whose lives he touched.

Rest in peace, dear lodge Brother. You were, and always will be, very much loved!

*Submitted by niece,
Wendy Kurtz Lovell
Lodge No. 121 President*

Marie Strnad (nee Sekyra) passed away on May 4, 2026 at the age of 95. She was the wife of the late Jerry Strnad; mother of Donna (David) Courte' Pierce and the late Greg (Carla) Strnad; grandmother of Lauren (Matthew) Reynolds, Kara (Matty) Jung, and Jared (fiance'e, Trang) Strnad and Arianna Courte'; great-grandmother of Madison and Avery Reynolds and Alenka and Matej Jung.

Her life career was as a real estate agent at L.K. Wood Realty. She was a lifetime member of CSA Lodge Missouri No. 1; dedicated member of Gymnastic Association Sokol (Sokol St. Louis) where she served as a gym instructor and Sokol Camp counselor; and she participated in many other events at the American-Czech Educational Center.

Our deepest sympathy goes to her entire family and her many friends. Her infectious smile and giggle will be missed by all those who knew her!

Marla Breidenbach



2026 Photo Contest



Best of Contest: \$250
Prize for Each Category:

1st Place: \$125

2nd Place: \$75

3rd Place: \$50

Youth

1st Place : \$125

2nd Place: \$75

3rd Place: \$50

Deadline: September 26, 2026

- Submitted photograph(s) must be taken By a CSA member in the year 2025 or 2026. No professional or studio photos will be considered, as this is an amateur contest.
- Participants may send only one (1) submission max, per each of the 4 categories. A member will also only be allowed to win up to two categories max.
- You may submit any size photo (up to 8X10), un-mounted, in black and white or color. The photo must be submitted as is; no retouching or photo shopping

Photo submission Categories

Animals

Nature

People

Photographers Choice

(Objects or subjects of interest)

Send photos to:

kdeegan@betterlifeins.com

2050 Finley Road
Attn: Fraternal Dept.
P.O. Box 249
Lombard, IL 60148

Digital images must be sent electronically or printed traditionally on photo paper; print-outs on computer paper will not be accepted. If mailing your photo, include your name, lodge name and number, age, full address, phone number, type of camera used, and submission category. If the photo includes specific scenery, please give the location. Do not write on the back of the photos.

Connect with us:



1-800-779-1936



www.csalife.com



@csafraternallife

CSAPOCNST09192025

Scholarship Fund Report



May 10, 2026 - June 10, 2026

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

Lodge Brookfield No. 475

Lodge Independence Liberty Bell No. 408

IN MEMORY OF ROSE PULS

Lodge Brookfield No. 475

TO SUPPORT THE THANK-A-DRIVER PROGRAM

Lodge Brookfield No. 475

Total Donations:

\$135.00

Scholarship Applications are available at CSALife.com

2026 Fraternal Calendar

JULY

2 – Deadline: Kropik Scholarship Application
2 – Deadline: CSA Scholarship Recipient Information Form
4 – Home Office Closed (Independence Day)

AUGUST

7/31 – 8/2
89th Annual Get-Together, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

SEPTEMBER

7 – Home Office Closed (Labor Day)
26 – Deadline: Photo Contest Entry

OCTOBER

15 – Deadline: Veteran's Names & Articles

NOVEMBER

26 – Home Office Closed (Thanksgiving)
27 – Home Office Closed (Thanksgiving)

DECEMBER

1 – Deadline: CSA Serves Matching Funds Request
24 – Home Office Closed (Christmas)
25 – Home Office Closed (Christmas)

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Lidice Lives

Lodge Harrison/Hus/Garfield No. 378, Cicero, Illinois – June 8 was our meeting and we were honored to have Colette Clayton visit us from South Carolina. She was a past secretary and a longtime member. After catching up on the family and the weather down south, we got serious time to eat. This was a Parents' Day lunch at P.J. Klems in Lyons; we ate well.

We discussed the Memorial Day Program at Bohemian National Cemetery. Norma, Ken, and Andy attended. Ken then talked about the

Annual Lidice Program at Crest Hill, Illinois. It was a very good program sponsored by our T.G. Masaryk Czech School and featured an extremely interesting talk by a representative of the Consulate General in Chicago. Four students from the school read poems. We all left with the reminder – Lidice Lives. If you have not been there, try to see it or visit the rose garden and park.

*Fraternally,
Ken Dvorsky*



We Grow Dreams

Lodge Yankee-Jungmann No. 77, Lombard, Illinois – Our lodge once again received the Platinum Award thanks to the hard work our lodge members throughout the year. Thank you to Ken Dvorsky for installing our lodge officers through the year 2026.

Four members from our lodge: Ken Dvorsky, Cindy Buenemann, Mary Ellen Janda, and Chuck Janda will be attending the 89th Annual Get-Together in Brookfield, Wisconsin. All are look-

ing forward to a fun time and meeting fellow lodge members from different cities.

One of our lodge members, Eunice Semple, will be celebrating her 100th birthday on August 20. We wish her the all the best, continued good health and much appreciation for being our Treasurer.

Our members voted to make a \$100 donation to "We Grow Dreams". Their mission is to provide people with dis-

abilities the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives. They do this by producing and providing products and services to the community.

We would like to wish everyone a great and safe summer! Have fun being with family and friends enjoying all those outdoor activities.

*Fraternally,
Mary Ellen Janda*

A Great Catch

Lodge Missouri No. 1, St. Louis, Missouri – There is a prominent college in St. Louis called St. Louis University and is also known as the "Billikens." I will refer to them as the "Billikens" throughout this article.

In the 1970's, the Billikens had a pretty good ice hockey team playing in the NCAA College Division. Almost the entirety of these players came from Canada or Northern United States where hockey is rampant. They came south to St. Louis to go to school because of great academics and athletic programs. Most of these players, upon graduation, went on to professional minor league try-outs. In their off-season, some went back home to Canada, but a lot stayed in St. Louis. I was playing in a men's league at that time and those who stayed in the area wanted to stay in game shape so they would infiltrate our league.

Every team in our league had at least two of these "Canucks" on each team, so I was playing either with or against these college or professional minor leaguers constantly. They were older, bigger, faster, and smarter than I was, but that made me develop into an elite player really quickly.

I got to be good friends with these players on and off the ice. A post-game ritual was going out on the parking lot after games and having a few "brewskies," hashing over the game, and picking their brains. One even ended up marrying my wife's girlfriend.

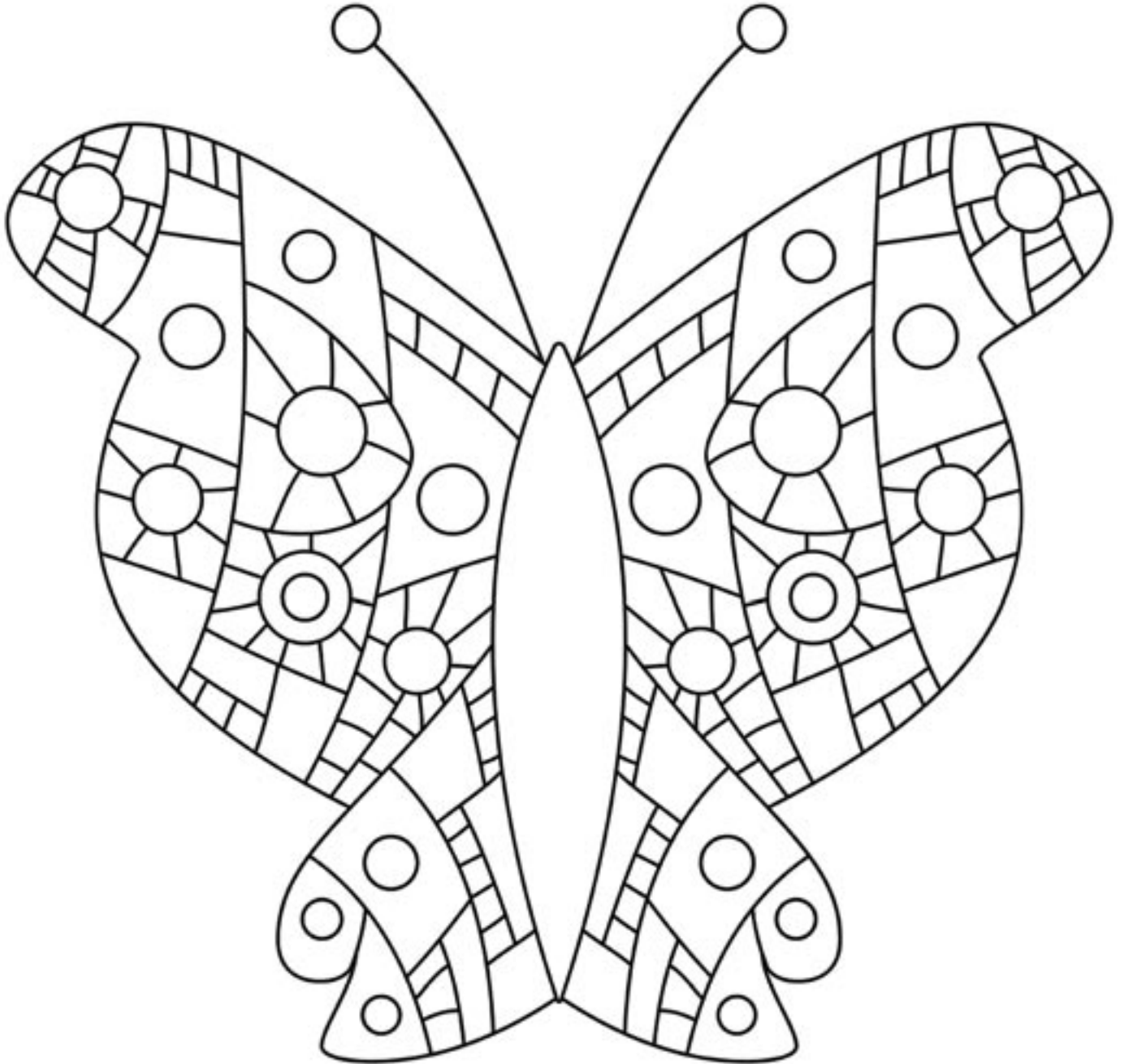
Being around these "northerners" so much for so long, I developed a knack for hearing a north-of-the-border accent from a mile away. It is so different from the Midwest lingo.

Fast forward to a couple months ago, I was in a local grocery store putting my

items on the conveyer belt and the cashier, we'll call him "Paul," mainly because that is his real name, said no more than five words to me and I said, "I detect a northern accent." Paul said, "Well, I was born and raised in Buffalo, New York; I could see Niagara Falls from my house, but I have been in St. Louis for over 50 years. I did not think I would have much of an accent left." I said, "well, you can lose some of your accent, but you can't lose it all." Paul said he could not believe I picked out his accent at all, much less in five words or less. Now, whenever I go in the store and see Paul he says, "I tell my family and friends this story and they are amazed you picked out my accent even though I've been here for over 50 years." That was a "great catch."

*Mike Wolf
Lodge Missouri No. 1*

Sweet Summertime



Let Freedom Ring

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

AMERICA
 CELEBRATION
 DECLARATION
 FAMILY
 FIREWORKS
 FLAG

FREEDOM
 INDEPENDENCE
 PARADES
 PATRIOTISM
 PICNICS

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

Celebrate Independence.

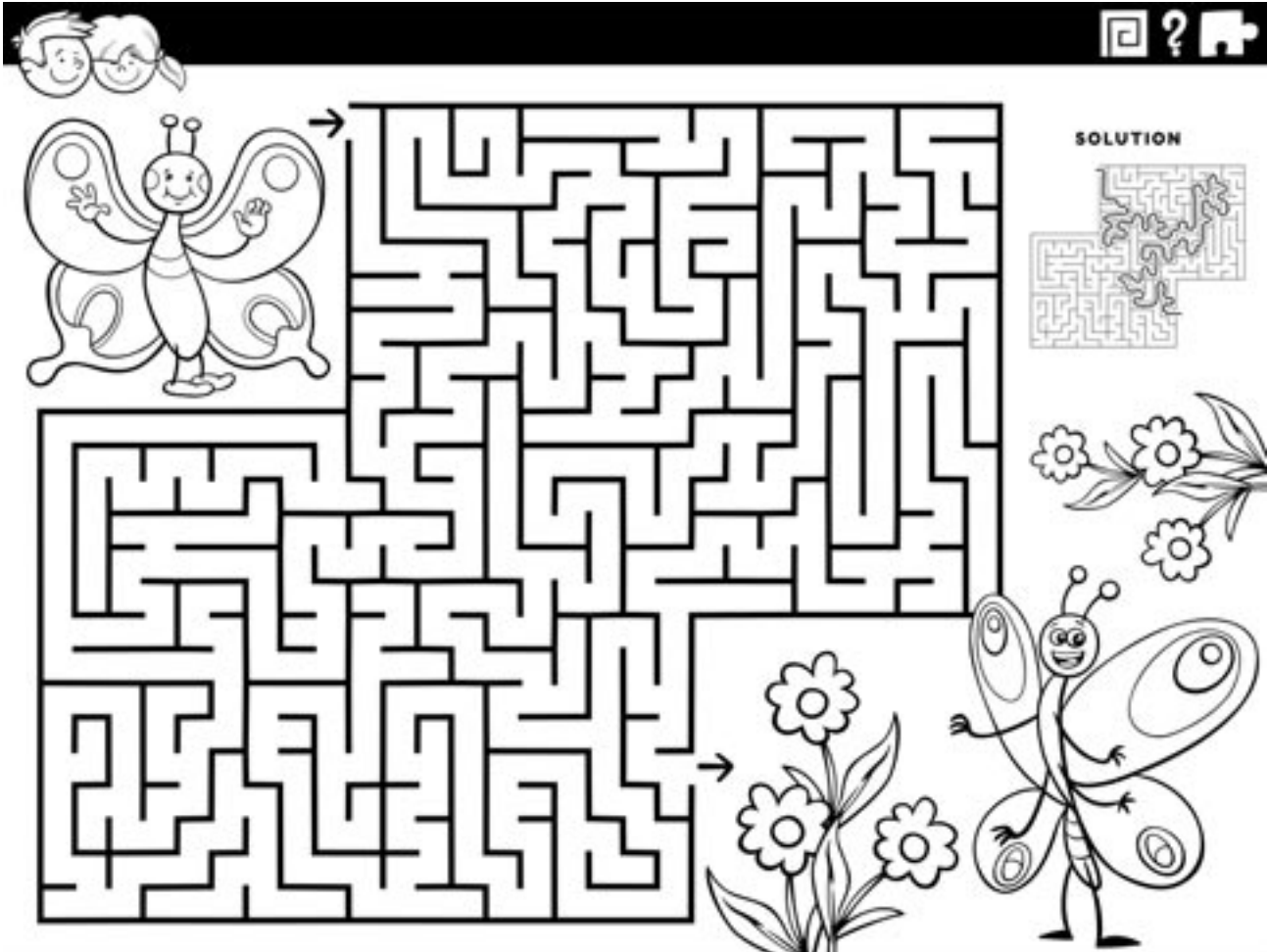
Oslavte nezávislost

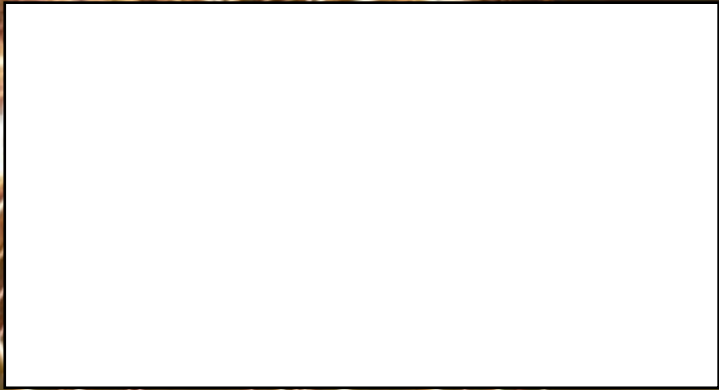
Honor your country.

Cti svou zemi

Fly the flag.

Vyvěsit vlajku





**What Image Will
You Capture
for This Year's
Photo Contest?**

See page 31.