



Journal

October 2025





Obzinky Page 19



Annual Peach Social Page 24

On the Cover

The story of Frank Hruska, the little Bohemian boy who saw liberty, is shared by his granddaughter Maryellen Hruska Vialpando on page 33.



25th American Sokol Slet Page 23

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Membership Matters

CSA Fraternal Life has Merged with BetterLife

Brothers and Sisters,

Hello to everyone out there. I hope all is well as we near the end of the year.

Well, here we are in October. Finally, CSA Fraternal Life has now officially merged with BetterLife! As you may imagine, a lot of work has been put into this by both CSA and BetterLife staff. A huge thank you to everyone who has helped during this process. It was not an easy thing, especially with the stresses of what a merger brings.

Even with us getting to the merger closing, there's still a lot to do, from finishing the integration of our Administrative Systems, to onboarding CSA staff to BetterLife, to any number of other things.

As we've communicated previously, I do want to stress that, as they have always been, your assets remain safe and secure in the CSA/BetterLife world.

Now, they are even more secure with over \$60 million plus in surplus backing us. Additionally, from a Fraternal / Member Engagement standpoint, CSA Fraternal Life will continue with *the Journal*, CSA member benefits, the CSA Get-Together, and allocations will remain as they currently are, just to mention a few.

Regarding the Fraternal / Member Engagement area, we'll be heading out to each CSA lodge in the weeks and months ahead to visit and answer any questions that lodges have. Representatives from both CSA and BetterLife are scheduling our "Listening Tour." Kelly Deegan and I will represent CSA along with Jake Manne and Chris Campbell from BetterLife. We're looking forward to hearing from lodges on everything... what we do well, and what can be improved on.

All in all, I am very much looking for-



John J. Kielczewski
Senior Vice President
Fraternal Development
Better Life

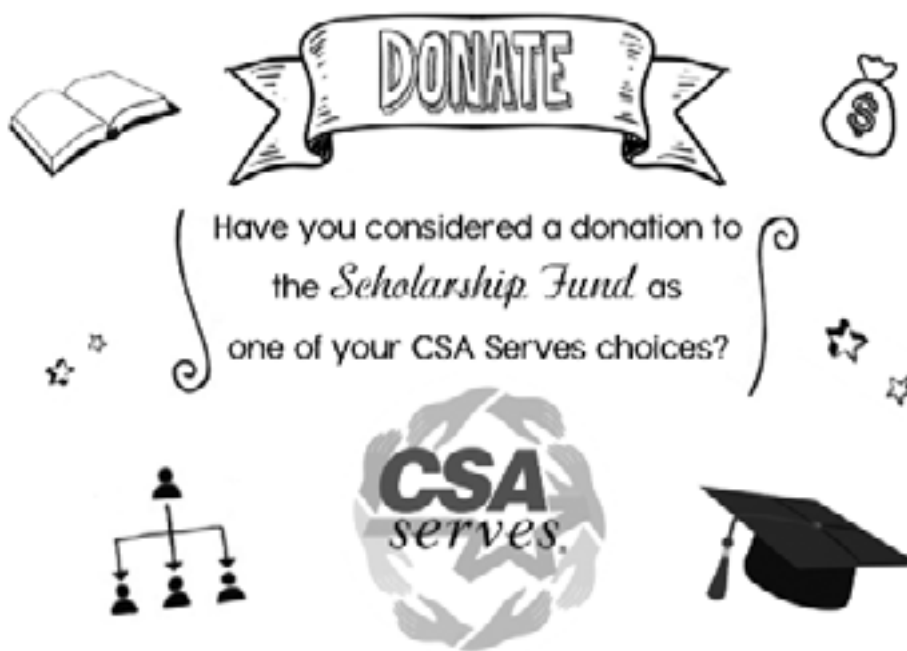
ward to the weeks, months, and years ahead of CSA and BetterLife being one, yet still having a traditional identity.

Personally, my role is changing a bit in the new CSA/BetterLife world as I'm now in the Fraternal/Business Development area. Being the CSA Fraternal Life President for the last 13 years has been a wonderful honor. Thank you again for your support. The beauty of my new role is that I'll continue to work with and hang out with members from the CSA side and additionally get to know the BetterLife membership as well. Not too shabby!

So much more to talk about, but there will be time for that in the months ahead. As always, do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Until next month...

John J. Kielczewski, CLU, FLMI
Senior Vice President,
Fraternal Development
BetterLife



Leadership

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Chris Campbell
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Frankfort, MI

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Daniel Biank
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Terry Placek
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Chief Distribution Officer

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Community Ambassador, Senior Vice President,
Member & Community Engagement

Jake Manne
Senior Director of
Member & Community Engagement

John J. Kielczewski
Senior Vice President, Fraternal Development

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 15, 2025 – DEADLINE
Submit Veterans Names for November *Journal*

October 31, 2025 – DEADLINE
Submit Bowl-O-Rama Scores

November 27-28, 2025
Home Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December 1, 2025 – DEADLINE
CSA Matching Funds Requests

December 24-25, 2025
Home Office Closed for Christmas Holiday

CSA Journal

Volume 138 No. 9 October 2025



A Dynamic Magazine "Dedicated to Our Membership"

ÚŘEDNÍ ORGÁN JEDNOTY ČESKOSLOVENSKÝCH SPOLKŮ V AMERICE

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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.

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Today's Fraternal

Kolache Festival

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters,

While fall is making its presence known across many parts of the country, Texas seems to have missed the memo. Caldwell greeted us with a blazing 98 degrees for this year's Kolache Festival! Despite the heat, it was a joy to attend with Miss CSA Cassidy Payer and her boyfriend Conner, and the day was filled with the vibrant energy of tradition, community spirit, and, of course, kolaches.

This event marked Cassidy's first official appearance as Miss National CSA, and she represented us with grace and enthusiasm. She began the day by being introduced by Susan Skrabanek and offering a brief welcome message to the crowd. Members of Lodge Svelto No. 277 were incredibly welcoming, and we are so thankful for their hospitality.

One of the highlights of the day was the always popular Kolache Eating Contest—a fan-favorite event that's as entertaining as it is competitive. Cassidy assisted with the contest and brought an extra bit of excitement when her boyfriend joined in the fun, ultimately finishing in second place, just one bite away from the win! It was an impressive (and very filling) effort.

Next up, Cassidy will be heading to Prince George, Virginia, for the Czech Slovak Folklife Festival. She's thrilled to continue her travels, meet more of our members, and celebrate the culture that ties us all together.

As you've likely noticed, this issue may look different. With the merger now completed, we're beginning to blend voices and experiences. Moving forward, you'll occasionally see articles from members of the BetterLife Member Engagement Team as we continue to strengthen our united community. We're excited for the future and look forward to sharing even more member stories and activities across both organizations.

A sincere thank-you to everyone who submitted entries for the Photo Contest. The images were truly incredible, and choosing the winners won't be easy! We also want to thank everyone who participated in the Bowl-O-Rama! Your energy and enthusiasm made it a fantastic event. We're excited to share the winners of both the Photo Contest and Bowl-O-Rama in the December issue—stay tuned! Remember, those Bowl-O-Rama scores are due to me by October 31.

With fall officially here (at least on the calendar!), we're busy updating forms and calendars for our 2026 programs. These will be distributed toward the end of the year, so please keep an eye out for those important updates.

As the colder months approach, please also remember your local shelters. This season brings increased need for warm clothing, blankets, and volunteers. Your generosity makes a meaningful difference to those in need.

Wishing everyone a safe and fun Halloween—and hopefully some cooler weather soon!

*Fraternally,
Kelly Deegan*

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



Miss National CSA

Wonderful Experience at Festival

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters,

Since Cleveland, I have officially started my second year of college. As much fun as it is to drive through Denver traffic to school every morning, I decided to take some online classes to give myself more time to be fully invested in this experience, as well as have more time for travels without having to miss classes.

Only a week after the Get-Together, I went on a road trip to Kansas for a lake weekend before the weather cooled down. I was able to drive a jet ski and go boat surfing for the first time ever! As some of you may know, I love being adventurous and trying new things so I had a blast being able to create new memories and experiences. I traveled to Kansas with my boyfriend (some of you may remember from Cleveland) as he generously invited me to go on this trip and stay with his family, who lives out there, for the week. His aunt found out I was Czech and I started sharing about our Get-Togethers, organization, and the pageant. When she heard about my heritage, she was thrilled to take us and drive over to Wilson, Kansas, the Czech capital of Kansas. I was able to see the World's Largest Czech Egg and read some more about the heritage, the egg symbolization, and more about the history of the kroje.

I am filled with joy and gratitude after my trip to Caldwell, Texas for the 40th Annual Kolach Festival! Since the Get-Together in Cleveland, I have been

anticipating going to my first festival and being able to get a full experience of the true heart and meaning of this experience. I got to meet some amazing girls who were in other Ms. Slovak pageants and it was inspiring to hear how involved in their culture they were. I met some amazing members from Lodge No. 277. They welcomed me greatly with a welcome card and gift, which I am incredibly thankful for. I was able to take many photos of the Czech heritage such as the dancers, the beautiful kroje, and photos with other brothers and sisters.

My boyfriend travelled with me to Texas and even entered the kolach eating competition! I am blessed to be able to share my heritage with people who appreciate it and value it as much as I do. My goal is to expand the interest of Czech traditions and heritage to the younger generation as it is so important to continue the legacy and to be able to

attend these amazing Czech festivals. I am so thankful and grateful for this opportunity and I cannot wait for the next festival!

Fraternally,

Cassidy Payer

Miss National CSA 2025-2026



Junior Bowl-O-Rama



Don't forget to turn in bowling scores to
kdeegan@csalife.com

by October 31 for inclusion in the December *Journal*.

Journal Themes for 2025

November – Honoring Those Who Have Served (*Veteran's names due 10/15.*)

December – Photo Contest Winners, Bowl-O-Rama Scores

Please send lodge articles to:

csajournaleditor@gmail.com by the 13th of the month prior.

Please address all Fraternal inquiries to:

Kelly Deegan at kdeegan@csalife.com or call 1.800.543.3272 x 4307



Fraternal Calendar

October	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.**





2025 CSA Fraternal Life Lodge Recognition Program

The Lodge Recognition Program was created to motivate the lodges of CSA Fraternal Life and to recognize them for their efforts to exhibit Equality, Harmony, and Fraternity to both our members and our communities. Awards for this program are granted to lodges that are well rounded and meet criteria in four areas:

1. **Service/Volunteer Hours/Donations** – Serving our communities is what we do. This area measures lodges by how they activate members to improve the communities around them.
2. **Lodge Activities/Attendance** – Our organization consists of a nationwide network of lodges. We maintain our bond by engaging in activities that unite our members on a local and national level. Our activities keep our society strong while honoring our lodge system and Fraternal programs.
3. **Social Engagement/Traditions/Rituals** – Social activity is what keeps our members together. In addition, CSA's fraternal history consists of various traditions and rituals that make up the backbone of this Society.
4. **Lodge Reporting (Sound Operations)** – The strongest lodges are the ones that meet regularly, maintain best business practices, and operate consistently with the CSA Home Office and Fraternal Department.

NOTE: Required points have to be earned in each of these four categories to win an award.

Lodges with a healthy balance of the above criteria will be rewarded Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze.

Important: Please keep in mind that one point does not equal one option. You may select a single option that can be as little as one point or as much as four points. For example, trying to earn a Platinum Award does not mean you have to choose 60 options, rather you have to **earn 60 total points**.


- To earn the **Platinum Award** (\$500 Award) designation, a lodge is required to earn **sixty (60) points** or more from the four categories plus hold **6 lodge meetings** and donate **25% of your annual allotment to charity**.
- To earn the **Gold Award** (\$350 Award) designation a lodge is required to earn **forty-six (46) points** or more from the four categories plus hold **5 lodge meetings** and donate **25% of your annual allotment to charity**.
- To earn the **Silver Award** (\$250 Award) designation a lodge is required to earn **thirty-eight (38) points** or more from the four categories plus hold **4 lodge meetings** and donate **25% of your annual allotment to charity**.
- To earn the **Bronze Award** (\$150 Award) designation a lodge is required to earn **twenty-eight (28) points** or more from the four categories plus hold **3 lodge meetings** and donate **25% of your annual allotment to charity**.



How to Complete the 2025 Lodge Recognition Program Forms

Step 1: Read the Lodge Recognition Program Breakdown and List of Options

Step 2: Fill-in the Award Requirements regarding which award you are applying for.

Platinum Star Award – \$500		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	60 total points	
	6 meetings held	
25% of annual allocation donated: \$ <u>100</u>		

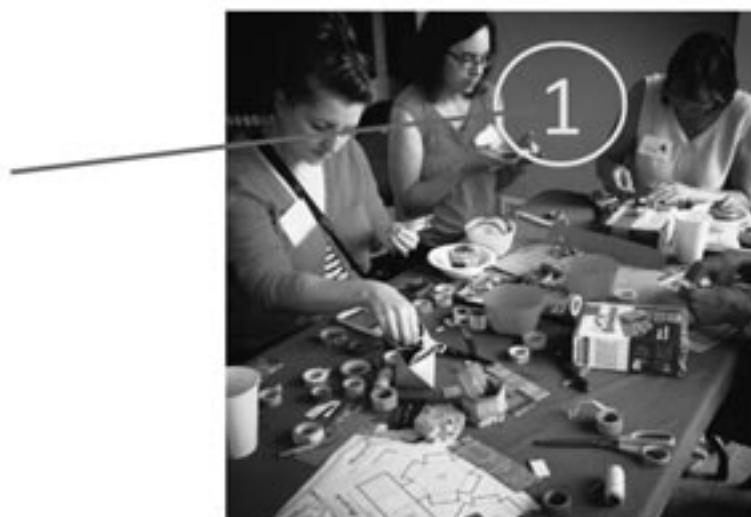
Step 3: Fill in the tables regarding Option #, Points Earned, and Activity Description

Lodge Recognition Submission for Lodge: Czech it Out #999

Social Engagement/Traditions/Rituals

Option #	Points Earned	Activity Description <small>(Items must be included on this form to be counted; all items will be verified from submission to Home Office.)</small>
1.	3pts.	Lodge Czech it Out hosted a craft night (social activity) with Sis. Caroline Doe, Sis. Jen Doe, Sis. Jan Den, and Sis. Karen Den present.

Step 4: Write the Option # on the documentation it proves (i.e. event photos, copies of checks, thank-you cards, etc.).





Award Requirements

CSA Fraternal Life
Attn: Fraternal Dept.
2050 Finley Rd. Suite 70
Lombard, IL 60148

Phone: 1-800-LIFE-CSA (543-3272)
Fax: 630-472-1100
www.csalife.com

Lodge Name: _____ Lodge No: _____

View the requirements for each award. Check the box of the Star Award you are applying for, determine the amount of your monetary donations (25% of annual allocation), and list the dates of your lodge meetings.

Platinum Star Award – \$500



- ☐ { 60 total points
6 meetings held
25% of annual allocation donated: \$ _____

Gold Star Award – \$350



- ☐ { 46 total points
5 meetings held
25% of annual allocation donated: \$ _____

Silver Star Award – \$250



- ☐ { 38 total points
4 meetings held
25% of annual allocation donated: \$ _____

Bronze Star Award – \$150



- ☐ { 28 total points
3 meetings held
25% of annual allocation donated: \$ _____

The dates our lodge meetings were held:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 12. _____ |



List of Options

BONUS: If you have an excess of 4 points (max) in any category, you can apply these 4 points to another category.

I. Service Activities/Volunteer Hours/Donations

1. **2 points – Lodge coordinates or participates in an official Join Hands Day activity or makes a donation in lieu of activity.**
 - Minimum of 2 members must participate; can occur during any month (not just May).
 - Maximum is 2 points, 1 Join Hands Day activity.
2. **2 points – Lodge participates in “CSA Serves”.**
 - Must provide service hours and donations.
 - Donations must be at least 25% of annual allocation and lodge must perform a minimum of 25 volunteer hours over the year. Donations can be made over a year’s time. 25 volunteer hours can be for one or more causes.
 - Minimum of 2 members must participate. Points will be awarded even if lodge members volunteer alone at the same project but at a different time. All hours will count towards the 25 hour minimum.
 - Maximum is 2 points.
3. **3 points – Lodge provides transportation to at least three (3) meetings for lodge member(s).**
 - Can be 1 or more drivers for 1 or more members.
 - A CSA member driving another member who is their family member/spouse will still receive points.
 - Maximum is 3 points.
4. **1 point – per Lodge member(s) participating in the Get-Together Service Project.**
 - May attend event, donate money, or donate goods to the Service Project.
 - Maximum is 3 points, i.e., 3 members attend or donate.
5. **2 points – Lodge holds a fundraiser and raises \$100 for a charitable organization (other than CSA Fraternal Life).**
 - This total can be accumulated throughout the year.
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., lodge raises \$200 for a charitable organization.
 - Maximum is 3 points, i.e., 1 point per person.
6. **3 points – Lodge donates handmade or purchased items to a hospital, center, shelter, etc.**
 - Items include blankets, hats, mittens, scarves, clothing, sheets, or personal care items etc.
 - Maximum is 6 points, i.e., 2 donations.
7. **1 point – Lodge donates minimum \$50 to Emergency or Disaster Relief fund.**
 - Organizations include Red Cross, FEMA, Salvation Army, etc.
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 2 donations.
8. **1 point – Lodge donates minimum \$50 to a Czech or Slovak cemetery.**
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 2 donations.
9. **1 point – Lodge sends medicine bottles, stamps, buttons, box tops, pop tops, etc. to charity, Home Office, or other lodge.**
 - Maximum is 3 points, i.e., 3 donations.
10. **1 point – Lodge participates in the Thank a Driver program by donating \$10 Amazon gift card(s) from the Home Office to truck drivers or delivery persons.**
 - 2 points – Lodge opts out of Amazon option and purchases gift cards from another source.
 - If receiving Amazon gift cards from CSA: Maximum is 3 points, i.e., 3 donations.
 - If buying your own gift cards: Maximum is 6 points, i.e., 3 donations.
11. **1 point – Lodge repays Home Office for the \$10 Amazon gift card(s) in the form of Scholarship Fund donation(s). Note: If lodge chooses to purchase their own gift cards, they are ineligible to receive these points.**
 - Maximum is 3 points, i.e., 3 repayments.
12. **2 points – Lodge donates \$50 to CSA Scholarship Fund.**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., \$100 donation.

Maximum Points Available: 37

Points Needed:

Platinum	16 Points
Gold	12 Points
Silver	10 Points
Bronze	8 Points



List of Options

BONUS: If you have an excess of 4 points (max) in any category, you can apply these 4 points to another category.

II. Lodge Activities/Attendance

1. **2 points** – Lodge creates a display on Czech or Slovak heritage/culture and shows it at a library, school, church, lodge meeting place, etc.
 - Minimum of 2 members must participate.
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 2 displays.
2. **2 points** – Members of your lodge attend another lodge's meeting, social event, or volunteer activity.
 - May be a virtual meeting – Skype, FaceTime, video chat, etc.
 - Minimum of 2 members must participate.
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 2 meetings attended.
3. **2 points** – Invite **Members of another lodge, Miss CSA, or home office attend your lodge's meeting, social event, or volunteer activity.**
 - May be a virtual meeting – Skype, FaceTime, video chat, etc.
 - Minimum of 2 members must participate.
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 2 meetings attended.
4. **2 points** – **1 youth member attends 3 meetings throughout the year.**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 2 youth members attend 3 meetings throughout the year.
5. **3 points** – Lodge "reactivates" **1 member who attends a minimum of 2 meetings.**
 - Reactivate = Member who has not attended a meeting in 12 months.
 - Maximum is 6 points, i.e., 2 reactivated members.
6. **2 points** – **Members attend, volunteer, work, or coach at a community / or another organizations event.**
 - Includes: church event, sports game, pancake breakfast, spaghetti dinner, Fraternal Society event (CSA or non-CSA related), ethnic event, etc.
 - Minimum of 1 member must participate.
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 2 events.
7. **1 point** – **Per youth member participating in CSA Jr. Bowl-o-Rama.**
 - Youth can bowl with Lodge, District, or independently.
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 4 youth members participating.
8. **2 points** – **Per lodge member attending Annual Get-Together.**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 2 lodge members attending.
9. **1 point** – **Per submission by lodge member(s) for Photo Contest.**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 4 members submitting photos.
10. **2 points** – **Lodge member shops for essential items for a neighbor, family, or friend.**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e. 2 shopping trips.
11. **2 points** – **Lodge member purchases meal from restaurant for a neighbor, family, or friend.**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e. 2 purchased meals.
12. **2 points** – **Lodge purchases gift card(s) priced at \$30 (or more) from local restaurant to use at a later date.**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e. 2 purchased gift cards.
13. **2 points** – **Lodge/DC takes out ad for Get Together book (All Lodges who contributed)**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e. 2 points for a half page and 4 for a full page add.

Maximum Points Available: **54**

Points Needed:

Platinum	16 Points
Gold	12 Points
Silver	10 Points
Bronze	8 Points



List of Options

BONUS: If you have an excess of 4 points (max) in any category, you can apply these 4 points to another category.

III. Social Engagement/Traditions/Rituals

1. **3 points – Lodge hosts social activity (movie night, craft night, etc.)**
 - Minimum of 4 members must participate.
 - Maximum is 3 points.
2. **2 points – Lodge members attend a social outing (play, holiday party, bus trip, etc.)**
 - Minimum of 4 members must participate.
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 2 outings.
3. **2 points – Lodge members hold a competition at a regular lodge meeting, vote for a winner, and give an award or small monetary prize.**
 - Competition can include Yahtzee, seek & find, crossword puzzle, etc.
 - Minimum of 4 members must participate.
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 1 competition.
4. **2 points – Lodge member's research and give a report or presentation on Czech or Slovak culture, traditions, etc.**
 - Minimum of 4 members must be in attendance; may be held via virtual meeting.
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 1 report or presentation.
5. **2 points – Conduct a Baby or Youth Naming Ceremony.**
 - Naming member can be up to 12 years old; may be held via virtual meeting.
 - Minimum of 4 members must be in attendance.
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 1 Baby or Youth Naming Ceremony.
6. **2 points – Conduct a formal Installation of Officers.**
 - Minimum of 4 members must be in attendance; may be held via virtual meeting.
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 1 formal Installation of Officers.
7. **2 points – Conduct a Memorial Service for deceased members.**
 - Minimum of 4 members must be in attendance; may be held via virtual meeting.
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 1 Memorial Service.
8. **2 points – Conduct a Memorial or Funeral Service for a recently deceased member.**
 - Minimum of 4 members must be in attendance; may be held via virtual meeting.
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 1 Memorial or Funeral Service.
9. **3 points – Lodge invites an outside speaker to lecture or give presentation on topic of interest to lodge members.**
 - Minimum of 4 members must be in attendance.
 - Maximum is 3 points, i.e., 1 lecture or presentation.
10. **2 points – Lodge hosts or attends 50-year or 75-year Pin Party (may occur at lodge meeting).**
 - Minimum of 4 members must participate; may be held via virtual meeting.
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 1 Pin Party.
11. **3 points – Lodge submits a nominee for CSA Fraternalist of the Year.**
 - Maximum is 3 points, i.e., 1 nominee for CSA Fraternalist of the Year.
12. **2 points – Lodge member runs for Miss National CSA**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 2 members run for Miss National CSA.
13. **2 points – Lodge fills out Lodge Phone Tree.**
 - Maximum is 2 points.

Maximum Points Available: **33**

Points Needed:

Platinum	12 Points
Gold	10 Points
Silver	8 Points
Bronze	6 Points



List of Options

BONUS: If you have an excess of 4 points (max) in any category, you can apply these 4 points to another category.

IV. Lodge Reporting (Sound Operations)

Documentation NOT needed. Submissions verified by Home Office.

**** These options are REQUIRED to win ANY award.**

1. **+1 BONUS point – Annual Financial Report submitted to Home Office by February 28, 2025.**
2. **** 3 points – Annual Financial Report submitted to Home Office by March 31, 2025.**
3. **** 3 points – Annual Lodge Election Report sent to Home Office by December 31, 2025.**
4. **3 points – Lodge submits minimum 5 Lodge President's Reports by December 31, 2025.**
5. **4 points – Lodge submits minimum 5 Journal articles with a photo during the year.**
 - Additional photos do not count for additional points.
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 5 Journal articles with a photo during the year.
6. **2 points – Lodge sends 2 brief articles and photos to Fraternal Department for Facebook post.**
 - Maximum is 2 points, i.e., 2 brief articles and photos.
7. **2 points – Lodge sends 1 member's email contact to Home Office.**
 - Maximum is 4 points, i.e., 2 members' email contact.
8. **4 points – Lodge prepares mailing and sends to members to promote attendance at meetings, social event, notice of deadline(s), encourage women to participate in the Miss National CSA Contest, etc.**
 - Home Office will assist with member lists and blank envelopes.
 - Maximum is 8 points, i.e., 2 mailings.

Maximum Points Available: **28**

Points Needed:

Platinum	16 Points
Gold	12 Points
Silver	10 Points
Bronze	8 Points

Except where noted, documentation **MUST** be submitted for each completed Option. Documentation can be a canceled check, photo, invitation, flyer, ticket stub, program, receipt, sign-in sheet, etc.

Deadline for submission: January 31, 2026

Visit CSALife.com for additional Lodge Recognition Program information and forms.

Spooky Yet Safe

Five Tips to Ensure a Happy Halloween

Between fun costumes and tasty treats, Halloween is one of the most anticipated nights of the year for many children. However, these precautions can be taken – by kids and parents alike – to help ensure an enjoyable, fun-filled time.

Pick Proper Costumes

Before Halloween, choose a costume that doesn't pose safety risks. Look for costumes, wigs, and accessories that are flame-resistant and flexible. Ideally, costumes will be bright and reflective. If not, add reflective tape to costumes or bags and provide glow sticks or flash lights. Make sure shoes fit properly and costumes are not too long to help prevent tripping, entanglement, or contact with flames. Also, consider non-toxic makeup and decorative hats as safer alternatives to masks, which can obscure vision.

Prep Your Home for Visitors

To ensure you're ready for trick-or-treaters, remove tripping hazards from your yard and porch, including hoses, bikes, and other toys, and clear wet leaves, snow, or other debris from the sidewalk. Make it known you're home by turning on your porch light; test it early and replace burnt out bulbs, if necessary, to ensure visibility. Also consider substitutes for sweets, which may contain ingredients some trick-or-treaters are allergic to, opting instead for more inclusive options such as stickers, coloring books, pencils, rubber insects, or colored chalk.

Trick-or-Treat with Care

Regardless of the age of your children, some extra precautions should be taken before they go out in search of treats. Remind children to avoid trick-or-treating alone; walk in groups or with a trusted adult. If older children are going with a group of friends, plan and review an acceptable route and agree on a specific time for them to return home. Tell them to only visit homes with illuminated

porch lights and always use direct paths, crossing the street at corners using sidewalks and crosswalks. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic and stay as far away from passing cars as possible.

Watch for Walkers

The risk for children being hit by cars is higher on Halloween than on any other day of the year, according to Safe Kids Worldwide. To help minimize that risk, slow down and be especially alert in residential neighborhoods – especially between the hours of 5-10 p.m. when most children are typically trick-or-treating – as excited kids may move in unpredictable ways. Take extra time to look for kids at intersections, on medians and curbs, and minimize distractions

such as cell phones as much as possible.

Inspect Candy

Though tampering is rare, a responsible adult should closely examine all treats and discard spoiled, unwrapped, or suspicious items once children return home. Teach your child to politely decline homemade items such as cupcakes, brownies, and popcorn balls, and always read ingredient labels as many popular candies contain common allergens like peanuts, milk, eggs, soy, or wheat.

Find more tips for a safe and fun Halloween at eLivingtoday.com.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

(eLivingtoday.com)



Decorate Your Way to a Howling Good Halloween

Costumes and candy may be mainstays of Halloween, but decorating is a fun way to set the mood and add a little extra excitement in the weeks leading up to the holiday. These spooktacular ideas can help dial up the drama and delight for all ages.

Pumpkins aplenty: A traditional glowing jack-o'-lantern may be one of Halloween's most recognized icons, but pumpkins can be used in plenty of other fun ways. You can dress them up with glitter and ribbon for a more elegant look or group a series of pumpkins in varied shapes and colors for a seasonal centerpiece. You can even give a pumpkin a coat of chalkboard paint and count down the days until Halloween.

Creepy kids' crafts: Get little ghosts and goblins into the Halloween spirit with hand-made decorations that make your seasonal decor equal parts sweet and spooky. Fold a black piece of con-

struction paper down the middle and trace a child's hand and wrist, with the wrist extending over the folded edge. Cut along the traced line, leaving the fold intact, and when you unfold the paper, you'll have a bat to decorate. Add eyes and attach string to the top of the wings to hang and display.

Gross and ghoulish: Some of the best Halloween displays have something in common: attention to detail. Get creative with your props and decorations to incorporate some unexpected attention-grabbers like brains in a jar. Place bunches of cauliflower in a clear glass container and cover with water dyed red.

Spooky serving: If you're entertaining for Halloween, incorporate spooky decor with your food and drinks to keep the theme going throughout the party. Use cauldrons as serving bowls and skeleton hands as serving spoons. Add

plenty of cobwebs and other spooky accents to the table, and search for easy recipes that fit your theme. One fun idea for kids is baking sugar cookies in fun Halloween shapes and serving them with a selection of food-safe syringes pre-filled with colored frosting.

Ghostly greetings: All the tricks and treats indoors make for plenty of good spirit, but don't forget to set the scene outside, too. Dressing up your front door lets visitors know they're in for a real treat. A haunted graveyard scene or a spooky spider den with lots of critters dangling from fake cobwebs are sure to show all who dare to enter that a howling good time lies ahead.

Find more frightfully fun ideas to make your home Halloween ready at eLivingtoday.com.

(Family Features)

Photo courtesy of Getty Images



Night at the Hospoda

Save the date for the Moravian Cultural Society's "Night at the Hospoda" on Saturday, October 11. If you were able to make it in the past, we hope to see you again! If you missed out, then come and experience "A Czech Gathering place".

Once again, it's taking place at the lower hall at Sokol Spirit in Brookfield. Most of the old places aren't here any-

more so we hope to bring those good times back to you. Czech music will be playing and the food and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the event.

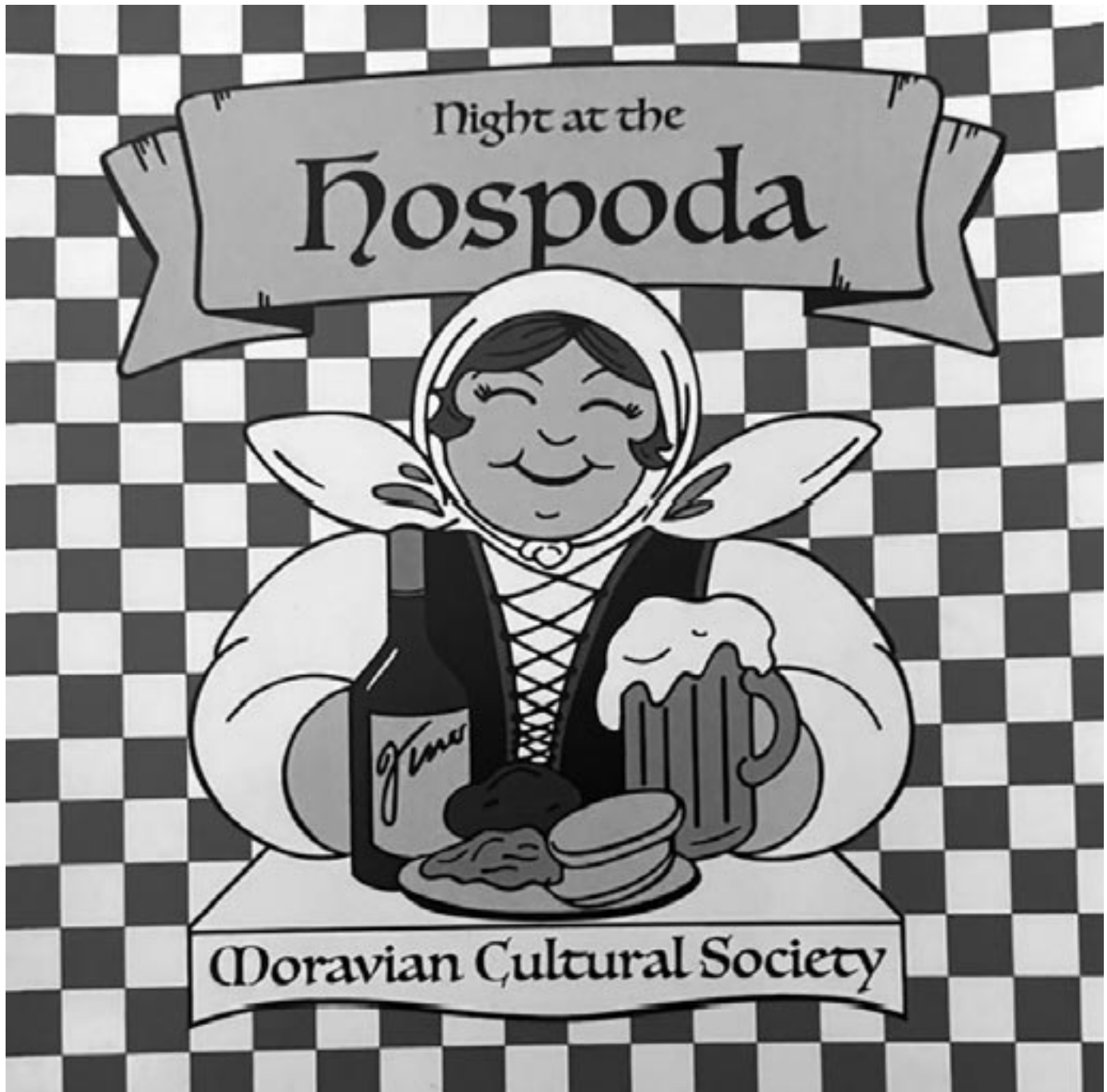
As always, there is no admission fee! You can plan your own evening; so come check us out and see for yourself. Come early or later. Stop in for a drink, quick bite to eat, or spend the evening.

Doors open at 4 p.m. and stay that way until 11 p.m.

Make sure to tell your friends and family. It's a great way to get together, so don't miss out!

We hope to see you there!

*The Moravian Cultural Society
(We are MCS!)*



District Council

Ohio/Penn Tournament in Need of a Lead

District Council 10, Northern Ohio and Michigan – District Council No. 10's quarterly meeting was held at the beginning of September. We discussed the Sports Committee needing someone to take over the Ohio/Penn Bowling Tournament. If anyone is interested, please contact Diane DiBianca (216-392-9074). We would hate to have this tradition dropped.

We received nothing but good feedback from the Get-Together.

Thank you, Nick and Lisa Kosmas, from the Home Office for attending Obzinky (Harvest Festival) at the DTJ Taborville. They even brought family from the Columbus, Ohio area.

We are starting to plan the District Council No. 10 Delegate Christmas Lunch. Yes, it's that time of year again. Lodges are working on the LRP and CSA Serves.

Birthday wishes for September were announced (me) and anniversary wishes

for October went to: Annette and Ralph Reichman and Kris and Bruce Marek. November anniversaries included Jan and Rick Russell.

Our next meeting will be December 4, before our Christmas Lunch at Eddies Creekside at noon. Winners of the 50/50 were Donna Stepka and Judy Genko.

*Fraternally,
Diane DiBianca*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Meet the Member

Roger Kratochvil, member of Lodge Estlian No. 404, has written over 140 stories for *The Prairie Land Buzz Magazine* – all on life stories. The 87-year-old former teacher, coach, High School Principal, and Scout for the St. Louis Cardinals also writes a column in the Mt. Olive, Illinois *Herald* called "Some Points of Interest and Worthy

Achievement" about positive things locally.

He is the son of Louis Kratochvil, who served for over 50 years as the financial secretary for Pokrof 355 Lodge in White City, Illinois. (Mt. Olive)

Roger remembers fondly delivering those famous dividend checks to the members while a young kid. They were

not much in amount but the people sure appreciated it. They were usually about a couple of dollars during the 1940s.

He also served on the Board of Trustees from 2004 to 2016 of Eastern Illinois University and was Chairman several times.

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Obzinky Went Well!

Lodge Paramount/Southgate No. 372, Maple Heights, Ohio – It was a glorious 62 degree day at the DTJ in Taborville for our meeting on August 28. We hosted our Annual Mike Walette Steak Roast.

The Obzinky went well. People had a good time listening to the bands that were in and out of the building. Freddie Shima and Diane DiBianca womaned the basket table, selling raffle tickets. There were quite a few to choose from!

The 2025 Get-Together was a success! On Friday, everybody enjoyed the meal and entertainment at the Bohemian Hall, and the museum was very interesting. On Saturday after the service project, people had options of going to the Rock Hall, the Goodtime III Lunch Cruise, or to spend the day roaming the city. I've heard some enjoyed the Cleveland Zoo, too! We had gorgeous weather for being outside and walking around. Patrick Lynch and the Jazz Guys were fantastic; they really had the toes-a-tapping with all of the great tunes they played.

Please support these DTJ Events. You are sure to have fun! October 5 is the Chicken or Duck Dinner. October 11 is A

Night at the Races. November 2 is the Chicken or Duck Dinner. All dinners require reservations. Call Kris Marek at (440) 543-8494 or The Hall at (440)543-5051.

I was a fifty-fifty winner and Donna got picked three times! She said, "pick again," and Kris said, "thank you!"

Thank you to Mary Ann for the salad, veggie tray, and, of course, the awesome desserts of Suzy Qs and Lime Jell-O Fluff. Thanks to Kris for the Dirt Pudding and chips, Donna for the garlic bread, Diane for the corn on the cob, and Annette for the baked potatoes. Also, thank you to Bruce the "Grill Master" for grilling the delicious steaks!

Our next meetings for 2025 will be: October 23, November 20, and December 18 is 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

Thanks, D.C. No. 10, for a Great GTG

Lodge Carter Hus Harrison No. 378, Cicero, Illinois – What a wonderful weekend we had in Cleveland for our annual GTG. Thanks to District Council No. 10 for hosting us. Thank you, Diane, for stepping up and getting your District involved.

The lodge was well represented by the entire Schretter family including the then current Miss CSA, Delaney Schretter.

A Friday night trip to the Sokol Hall and an old time pork, dumpling, and sauerkraut dinner may have been a highlight of the weekend. We visited the

museum and marveled at the interior of the Hall. A program with past Miss CSA winners and then a contest involving Cassidy Payer was the event we waited for.

I enjoyed seeing and meeting everyone while pouring the sunkys shots.

On Saturday, our lodge members participated in the service project for Journey Center, a job well done by all volunteers. A choice of the Rock and Roll Museum or a boat trip on Lake Erie was there for the delegates. On Saturday night, the Fraternalist of the Year was announced, Annmarie Antos of Lodge

DuPage Pioneers. I presented the Kropik Scholarship award to Delaney.

Sunday morning, the Journey Center presented their program. Then, the announcement that there will be a 2026 GTG (location TBD) was made by Nick Kosmas.

Members had a lunch meeting in September. Finances were discussed and a \$200 donation was made to the Salvation Army. Happy Birthday to pizza queen Gladys Zemanek and to Andy Bultas.

*Have a good day, dobrý den,
Ken Dvorsky*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Decorate a Halloween Lunch Bag in October

Lodge Cleveland Chapter No. 219, Cleveland, Ohio – A bright and sunny day reached our members and guests at our September lodge meeting. We had 13 members and four guests from Lodge Paramount/Southgate attend our meeting. It was held at the Parma Heights Library at 10:30 a.m.

We gave out all three of our “Thank a Driver” gift certificates.

There will be a “Night at the Races”

function at the DTJ facility on October 11. The doors open at 6 p.m. Our lodge bought two horses named 219 Riders and Wild Card. We also bought a race. There is also a “Crock Pot” event on the same date at Ceska Sin Sokol Hall. We donated lottery tickets for their basket raffle.

Our 50/50 raffle was won by Kathy and Karen.

We provided pizza, salad, drinks, and desserts for this meeting. Thank you, everyone.

After lunch, we had a very interesting slide show about Chris Jana’s and Jan Russell’s trips to Cambodia, Bangkok, Thailand, and other cities. Chris did the presentation.

At our October meeting, we will have

a “Decorate a Halloween Lunch Bag” contest and play Halloween bingo. It should be a fun meeting.

The meeting will be held at the Parma Heights Library on October 14 at 10:30 a.m.

The leaves on the trees are starting to fall. Happy Autumn!

*Fraternally yours,
Judy (Sevcik) Genco*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Thanks, T-Burd! Welcome, Andrew Malkus

Lodge Benjamin Franklin No. 02, Seven Hills, Ohio – The bowling team of Lodge Benjamin Franklin finds itself at a crossroads with a changing of the guard. Ken Burdzinski has been the senior man, joining the team during the 1993-94 season. He now has decided to retire from the game. For the past 23 years, Ken took on the responsibility of team captain, organizer, banker, and cheerleader. Thanks, “T-Burd,” for all the years of dedication. We’ve had many a good time! Brother Andrew Malkus, one of the young guns, is stepping up as the new sheriff in town. Best of luck to Andrew and our high scoring team!

August is quite the month for anniversaries in this lodge. Big Jim Zidlicky found himself on the Seven

Hills marquee once again this summer, this time along with Vicki, as they celebrated 60 years of loving companionship. They were married August 14, 1965 at Holy Family Church, on a hot Saturday in one of Cleveland’s Czech neighborhoods, called Corlett. Happy Anniversary and here’s to many more!

On August 16, my bride Nancy and I, celebrated our fiftieth year of marriage. Our children treated us to an evening dinner at Ruma’s Party Center in North Royalton, Ohio. The 35 in attendance enjoyed the ambiance of the room which was beautifully decorated for the occasion, including printed poster boards of memories made during the past five decades. We had a great dinner and pastries along with many options at the bar. Candice and Corey gave touching testimonials to us. Interestingly, one guest pointed out an article she read which stated that today only six percent of married couples will ever celebrate a

Golden Anniversary!

Allyson and Scott Krecow commemorated their sixth anniversary on August 17. They had “club seats” to a Guardians game that Sunday, then traveled to Columbus, Ohio, the following day for some sightseeing and dining at Guy Fieri’s Trattoria restaurant!

Also traveling to Columbus were Ryan and Candice Wallace as it was their eighth anniversary on August 19. They took a long family weekend trip to the Columbus Zoo and Center of Science and Industry (COSI) in celebration.

Wishing the best of health, happiness, and prosperity to these devoted couples!

Come join us for meetings at Mama Romitos in North Royalton, Ohio, on October 20 and November 17, 2025.

*Fraternally,
Jeff Zidlicky*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Historic 25th American Sokol Slet

Lodge Lincoln No. 7, Berwyn, Illinois – Congratulations to the Get-Together committee on a job well done! The GTG was a huge success and everyone enjoyed traveling to Cleveland to attend the many trips, meals, and activities that were arranged for the participants! We wish our newly crowned Miss National CSA, Cassidy Payer, a wonderful year ahead and commend the Fraternalist of the Year, Annmarie Antos, on her accomplishments throughout the years as a dedicated CSA member.

In June, the historic 25th American Sokol Slet was held here in Chicago! Our own lodge member, Adam Wilt, is currently the president of the organization. Several of our lodge members planned and attended the week-long Sokol Slet gatherings of competitions, tours, and an awards banquet. Participants traveled here from the Czech Republic and hundreds traveled from all over the U.S. to attend the American Sokol Slet. Nearly 300 athletes performed the number that Adam Wilt and Alix Fron wrote to the song, “America” by Neil Diamond, which concluded the 25th

American Sokol Slet held at Hinsdale South High School. Vera Wilt was also in attendance at the Slet.

In August, we held our business meeting at the home of Stan and Pat Smolucha. They hosted a ribeye steak cookout. Stan was voted the official “Grillmaster” of our lodge because of his skill in seasoning and grilling to perfection! Chris Lanzel, Vera Wilt, and Pat Smolucha brought tasty side salads. Doretta Valenta brought a cheese spread and crackers, while John Pritasil brought home-baked kolacky and Joe Hartzel brought cookies.

President Matthew Schultz called our meeting to order, and we began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Matthew reported that he had been invited to participate in a virtual one-hour BetterLife Management introduction session. He found a set of FAQs through a Facebook post and shared those questions and encouraged members to look those up to understand what our organization’s future will look like.

We voted to make donations to Operation Support Our Troops America and to the Friends of the Bohemian National Cemetery. Sending in our donations early enough, we hope that the matching funds will be even better for the organizations. We continued this discussion at our September 10 meeting at Chris Lanzel’s home. We met at 6:30 p.m. for dinner and social with our meeting following.

The October meeting will be at John Pritasil’s house, located at 606 Robinhood Ln., LaGrange Park, Illinois, on October 16 at 6:30 p.m. Dinner and social will be included with our meeting. Hope to see you all there!

Wishing you all a fun and safe Halloween!

*Fraternally,
Pat Smolucha*



Lodge Lincoln members



Jakub Uteseny, the Consul General, and Martin Chlumsky, the President of Czech Sokol, along with Adam and Theo Wilt



Adam and Theo Wilt with Alix and Garrett Fron at the Sokol Slet



Stan Smolucha grilling steaks with Bob Valenta and John Pritasil



President of American Sokol, Adam Wilt



John Pritasil with homemade kolacky

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Peaches and Pumpkins Aplenty!

Lodge Kruh Osvojenych Zen a Panu No. 121, Dillonvale, Ohio – Greetings, brothers and sisters! We hope that you are enjoying a little change of scenery perhaps followed by a slight change in weather as we prepare to usher in the autumn season. In our area, fall seemed to begin a good bit early this year with leaves dropping as early as the second week of August—perhaps due to an extended period without rain. As I

drove to my first day of school this year on August 18, I was met with falling leaves among all the country roads that I travel. Mother Nature sure keeps us guessing from year to year! I hope you enjoy the view outside your window.

Our most recent activity included our participation in the Annual Peach Social at the Dillonvale Presbyterian Church on Sunday, September 7, 2025, in the church social hall. Lodge No. 121 members worked alongside church members, preparing and serving food to our friends in the community. Sister Lovell helped set up the hall and decorate the tables before the event. The Lovells and the Ebright's provided support for the event with donations of food items and money. The Sniders also came out to support the event and were very generous, as well. A variety of food items were offered including

creamed chicken sandwiches, sloppy joes, hot dogs, pasta salad, cakes, peaches, ice cream, and peach cobbler. Patrons could also help themselves to coffee, lemonade, and water. There was no charge to anyone, but a donation jar was available for those wishing to make a love offering. Pumpkins and peaches were aplenty with pumpkins being available to purchase at reasonable prices. All donations collected were to go to the church's fuel fund to provide fuel oil for the winter months.

At the time this article was being written, our monthly meeting had not taken place. We will be sure to provide updates in next month's *Journal*. Our members continue to transport one another to meetings and outings; send out cards, letters, texts, and phone calls to our neighbors; and volunteer in our local churches and for community events. In addition, we continue to collect pill bottles and pop tabs.

We would like to wish everyone a beautiful fall season full of color. Hopefully the cool, crisp air and warm autumn sunshine will help rejuvenate you and brighten your spirits! Here's to family time by the fire, jack-o'-lanterns, and s'mores! Enjoy!

*Autumn blessings to you and yours,
Sister Wendy Kurtz Lovell*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Celebrating Our Fraternalist of the Year and Scholarship Recipients

Lodge DuPage Pioneers/Edison No. 409, Lombard, Illinois – Our September meeting was well attended for a number of reasons. First and foremost, 15 members and guests gathered for our celebration of CSA's Fraternalist of the Year for 2025 – our very own Sis. Annmarie Cervenka Antos. Second, this was our first merged meeting with members of former Lodge Betsy Ross. We welcomed Nick and Lisa Kosmas, and hope to see more members very soon. Our third order of business was to choose a name for our newly merged lodge. After some discussion, it was agreed we would remain Lodge DuPage Pioneers No. 409.

The business of the meeting included choosing officers for 2026, and deciding which charities we would support in 2026. We chose CSA's Scholarship Fund, Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery, West Suburban Community Food Pantry, and the Elgin Crisis Center. Members felt these were suitable and deserving recipients of our lodge's donations. Members discussed possible lodge events. We're considering a bake-off, dinners, and our holiday party.

Congratulations to Jackson and Gillian Nekolny, grandchildren of our former Lodge Secretary John and Sentry Joann Nekolny. Both Jack and Gillian have been awarded generous scholarships from CSA. Fellow lodge members have welcomed them to our meetings and outings for a number of years, enjoying their participation, and getting to know them. We wish them the best during their college years and much success in all of their future endeavors.

To close the meeting, members applauded Annmarie and her achievement. She was presented with a beautiful bouquet of red roses and an official certificate of her win. Sis. Kelly Deegan took an official photo of Annmarie to be displayed in CSA's Home Office lobby. We then asked Annmarie to say a few words about her history of fraternal and volunteer activi-

ties. Her "resume" is impressive. Annmarie's parents were the original founders of this lodge. She and her siblings were attending meetings as soon as they were able. Annmarie's fraternal activities began long before she graduated grammar school. She was, and is, active in American Sokol, and is a long-time delegate to Tabor Hills Senior Living facility. Community activity includes working the "float" in the Hoby Day Parade which celebrates Czech heritage, and working backstage during CSA's Christmas pageant held during Christmas Around the World at Chicago's Museum of Science of Industry. Over the years, she has established a network of vendors and retailers to obtain prizes and gifts for lodge/Sokol members at discounted rates or even free! She has been tireless in her efforts to insert fun into our meetings. She loves puzzles and games of all types. This past year, she introduced Puzzle Day where members and guests competed to assemble puzzles. Annmarie facilitated the event, donated candy and prizes, and created an activity our lodge is sure to repeat. It's hard to remember a time or meeting when she wasn't passing out prizes or goodies or initiating a game. Lodge DuPage Pioneers is so proud that this very deserving member has been recognized and applauded.

*Fraternally,
Gerri Romanelli*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Concerts, Fall Meetings, and Annual Meeting

Lodge Laurel No. 452, Ashford, Connecticut – Members gathered on July 11 at the Windham Center Green to listen to the Windham Concert Band, directed by Kathryn Niemasik. What a professional, fun, and uplifting concert we heard! The 85-member band performed classic, patriotic, and fun pieces for us all to enjoy. It was a beautiful evening for an outside concert! The pictures show the band under the trees and Lodge Laurel members posing for a group photo.

On July 23, members gathered at the Willington Athletic Complex for a wonderful concert by lodge member Valerie Voboril Rogers and her Red Satin Band. Again, we experienced a delightful, uplifting concert on a gorgeous evening. It is always such a joy to hear Val's beautiful voice, and this time accompanied by her talented Red Satin Band. The pictures show Val and her band with children enjoying the bubbles from her bubble machine, and lodge members, and others in the audience. There is also a picture of Marion and Agnes enjoying company with Val.

At our July lodge meeting, we scheduled our meetings for the rest of 2025. October's meeting, to be held on Sunday, October 19, will include our Annual Memorial Service. We will begin at St. Michael's Cemetery on Town Hall Road in

Ashford at 1:00 p.m. We will hold our service, remember lodge members who passed away in the last year, and place flowers at the Memorial Monument in the cemetery. We will then proceed to the Midway Restaurant on Route 44 for pizza. Following lunch, we will continue with our October meeting.

November's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, November 16 at 2:00 p.m. at the meeting room downstairs in Ashford Town Hall. At this meeting, we will hold our Annual Competition. Please check our lodge email, laurel452@msn.com, or call the Secretary at 860-429-6322 to see what the competition will be.

Our Annual Christmas party and December meeting will be held on Sunday, December 14 at 1:00 p.m. at St. Philip's Center on Route 44 in Ashford. We will begin with a luncheon and delicious desserts made by members. There will be crafts, games, and lots of fun!

We hope to see many of you at these events! For any questions you may have, please contact the secretary at the above email or phone number.

Happy Fall!

*Fraternally,
Marion Varga*



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



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LODGE HAPPENINGS

Summer Ends, but Good Times Don't!

Lodge Woodrow Wilson, No. 377, Brookfield, Illinois – Our annual lodge picnic, as always, was such a good time! Nine members were present, and President Cary Mentzer had ordered up sunshine for the day, so it was the perfect day for a late summer gathering of our little group. We were delighted to have youth member Kamila Dropka with us, and to watch her play catch with Babi, Missy. Although everyone brings their own “main,” the shared goodies also were abundant, including an enormous sandwich “accidentally ordered” and cut into pieces for sharing by Pat Satek. Other sweet and savory treats, and lovely visits with each other, ensured that no one went away lacking, neither for food nor for smiles.

September's lodge meeting served double-duty: after conducting general business and getting caught up on everyone's news, we got started on the work of crafting this year's holi-

day ornaments. Hosting craft night(s) has become a favorite annual tradition for our members: “craft-master” Pat supplied us with the basic materials, and everyone got busy with the next step. Crafting will continue at future meetings – until the project is finished and the final products will be revealed here. So, stay tuned for updates as we continue our crafting and ready our hand-made decorations for donation, to brighten the holidays for residents of assisted living.

What projects are on your plate these days? What news do you have? Please let me know, and I will share here, so we all can enjoy hearing about it!

Fraternally,

Jean Hemzáček Laukant



LODGE HAPPENINGS

"I've Got the Music in Me!"

Lodge Missouri No. 1, St. Louis, Missouri – "I've Got the Music in Me." That is a great tune by Kiki Dee. I have had the music in me since about sixth grade. I joined the school band and was immediately put in the percussion section. My fondest memory of that is playing the drum hanging by a strap over my shoulder, marching down the streets of South St. Louis on a bright, sunny day in our school picnic parade.

Then, along came high school and I had a band instructor named Bob Kuban. A year earlier, he and his band, "The In-Men," had a hit record called, "The Cheater." That record got plenty of air play on the radio. He was the drummer of the band and is mentioned in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as a "one hit wonder" for his hit, "The Cheater." He was well known in the St. Louis area playing fundraisers, weddings, the Admiral (a boat on the Mississippi riverfront), and at Busch Stadium, playing at St. Louis Cardinal football games, and at concerts in the park. I would see him at various functions throughout the years after high school and he would be glad to see me. I guess being a drummer like him and a former student, we had a personal rapport for each other.

Our school band had to play at our high school graduation at the spacious Kiel Auditorium. (Yes, I had to play at my own graduation.) During my time in school bands, I played drums, kettle drums, bongos, gongs, cymbals, maracas, ratchets, whistles, triangles, cowbell, and xylophone; I am sure I am forgetting something.

I still have my drum set but have not played in decades. The only thing I beat on now is the steering wheel when I am in my truck listening to the radio. The only time my drum set gets played is when my young granddaughter comes over and beats on them. No, she does not have the music in her (at least not at this point).

Throughout my life, I have been to many concerts. I can remember once standing next to a speaker that was three times my size. I guess that might be why I have hearing loss.

When I was growing up, there were two older neighbor boys. I would go over to their house, and we would listen to records for hours. Because of that, I have the knack of knowing the name of the song and who the artist is. My wife and I play a game called "name the group." Even if it is a solo artist, I will say "name the group," hoping to throw her off. I do not know why I do this because she always has no clue and will always answer, "Deep Purple." One time a song by "The Who" came on and I said, "name the group." She looked to the sky and pondered for about 15 seconds and finally said, "I do not know - Who"? And I said, "You're right, 'The Who.'" I will give her an "E" for effort.

I recently attended the 88th CSA Get-Together in Cleveland, Ohio. With Cleveland being the city of Rock and Roll, attendees to the Get-Together were encouraged to wear their favorite band's T-shirt. I have more T-shirts than there were days at the event to wear them.

Mike Wolf

Lodge Missouri No. 001



In Memoriam

Claim	Name	Lodge	Location	Date of Death	Age
56148	Nelson, Karen E.	007	LA GRANGE, IL	05/20/2025	72
56149	Langbein, Patrick J.	007	LAVALLE, WI	08/08/2025	99
56131	Lazansky, Frank	066	CHOKOLOSKEE, FL	07/28/2025	77
56141	Cosper, Sinceray P.	091	CHICAGO, IL	07/27/2025	64
56144	Myslik, Kenneth F.	099	HICKORY HILLS, IL	08/05/2025	87
56142	Hughes, Elaine M.	155	HAYMARKET, VA	08/06/2025	75
56136	Gisin Jr., Arthur A.	211	MIDLOTHIAN, TX	04/26/2025	75
56138	Canas, Ruth	211	PORT ST. LUCIE, FL	08/06/2025	75
56145	Slaby, Anthony R.	219	MAPLE HEIGHTS, OH	05/13/2025	67
56150	Deering, Carolyn	219	SARASOTA, FL	07/20/2025	70
56124	Mensik, Eleanor	277	ENNIS, TX	07/09/2025	92
56152	Talafuse, Gary L.	277	BUCKHOLTS, TX	06/25/2025	72
56153	Rada, Thomas E.	366	INKSTER, MI	08/20/2020	70
56147	Orbeck, Christine	377	LA GRANGE, IL	10/17/2024	72
56133	Blum, Zdenka M.	378	BARTLETT, IL	06/12/2025	90
56140	Lukasek, Joseph	392	PORT CHARLOTTE, FL	08/09/2025	101
56130	Davis, Elaine A.	409	SHELBYVILLE, IN	03/02/2025	74
56132	Schoon, Arlene	419	HOLLAND, MI	07/26/2025	85
56151	Griffo, Norine	419	KNOX, IN	11/22/2021	93
56125	Jackson, Eddie	422	BRONX, NY	06/14/2025	53
56128	Valle-Vazquez, Emerita	422	BAYONNE, NJ	07/28/2025	85
56137	Banchak, Kenneth	432	NEW PORT RICHEY, FL	06/07/2025	81
56139	Espinoza, Beverly B.	432	LAS VEGAS, NE	07/30/2025	82
56129	Valenta, Andrew F.	452	COCHRAN, GA	07/23/2025	63
56135	Strnad, Thomas J.	452	PITTSFIELD, MA	02/24/2025	71
56127	Williamson, Joanne M.	459	SWARTZ CREEK, MI	06/22/2025	88
56122	Garczynski, Anne M.	469	ATLANTIC BEACH, NY	07/30/2025	99
56126	Lomicka, Joseph	479	FAIRMONT, WV	07/26/2025	95
56143	Phillips, Alice L.	479	FREEDOM, PA	08/19/2025	94
56146	Reed, Ellen	479	ZELIENOPLE, PA	07/07/2025	84

In Memoriam

Lodge Cleveland Chapter No. 219 is sad to announce that long-time member, **Dolores Clark**, has passed away. The lodge held a moment of silence in her honor. A card was sent to her family.

On New Year's Day, the family and friends of **Anne Michalek, President of Lodge Virginia No. 230**, were saddened at learning the news that Anne (pictured) passed away after a short illness. Anne served as president for more than five years and was instrumental in making sure we were represented at the Annual Virginia Czech and Slovak Folklife Festival each fall. Anne was a nurse for 40 years before retiring to take care of her mother. Anne received her nursing education at Petersburg General Hospital School of Nursing, added a bachelor's degree at University of Virginia and a

master's degree at Virginia Commonwealth University. Anne was a caregiver at heart. Anne was an enthusiastic "Wahoo" fan of U.Va. sports and received the great thrill of a lifetime when U.Va. won the NCAA national men's basketball championship in 2019. She was also a great fan of Neil Diamond and followed his career as long as he publicly performed, and beyond. Anne loved flowers and cats and was even taking care of stray cats in her neighborhood until she was no longer able.

Anne was a member of CSA since birth. Her father, Anthony Michalek Sr. made sure that his first-born girl (after three boys) was well taken care of. Anne's siblings, Tony, Tom, Susie, and Dorothy; niece, Lisa; nephew, Paul; and grand nieces, Isabella and Mariah are also members. In the spirit of CSA volun-



teerism, Anne was a volunteer at St. Ann Catholic Church Food Pantry. Anne will be sorely missed by so many people.

Odpočívaj v pokojí, Anne!

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Mikulášska Zábava (St. Nicholas Party) Planned



Lodge Washington No. 30, St. Louis, Missouri – Another successful Bake Sale fundraiser is in the books! We held it in September as part of CSA Serves, to benefit our American Czech Center, and we filled the table with lots of

homemade items – pumpkin loaves, brownies, cookies, the famous gooey butter cake, and more. Between the matching funds for our profits and all the hours we worked, it should come to a nice sum that will help maintain our Center and all its activities.

There were some items left when we closed up, and sis. Karen Ditz packed them up and delivered them to a local fire department, as she usually does, and everyone there was really happy to accept the donation. It's always a great way to give back to those first responders!

The ACEC will hold its St. Nicholas Celebration on Saturday, December 6, and we're getting a jump start on some of the work involved. We'll be offering a lot of great food, including dumplings for sale, cookie plates, caraway soup, mulled wine, among other things, and lodge members Bill and Ken Korpecki will cook up some traditional goulash from their aunt Elsie Korpecki's recipe,

to be packaged as a take-out item. It promises to be a fun afternoon for all ages, with a visit from Svatý Mikuláš himself. It all goes from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Keep following the ACEC Facebook page for updates.

The first Mikulášska Zábava (St. Nicholas Party) at our Center was held in 1965, when we first moved into the new building, and while some finishing touches were still being completed. It included songs and other entertainment provided by the students (of all ages) in the revitalized Czech School. A lot of us in St. Louis still have some wonderful memories of that event, and we love that this tradition is being enjoyed by so many of our members and friends.

Happy Fall!

*Fraternally,
Deborah Zeman*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Join Us at T.G. Masaryk School

Lodge Century of Progress/ Bila Hora No. 231, Cicero, Illinois – The August lodge meeting was held at PJ Klem's Restaurant. Reports from the Secretary and Treasurer and the representatives of various activities of CSA were discussed and accepted. A report announcing the number of members in our lodge was given.

Other announcements included lodge donations of school supplies to the T.G. Masaryk School including cash amounts; food and cash donations were made to the Holy Guardian Food Pantry; a donation was made to the Salvation Army; an appeal from the USO was tabled, held for a future meeting of the lodge; and a birthday card

was sent to Mildred Mentzer for her 102nd birthday celebration for which the lodge received a thank-you note. It was also announced that District Council No. 12 held a meeting on September 25 and the T.G. Masaryk school was getting ready for its September opening.

Ken Dvorsky reported on the Get-Together in Cleveland. He was impressed with how well run the programming was, along with the location, with the hotel near the lake, and the food including dumplings and sauerkraut. He said the GTG had 105 total guests. He also mentioned that the programming included the introduction of many past Miss CSAs and four of them

made a presentation. The service project of packing bags was held and delivered to the local shelter. Representatives from the BetterLife made presentations discussing the future merger. There were no state bids for the next GTG.

Our meetings are generally held at the T.G. Masaryk School on the second Wednesday 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 701 W. 22nd Place, in Cicero. For more information, contact Ed Slavik at 708 423-5267.

*Fraternally
Elaine Tejcek*

Scholarship Fund Report



August 10, 2025 – September 10, 2025

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD L. LEVINSON

Lodge Brookfield No. 475

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

Lodge Groveton No. 4

IN MEMORY OF MILDRED MENTZER

Roberta Jarosik

Anna Ramirez

Ellie and Bernard Babka and Janet Schreier

Kenneth and Karen Rouleau

Milissa Dropka

Total Donations:

\$640.00

The Bohemian Boy Who Saw Liberty

Lodge Mile-Hi Czechs No. 432, Lakewood, Colorado – For the May meeting, Maryellen Hruska Vialpando stood with her arms above her head. She was telling the story of her grandpa, Frank Hruska. She repeated his words: “I sneaked up on deck, something Ma didn’t want me to do. A fog, thick as soup, floated outside the rails. Then, like a miracle, the fog lifted up off of the ocean, and there she stood, the Statue of Liberty.”

This tale Frank told over and over again all his life. Each time he told it, he’d lift his arms over his head, just like Maryellen was lifting her arms, telling his story. Frank was eight years old when he came to this story, born in 1880. He arrived on the ship Lahn, docked at Castle Gardens, just a boy born in Hodetin, Bohemia. He traveled with his mother, Marie (b. 1859), his brother Mike (b. 1885), and his sister Mary, (b. 1886) – those children just five and six.

Marie was to travel to the land of Lady Liberty with her three little children to meet their father, Vaclav (James) Hruska in Chicago. From Castle Gardens, New York, she was to get on a train to Chicago. She couldn’t speak English, and she and her brood missed the train because of the language; they had to wait until the next day. Grandpa Hruska always said, “That station had the hardest benches I ever sat on.”

Vaclav had gone to stay with relatives in Chicago. When they met up, they traveled on to Table Rock, Nebraska. There Frank Hruska grew up, and when he was a young man, he traveled to Colorado to work in the coal fields.

He told the story that he had to “wait for Emma to be old enough to marry me.” The way Emma told it was, “he just left to work in the coal fields.” Emma Olga Svanda married Frank Hruska in 1909. He was 29 years old; she was 19. They worked for a little while and then they bought a farm south of Table Rock and raised their five children there. They had four children, each

two years apart, and then five years later they had another child, a son. Amy was born in 1910. She married Robert Philpot, and they had one child, Charlotte. Erma Helen was born in 1912. She married Bert England. Frances Emma was born in 1915. She married Donald Pugh. Frank Thomas, who was born in 1917, married Ellen Mary Lane. He became the papa to Maryellen Hruska Vialpando. Roy Charles, who was born in 1921, was called “Bobby.” He married Ann Rogers. He always said he was adopted because of the Depression.

All of Frank and Emma Hruska’s children graduated high school and got married. Her dad Frank Thomas, uncle Don, and “Uncle Bobby,” as Maryellen Hruska Vialpando knew him, joined the Navy in WWII.

Maryellen’s dad, Frank Hruska, married Ellen Mary Lane, an Irish Catholic who hated to cook. Her mother worked. Thus, Maryellen learned to cook from her grandma, Emma. She was sent to Lincoln, Nebraska every summer until she started high school!

Maryellen still has the purple apron made out of chicken feed sacks with red houses and yellow flowers. Her grandma made the apron. Her grandparents moved from the farm in 1944, to Lincoln, Nebraska where most of the kids were. And, they moved to an acreage: they traded a large farm for a two-bedroom house on two acres. Grandma brought along her chickens, and Maryellen had to gather the eggs. She became skillful, so as not to get pecked. Grandpa Frank Hruska did not approve of the chickens. He said, “I left pigs and cows on the farm and you should have left your chickens.” His idea to spare a person the pecking was to grab a chicken and toss it. However, that practice caused the chickens to stop laying eggs!

From Frank and Emma Hruska issued forth the five children: Maryellen’s aunt Amy died in 2004, her aunt Erma died in 2005, aunt Frances passed away in 1979, and “Bobby” Ray

Charles died in 2018. Maryellen’s dad, Frank Thomas, died in 1980, and her mom, Ellen, died in 1999.

Grandpa Hruska lived until 1969 and Grandma Emma Hruska lived until 1977. If young Maryellen complained of being bored on the acreage, Grandma Hruska would say, “what do you want to do? Pick flowers or cook?” Maryellen often chose the cooking. To this day, Maryellen makes a fine apple strudel, a darn good potato dumpling, and her kolaches are mouth-melting and delicious. Thus, Lodge Mile-Hi Czechs thanks her and her grandfather, the Bohemian boy who saw Liberty rise up out of the fog.

*Fraternally,
Sandra Maresh Doe*



Happy Halloween!



Creepy Crawlies

U H R O B U V R H P E P Q E X S E E O S I G H W S
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WORD LIST



ANT	BEE	ROACH
FLIES	SPIDER	BEETLE
LADYBUG	MOSQUITO	FIREFLIES
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Czech to English

Happy Halloween

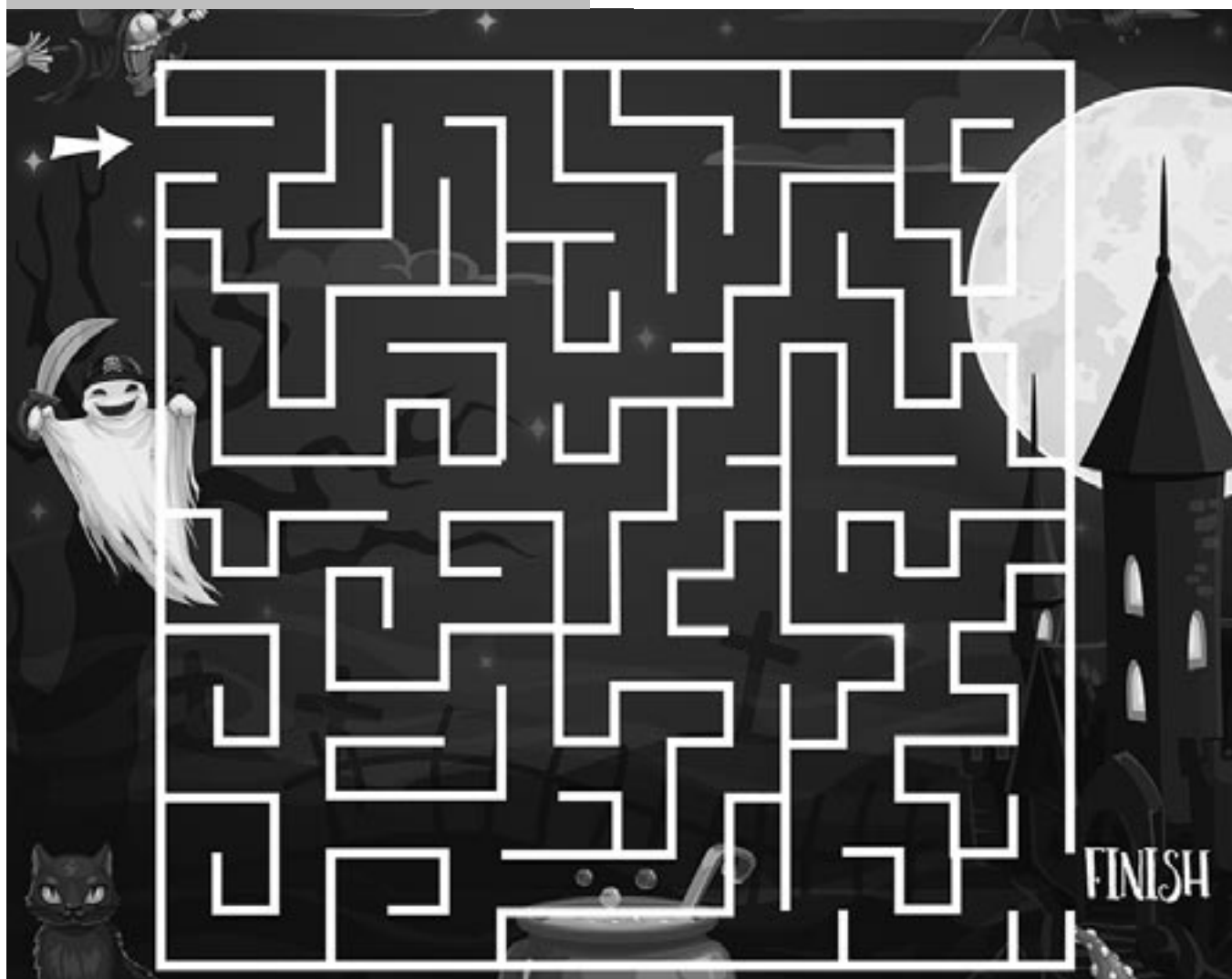
Veselý Halloween

Thank you for the candy

Děkuji za bonbón

Be careful crossing the road

Buďte opatrní při přecházení silnice



The background of the entire page is a faded American flag with white stars on a blue field and red and white stripes, set against a light-colored wooden plank texture.

Honor All Who Have Served.

**Submit names of
CSA members
who have served
our country to
csajournaleditor@gmail.com
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to have them recognized in
the November *Journal*.**