



Journal

April 2025

Happy Easter





**Soup and Sandwich Sale
Page 23**



**Game Day
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**Meeting – 80 Years Ago
Page 19**

On the Cover

Expertly crafted by Marj Nejd, beautiful Czech eggs adorn this month's cover in her honor. See a tribute to Marj in the In Memoriam section on page 31.

Photo courtesy of Cindy Hadish

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President's Piece

CSA Delegates Approve Proposed Merger With BetterLife



Brothers and Sisters,

Happy April to everyone. I hope the early part of Spring is treating you well.

As you all know, in early January of this year CSA Fraternal Life's Board of Directors voted to approve a proposed merger with BetterLife, a Fraternal Benefit Society with deep Czech and Slovak roots.

As part of the process, Delegates from CSA's most recent (2022) Quadrennial Convention must vote with a 2/3 majority to approve the proposed merger. I'm happy to report that with overwhelming support, our Delegates have voted in favor of proceeding with the proposed merger. As I write this article (in mid-March), there may be a few ballots that are stragglers still to be delivered to us. So at least for this article, I cannot yet pass along the exact vote. But from the ballots that have been counted, the "yes" votes

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that have been counted have surpassed the threshold needed to approve the proposed merger.

For some background, ballots had to be postmarked by March 14, 2025, so we will not have the final vote count until the end of March. We will post the official count on our social media platforms at the end of the March. So by the time you're reading this article in the April issue of *the Journal*, all ballots will have been counted. I'll report on the official count in next month's (May) article as well.

To give everyone some insight and a "peek" into the voting process...

In early February, we mailed ballots to all eligible Delegates from the 2022 Convention, explaining the process, explaining the reasoning for the merger, and giving directions on how to cast their vote, how to sign/attest that the Delegate is properly making the vote, and how to return the ballot to our office.

At two different times over the past six weeks (as ballots were delivered and accumulated at our office), outside Counsel that our Board of

Directors appointed to advise CSA on the merger process oversaw the counting of the votes. As mentioned earlier, a final tally will occur at the end of March, again overseen by outside Counsel.

I want to thank the Delegates from the Convention who took this process seriously and voted in the best interests of CSA Fraternal Life as a whole.

In the weeks/months ahead, different State Insurance Regulatory bodies must approve this proposed merger, which we expect to occur later this year. We will keep the updates coming on the process, and any news that arrives.

To reiterate, your assets are safe and secure with CSA, and ultimately with CSA/BetterLife. Our office and staff members will continue to be here to help you out and answer any questions. Don't be shy, feel free to reach out.

Stay well and thank you for your continued support.

Fraternally,
John J. Kielczewski, CLU, FLMI
President/CEO



UPCOMING EVENTS



April 18, 2025

Home Office Closed for Good Friday

May 3, 2025

Join Hands Day

May 26, 2025

Home Office Closed for Memorial Day

June 6, 2025 - DEADLINE

Miss CSA Application and Photos

June 6, 2025 - DEADLINE

Fraternalist of the Year Nomination Due

July 2, 2025 - DEADLINE

Kropik Scholarship Application

July 2, 2025 - DEADLINE

Recipient Information Form for CSA Scholarship

July 4, 2025

Home Office Closed for 4th of July

August 1 - 3, 2025

88th Annual Get-Together

Cleveland, Ohio

September 1, 2025

Home Office Closed for Labor Day

September 26, 2025 - DEADLINE

Photo Contest Entries

September 26, 2025 - DEADLINE

Bowl-O-Rama Entries

CSA Journal

Volume 138 No. 4 April 2025



A Dynamic Magazine "Dedicated to Our Membership"

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CSA MISSION STATEMENT

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

CSA Leadership

National Officers

John J. Kielczewski, *President*

Nick Kosmas, *Secretary/Treasurer*

National Directors

Tom Ledvina

Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota

Ken Dvorsky and Cary Mentzer

Northern Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin

Irma Farrell

California, Colorado, Kansas, and Texas

Diane DiBianca

Northern Ohio and Michigan

Connie Wolf

Missouri and Southern Illinois

Terry Placek

Southeastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania

Carol Tranter

Florida, Maryland, Virginia, D.C.,

Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Paul Vavrsek

New York State and Connecticut

Home Office Hours

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

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

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

Today's Fraternal

Seeking Miss CSA Contestants

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters,

I am so excited for longer days, the weather warming up, and the transition from spring to summer. With its bursts of color and revitalizing energy, spring is a reminder that the perfect time to begin planning for the summer Get-Together is now. This event is a collective effort, and we look forward to your participation. Spring is the season to lay the groundwork for this memorable annual celebration.

In preparation, we are still seeking young ladies to participate in the Miss National CSA Contest. If you know anyone who might be interested, please have them contact me.



Please send lodge articles to:
csajournaleditor@gmail.com
by the 13th of the month prior.
(You will receive a confirmation email.)

Please address all Fraternal inquiries to:
Kelly Deegan at
kdeegan@csalife.com
1.800.543.3272 x 4307

I've completed the Lodge Recognition certificates and checks, which have been mailed to the lodge treasurers. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all who participated. Your involvement is the backbone of our Society and what makes us strong.

We have received all the scholarship applications and are now reviewing them. We understand the importance of this process and will keep you updated on the progress, ensuring that you are part of the journey.

As we gear up for this season of renewal, we are reminded of the power of unity. Your ideas, participation, and dedication are what make our community and events truly special. We eagerly anticipate celebrating the spirit of spring and summer with all of you. Stay tuned for more updates, and thank you for your unwavering support.

Let's work together to make this year's Get-Together celebration truly unforgettable!



Hope everyone has a Happy Easter!

Fraternally,
Kelly Deegan
Fraternal Programs Manager
Lodge DuPage Pioneers/Edison No. 409

Journal Themes for 2025

May -	Join Hands Day
June -	Flag Day
July/August -	Czech and Slovak Festivals
September -	Recap of the Annual Get-Together
October -	Photo Contest Winners
November -	Honoring Those Who Have Served and Bowl-o-Rama
December -	Lodge Recognition Program

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

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY/TREASURER

ROCK AND ROLL GET-TOGETHER



Greetings, brothers and sisters,

Before we know it, the Cleveland Get-Together will be here!

The Cleveland Get-Together Committee is busy getting ready for the event. The registration form is published on page 13 of this *Journal*, and we will soon post this information on our website and Facebook page. Two exciting events have been organized by this Get-Together Committee. Lisa and I can't decide which trip to take.

In Home Office news, our delegates have approved the merger with BetterLife. We will have more information soon. The Home Office staff has had a couple of virtual meetings with various BetterLife staff members. Chris Campbell, CEO-President of BetterLife, visited the Home Office to meet the staff in person and answer questions. More virtual and in-person meetings are being scheduled to start the integration process

of our two societies.

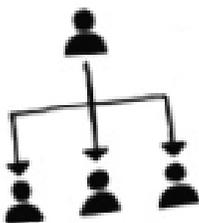
I want to thank the lodges that invited me to their meetings. We had a great discussion on mergers, and I look forward to attending more meetings.

We hope everyone has a lovely Easter holiday with their families and friends. We are finally starting to get better weather here in Lombard (for the most part). Our lawn is turning green, trees are budding, and bulbs are beginning to pop up!

*Fraternally,
Nick V. Kosmas
Secretary / Treasurer*



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



Miss National CSA

This Month Has Been a Blur!

Greetings, brothers and sisters,

tasty!

This month has been a blur for me so far! First midterms, then spring break, then jumping back into the deep end of schoolwork.

Great news: I got A's on all my midterms which felt really validating! In one of my classes, I sit next to someone who tends to explain things to me in a way that makes me feel like they assume I don't know what's going on, so – even though it's petty – I was very excited to see that I got the higher score.

Over spring break, I was all over the map! I went to Wisconsin to visit my boyfriend at school for a few days. We had some of the best food I have ever tasted. We went to a restaurant called Tauro Cocina and it was incredible. I got their spicy tomato pasta and it was so

After my visit, I went back home to pack and then took off to Florida the next day. My family and I had rented an Airbnb and enjoyed a little vacation! It was such a great time and it is always so nice to be with my family after being away for so long!

After break, I headed back to school and I've really been working hard with my assignments. We're getting to the point in the semester where I have a ton of big projects to get done and it can be a little overwhelming. I'm taking it one step at a time and making sure I take some time to decompress at the end of the day, usually by reading or journaling.

The last exciting thing I did this month was hitting a 700 day streak on Duolingo!



Estoy muy feliz por mi trabajo duro.

Fraternally,
Delaney Schretter,
Miss National CSA 2024-2025

Ready to Run for Miss CSA?



Visit csalife.com

Entertaining on Easter

Five tips to make holiday hosting simple

(Family Features) Easter signals springtime and provides an opportunity to gather with loved ones to celebrate. However, hosting the get-together – whether brunch, lunch, or dinner – requires planning and preparation to ensure the event is enjoyable.

From the guest list and menu to the decor and activities for the kiddos, consider these steps to get ready for Easter hosting duties.

Make a Guest List

When planning your gathering, first think about how many people your space can accommodate. Ensure there's a place for everyone to sit and eat, even if that means bringing in extra tables and chairs or designating a "kids table" so all the adults can sit together. Once you know how many people you can invite – and have a plan for seating – send out festive invitations or create a group on social media with your preferred guests to gather RSVPs.

Take Inventory of Necessities

Once you have your guest list set, take inventory of serving dishes, utensils, linens, and glassware. Depending on the number of guests, you may need to invest in extra supplies or borrow from a friend or relative to ensure you have everything you need. If you don't have enough of one set of plates and flatware, mixing and matching is a trendy move and can serve as an additional aspect of your decor.

Plan the Menu

When setting your menu, traditional favorites like ham or lamb are almost always a hit but remember to consider any

diet accommodations that may need to be made for any vegan or vegetarian guests. Dishes featuring eggs, carrots, ginger and other ingredients that call spring to mind like quiches, soups, galette and more can be a perfect complement to the traditional main course. Serving the meal family-style with platters and bowls for everyone to share or hosting a potluck with guests bringing assigned dishes can help reduce the stress of trying to prepare the entire meal yourself.

Decorate in Advance

From a seasonal wreath on the front door to a well-dressed table complete with place settings and a festive centerpiece, getting your decorating done early can not only reduce stress on the day of your event but also get you into the proper mindset for the celebration. A pastel or light-colored hue can add to the springtime vibes, and flowers, seasonal fruits in bowls, and decorated eggs can all add to the tablescap.

Keep the Kids in Mind

While the meal is likely a highlight of the event for many, the younger guests often look forward to the activities, such as decorating eggs or an Easter egg hunt. You can hard-boil eggs in advance and set up a decorating station, complete with dyes, markers, stickers and more. Or while you're finishing up inside, designate another adult or older children to hide pre-filled plastic eggs around the yard (weather permitting) and manage the hunt.

Find more ideas for hosting Easter festivities at eLivingtoday.com.

Photos courtesy of Unsplash



Brunch Made Easy

(Family Features) Gathering friends and family doesn't need to be fancy. With its prime positioning between breakfast and lunch, brunch is a more casual and lighter alternative to the typical dinner party.

When charged with hosting a mid-day gathering, a little pre-planning can go a long way toward ensuring your brunch get-together is as simple as it is scrumptious.

Get creative with decor. When prepping your table, think outside the box. Opt for unexpected serving dishes such as tartlet tins and vases, and transfer syrups and jams from their everyday containers to glass bowls or creamers. Fresh flowers and produce can add natural pops of color to the table and a bowl of fruit can make for an eye-catching centerpiece.

Plan a variety of dishes. Make sure you have a mix of both sweet and savory dishes on the menu that can please a wide variety of palates. Earmarking some recipes that can be made ahead, like pastries and casseroles, can be a simple way to avoid waking up extra early to prepare. Save the morning of your event for dishes that are best served fresh, like this Herbed Spanish Omelet, which features potatoes; fresh, spring herbs; and red onions, and packs protein, B-vitamins, and cancer-protective phytochemicals.

Serve it buffet-style. Setting your spread out on the counter and allowing guests to help themselves not only makes it easier for the host to mingle, but it allows guests to customize their meals as they wish and gives the gathering a more casual vibe. Try themed stations, such as a coffee or mimosa bar, parfait bar or bread bar, in addition to more traditional dishes to let guests take the customization to the next level.

For more brunch ideas and recipes, visit Culinary.net.

Herbed Spanish Omelet

Reprinted with permission from the American Institute for Cancer Research

Servings: 4

- 1 pound potatoes, peeled and diced or shredded
- water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup diced red onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 large whole eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 egg whites, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh basil
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives
- salt, to taste (optional)
- fresh herb sprigs, for garnish (optional)

Place potatoes in large pan. Cover with water. Bring to boil

and cook, uncovered, 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover and let stand about 10 minutes, or until potatoes are tender. Drain well.

In deep, 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion and garlic. Cook about 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add potatoes and cook 5 minutes.

Combine whole eggs and egg whites. Stir in parsley, basil, and chives. Season with salt, to taste, if desired. Pour mixture over potatoes in hot skillet. Reduce heat and cook, uncovered, about 10 minutes, or until bottom of omelet is golden.

If desired, brown top under toaster oven. Garnish with fresh herb sprigs, if desired.

Nutritional information per serving: 260 calories; 12 g total fat (2 g saturated fat); 28 g carbohydrates; 11 g protein; 2 g dietary fiber; 106 mg sodium.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images



Easter Appetizers Made Easy

(Family Features) If you'll be hosting friends and family for Easter this year, creating the perfect spread doesn't have to be hard. Make your gathering as simple as it is delicious by serving dishes that can be made ahead of time then easily put together on the big day.

Opting for an array of appetizers can help keep hungry people out of the kitchen until the main course is ready. Featuring easy prep and short cook times, these apps from "Cookin' Savvy" can let you spend more time creating memories with loved ones.

Whether you're celebrating with your nearest and dearest or hosting a larger crowd, these Deviled Eggs, Pimento Cheese Bites, and Spinach Bites recipes can be halved or doubled to fit your needs. Plus, they feature many ingredients you may already have on-hand, making them easy to prep ahead of time to avoid spending too much time in the kitchen while trying to host.

Find more recipe inspiration to make your Easter celebration extraordinary at Culinary.net.

Deviled Eggs

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Yield: 16 deviled eggs

8 boiled eggs
1/2-3/4 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons mustard
2 tablespoons dill pickle juice
1 package (2 1/2 ounces) real bacon pieces
1 teaspoon garlic powder
2 teaspoons onion powder
salt and pepper, to taste
smoked paprika, for garnish (optional)

Slice each egg and place whites on plate and yolks in bowl.

In bowl of yolks, add 1/2 cup mayonnaise, mustard, pickle juice, bacon pieces, garlic powder, onion powder, and salt and pepper, to taste. With fork or hand mixer, blend until smooth. Add more mayonnaise until mixture reaches desired smoothness.

Spoon or pipe mixture into egg whites. Garnish with smoked paprika, if desired.

Note: Deviled eggs can be made day before and kept covered in refrigerator until needed.

Pimento Cheese Bites

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Yield: 12 shells and 12 tops

2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
8 ounces cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 jar (4 ounces) pimentos, drained
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1 package (2 1/2 ounces) real bacon pieces
salt and pepper, to taste
2 packages frozen puff pastry shells

With hand mixer, blend cheddar cheese, cream cheese, mayonnaise, pimentos, garlic powder, onion powder, bacon pieces, and salt and pepper, to taste, until smooth; set aside.

Heat oven to 400 F. Thaw then bake pastry shells 15 minutes.

Remove tops and set aside. Spoon pimento cheese mixture into each shell. Place dab of pimento cheese mixture on tops for smaller appetizers.

Notes: Pimento cheese mixture can be made in advance and kept in refrigerator up to 5 days before using.

Spinach Bites

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Yield: 24 spinach bites

1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1 cup thawed frozen spinach
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup mozzarella cheese
1 package (2 1/2 ounces) real bacon pieces
1 teaspoon garlic powder
2 teaspoons onion powder
salt and pepper, to taste
1 package (2 sheets) frozen puff pastry

With hand mixer, blend cream cheese, mayonnaise, sour cream, spinach, Parmesan cheese, mozzarella, bacon pieces, garlic powder, onion powder, and salt and pepper, to taste.

Heat oven to 400 F. Thaw and roll out puff pastry sheets. Cut each sheet into 12 squares. Place each puff pastry square into hole in muffin pan then spoon spinach mixture into each square and pinch corners together. Bake 15 minutes and serve warm.

Note: Spinach mixture can be made in advance and kept in refrigerator up to 5 days before using.

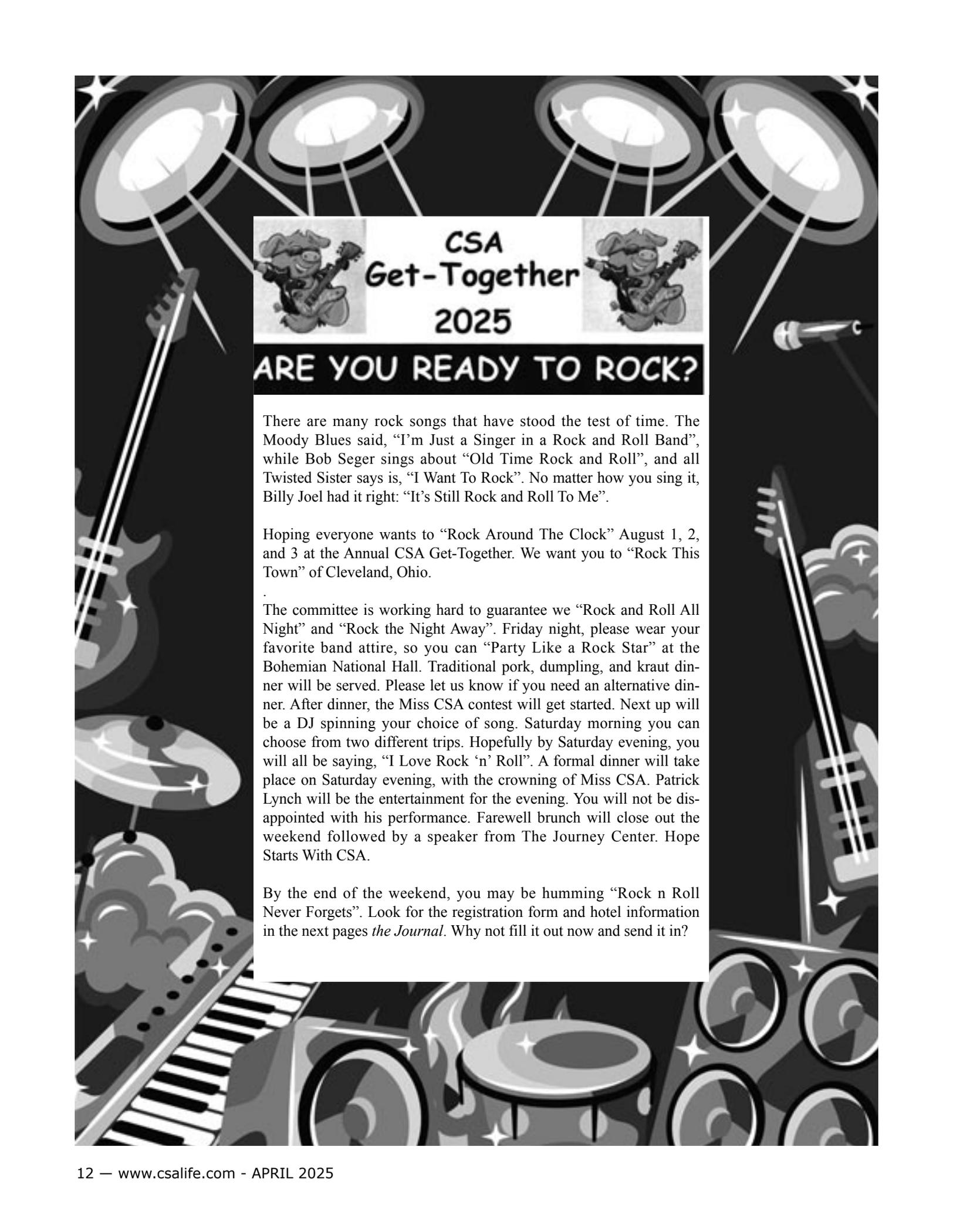


Did You
Dream of
Being a
Princess?

Take a
chance at
being our
Queen!

Join us 8/1 - 8/3
in Cleveland
for the
Miss CSA
Contest at the
GTG.

csalife.com

The background of the entire page is a stylized, monochromatic illustration of a rock band's stage. It features several large, glowing spotlights at the top, a microphone on the right, a keyboard in the bottom left, and various drums and cymbals at the bottom. The overall aesthetic is retro and energetic.

**CSA
Get-Together
2025**

ARE YOU READY TO ROCK?

There are many rock songs that have stood the test of time. The Moody Blues said, “I’m Just a Singer in a Rock and Roll Band”, while Bob Seger sings about “Old Time Rock and Roll”, and all Twisted Sister says is, “I Want To Rock”. No matter how you sing it, Billy Joel had it right: “It’s Still Rock and Roll To Me”.

Hoping everyone wants to “Rock Around The Clock” August 1, 2, and 3 at the Annual CSA Get-Together. We want you to “Rock This Town” of Cleveland, Ohio.

The committee is working hard to guarantee we “Rock and Roll All Night” and “Rock the Night Away”. Friday night, please wear your favorite band attire, so you can “Party Like a Rock Star” at the Bohemian National Hall. Traditional pork, dumpling, and kraut dinner will be served. Please let us know if you need an alternative dinner. After dinner, the Miss CSA contest will get started. Next up will be a DJ spinning your choice of song. Saturday morning you can choose from two different trips. Hopefully by Saturday evening, you will all be saying, “I Love Rock ‘n’ Roll”. A formal dinner will take place on Saturday evening, with the crowning of Miss CSA. Patrick Lynch will be the entertainment for the evening. You will not be disappointed with his performance. Farewell brunch will close out the weekend followed by a speaker from The Journey Center. Hope Starts With CSA.

By the end of the weekend, you may be humming “Rock n Roll Never Forgets”. Look for the registration form and hotel information in the next pages *the Journal*. Why not fill it out now and send it in?



2025 CSA FRATERNAL LIFE GET-TOGETHER REGISTRATION FORM

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

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

PHONE: 216-392-9074

EMAIL: ddibianca.csalife@gmail.com

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

DISTRICT COUNCIL #10 CSA

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

PLEASE PRINT BELOW:

One form per guest

NAME: _____ LODGE (if applicable) _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST CSA GET-TOGETHER? _____

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ROCK SONG? _____

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

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

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

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

SATURDAY DINNER: (PLEASE CHOOSE ONE)

BRAISED SHORT RIB _____ LAKE ERIE WALLEYE _____ VEGETABLE STRUDEL _____

DAY TRIP (PLEASE CHOOSE ONE)

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

HANDICAPPED: YES _____ NO: _____ DIETARY NEEDS: _____

DRIVING _____ FLYING _____ OTHER _____



CSA Get-Together 2025



ARE YOU READY TO ROCK?



AUGUST 1st, 2nd, 3rd

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

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

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

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

BOOK YOUR ROOM:

Call 1-800-445-8667 code CSA

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

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

TRIP #1

ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME



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



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

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



TRIP #2

GOODTIME III

"CLEVELAND'S LARGEST EXCURSION SHIP"

FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED SINCE 1958

Narrated Luncheon Cruise 2025



GOODTIME III LUNCH MENU

Boarding 11 AM

Lunch served on ship, dockside at 11:00 AM

Cruising 12PM (Noon) - 2:00 PM

(Served on China w / Silverware)

House baked Focaccia Bread with butter

Chicken Piccata with creamy lemon caper sauce (GF)

Roasted Smashed redskin potatoes

with fresh herbs (GF DF)

Buttered whole top baby carrots (GF)

Fruit Cup

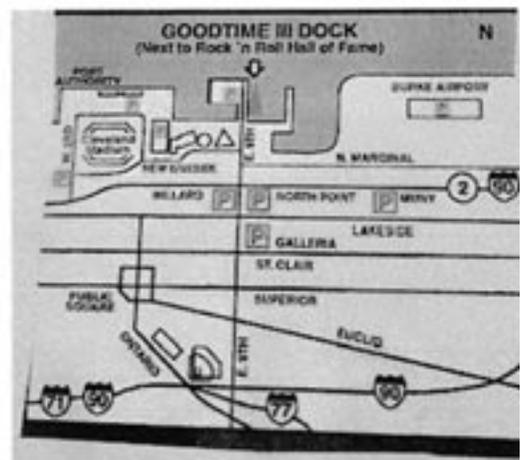
House baked Cookie assortment

***vegan option available upon request**

Adults \$55

Children Ages 5-12 ~ \$45

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



American-Czech Educational Center
PROUDLY PRESENTS

Czech Festival Raffle

4690 LANSDOWNE AVE ST. LOUIS, MO 63116

GRAND PRIZE \$3,000.00

2nd Prize
\$1,500

3rd Prize
\$1,000

4th Prize
\$500

\$25.00 Per Ticket
Buy 4 Tickets
get 1 Ticket Free

See any BOD member for Tickets

Drawing
held on
SATURDAY,
APRIL 26, 2025
at 6:00 pm

Follow us on Social Media
to stay up to date on events



ACECSTL.ORG

For more information contact Marla 314-401-9214



Fraternal Calendar

April	18	Home Office closed for Good Friday
May	3	Join Hands Day
	26	Home Office Closed for Memorial Day
June	6	Deadline - Miss CSA Application and Photos
	27	Deadline - Fraternalist of the Year Nomination Application
July	2	Deadline - Kropik Scholarship Application
	2	Deadline- Receipt information form for CSA Scholarship
	4	Home office closed for 4th of July
August	1-3	88th Annual Get-Together in Cleveland Ohio
September	1	Home Office closed for Labor Day
	26	Deadline - Photo Contest Entries
	26	Deadline - Bowl-O-Rama Entries
October	13	Home Office closed for Indigenous Peoples' Day (Columbus) Day
	15	Deadline - Veterans Names/Articles for November Journal
	31	Deadline - Bowl-O-Rama Scores
November	27-28	Home Office closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
December	1	Deadline - CSA Serves Matching Funds Request
	24-25	Home Office closed for Christmas Holiday

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



Attending A Lodge Meeting – 80 Years Ago

While looking through the library and archive at Sokol Detroit, Diana Balint of Lodge Pingree No. 366 found a 1940 CSA booklet on the official rituals of lodge meetings.

She found it fascinating and charming and thought it provided real insight into the past, when fraternal activities were respected and fostered a sense of community.

Below is an original article she wrote highlighting these past practices and an image of the booklet she used for reference:

In the history of our fraternal organization, rituals and rules followed each meeting and fostered a sense of belonging and tradition.

PASSWORD, PLEASE.

Each member in good standing knew the annual password which was changed each year by the President of the Executive Committee of the Czechoslovak Society. At the opening of each meeting, the President would request the officers and members to take their places. The Sentry would then lock the door and allow no entry until the meeting was called to order.

The Lodge Guide would then receive the password in a whisper from the President. The Guide would then approach each member in attendance and receive the password in a whisper.

FORGET YOUR PASSWORD?

If a member forgot their password, the sentry would check the status of the member to see if they were a member in good standing. They would then receive the password whispered to them and would be welcome to attend.

THE SIGN OF COURTESY

Each member knew the sign of courtesy

which was the right hand placed over the heart and a slight bow.

THE GAVEL CODE

The President of the lodge would use raps of the gavel to signal.

- 1 rap: Call to order
- 2 raps: Officers stand
- 3 raps: Members rise
- 4 raps: All form brotherly circle
- Next single rap: sit

THE VOTING SIGN

Used for 'yes' or 'no' votes, members raised their right arm halfway with the palm facing outward with the fingers and thumb together.

*By Sis. Diana Balint,
Lodge Pingree No. 366,
Detroit, Michigan*

*Taken from 'Regulations and Ritual for
Lodges of Czechoslovak Society of
America, Executive Committee CSA,
Cicero, Illinois, January, 1940*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Input Needed on the Detroit Tigers Game

Lodge Pingree No. 366, Dearborn Heights, Michigan – Nazdar, Sisters and Brothers of Lodge Pingree No. 366. I'm praying everybody got shoveled out from the previous month's snowstorms and is finally warming up! I don't have any news from members to report, except myself. I am happy to say that I'm feeling great!

Vesele Velikonoce (Happy Easter) to one and all, praying that all of you remember to praise the rising of Jesus

on this Holy Day. Wishing everybody had a basket full of goodies!

We hope that everyone had a Happy Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, and St. Patrick's Day, enjoying chocolates, Paczki, and green beer! Now it's time to get back to kielbasa, sauerkraut, and kolache!

Spring is upon us, and now that the weather is much better, I'm asking all of our fraternal Sisters and Brothers to join us at H.I.S. Church Anglican on the

third Saturday of the month for their Food Pantry. We get there at 9:00 a.m. and it is over at 11:00 a.m. We then have a very brief meeting.

We have a deposit on a Detroit Tigers baseball game and your input on a date would be very helpful.

Please, please join us. This is your lodge and we need your help!

*Fraternally,
Jeff Teichman*

Show Off Your Artistic Skills in April!

Lodge Yankee-Jungmann No. 77, Lombard, Illinois – March was our last Zoom meeting for this winter. As in the past, it has worked out well for our lodge. A member from Florida has even been able to join us! Thanks to lodge member Chuck Janda for arranging these meetings for us.

Lodge member Eunice Semple has been our Treasurer since 2012. Eunice has changed and updated our reports to

be computer generated. This was a very timely process converting over to spreadsheets. Thank you, Eunice, for your time and accounting for every penny.

A special thank-you to lodge members Margaret Jasinski and Chuck Michalek. They took time to conduct the audit for our annual report.

We will be back to in-person meetings for April at the Home Office.

Members will be using their artistic skills decorating a bunny, chick, or egg to celebrate Easter.

Wishing everyone a Happy Easter and Spring! With the time change, get out and enjoy the warming weather, working in the garden, and cutting the grass!

*Fraternally,
Mary Ellen Janda*

Scholarship Fund Report



February 10, 2025 – March 10, 2025

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

IN MEMORY OF MARVIN LANZEL

Lodge Lincoln No. 7

Lodge Central Star No. 411

Total Donations: \$200.00

LODGE HAPPENINGS

David DiBianca Bowls First “300” Game!

Lodge Paramount/Southgate No. 372, Maple Heights, Ohio – It was a grizzly, drizzly, 39 degree day for our meeting on February 27 at the DTJ in Taborville, Ohio.

After Kris read letters from the Home Office, we again discussed the upcoming merger with BetterLife. We are glad that they are going to let the lodges keep doing what they’re doing to keep the Czech traditions alive.

A special shout out to David DiBianca who bowled his first “300” game on February 17 at the Pawnee Lanes in Bedford, Ohio. He’d been trying for weeks to hit that “300”!

Congratulations to Mary Ann, Bruce, and Johnny who were our lucky 50/50 winners!

Remember to save the date, August 1-3, for the Get-Together 2025! The hotel will be the Double Tree in downtown Cleveland. A reservation link is on page 13 of this *Journal*. Remember to have your favorite band or concert T-shirt when you come!

I was in charge of the “snack”; we had a choice of cheese, supreme, or pepperoni pizza, and salad with a choice of black and green olives, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, and two types of cheese to top it with, along with an assortment of salad dressings. Thank you, Mary Ann! Donna also brought Michigan Cherry BBQ potato chips, an interesting combo of smoke and sweet taste. For dessert, there were Girl Scout Thin Mint mini cupcakes, vanilla mini cupcakes, and Mary Ann made mini cheesecakes. All

was very tasty. Thank you both for the additions to the snack.

Our next meetings for 2025 will be: May 22, June 11 (Bus Trip), July 24, August 28, September 25, October 23, November 20, and December 18 (our Christmas luncheon). Come to a meeting, reconnect with friends, and have a tasty snack. We would love to see you!

*Fraternally,
Annette Reichman*



TEAM	DOWN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot
5	5	3	X	8	8	8	8	8	9	8	X	8
	8	28	46	64	82	90	99	119	137	145		
	9	X	X	X	X	7	8	9	9	X	X	X
	20	50	80	107	127	145	164	183	192	222		
	7	2	X	X	9	7	X	8	7	8	X	
	9	38	58	75	95	123	141	149	167	187		
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	30	60	90	120	150	180	210	240	270	300		
	X	7	7	X	X	8	19	X	X	X		
	19	28	48	76	95	104	124					
	1201	32	42	59	62	73	84	90	101			

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Tabs Turned in for Pull Tab Palooza!

Lodge Benjamin Franklin No. 02, Seven Hills, Ohio – Lodge Franklin gathered for the Presidents Day meeting on February 17 at our Mama Romitos haunt. The birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln were commemorated and the birthday of our own President Scott Krecow was celebrated. Scott has been the lodge's leader going on his 16th consecutive year. For the past 30 years, he has been the volunteer number caller, on both Saturday and Sunday, at Trinity Bingo in Garfield Heights, Ohio. Scott takes on a leadership role in anything he is involved in. The past several years, he has been Bowling League Secretary on Tuesday and Thursday nights at The Seven Hills House of Thrills. Happy birthday, Scott, it was a pleasure to be in your company on your special day!

Treasurer Ken Burdzinski brought in the financials for 2024. They were put into the competent hands of the audit committee of Jimmy Zidlicky and Mike Cernosky, who declared them in excellent order! Special thanks to brother Cernosky for filling in as secretary, as Vicki Zidlicky was absent.

Team Franklin bowlers finished in the middle of the pack once again. This last third will hopefully see them finish hot. Scott "the tower of power" Krecow recently unleashed a 200-

243-299-752 series for the CSA good guys; 299 was Scott's all time high single. As you would probably have guessed, it was that pesky ten pin. Congratulations, Scotty!

Upcoming meetings will be held on April 28, May 19, and June 16, 2025. Please bring any pull tabs you have saved, as the Ronald McDonald House Pull Tab Palooza is set for early May. A big thanks goes out to eight-year-old Eric Adams who turned over a bag of tabs to the Zidlicky boys recently. As a friend of our lodge, Eric thought it would be neat to help RMH through our tab collections!

*Fraternal Regards,
Jeff Zidlicky*



Fraternal Well Wishes

Dave Kus

Lodge Benjamin Franklin No. 002

Vicki Zidlicky

Lodge Benjamin Franklin No. 002

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Looking for the Signs

Lodge Kruh Osvojenych Zen a Panu No. 121, Dillonvale, Ohio – After the long, gray, dreary days of winter, one can't help but feel excited for the fresh, rainy, blossoming days of spring. As of this writing, our southeastern Ohio area was just beginning to make the anxiously awaited changeover into spring-like weather. Daylight savings time had recently occurred, and the days had become slightly warmer, and considerably longer. What a difference that one hour makes! The “signs” are among us.

Lodge No. 121 adjusted our March meeting date to allow us to gather at the Dillonvale Presbyterian Church to help support their recent Soup and Sandwich Sale. The Lovells donated pots of vegetable soup, crackers, and bottled water on behalf of CSA. The Sniders and Ebright supported the event by purchasing meals and carry-out items.

We held our meeting after the event was over in the church social hall and helped with some necessary clean-up before leaving for the afternoon. A good time was had by our members

along with friends from the church and surrounding community who were there to share in the event. Our lodge was able to make an in-person donation to the church treasurer, Leah Tysco-Creamer, as a part of our CSA Serves Project. We voted to donate to the St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Tiltonsville, Ohio, as part of the project, too.

Included in our business items were discussions about the proposed merger with BetterLife Insurance Company, along with how our membership would like our convention delegates to proceed with the voting. We also discussed the finality of the disbandment of our local District Council No. 9 and any changes moving forward as a result. We are thankful to our past D.C. No. 9 President, Peggy Goclan, for her diligence and fraternalism in taking care of the necessary paperwork and financial disbursements. We had a good run, Lodge No. 251, Lodge No. 310, and Lodge No. 121! It appears 2025 is bringing many changes, friends. I guess it's true when they say, “The only thing constant is change.”

After our meeting, we enjoyed a variety of desserts including banana nut muffins, carrot cake, orange Jello salad, a cherry trifle, and fresh fruit. Two-thirds of our group members are diabet-

ics. Thankfully, none of us had an upcoming check-up with the doctor... wink! wink! While we enjoyed tasting all the desserts, the carrot cake and the cherry trifle seemed to be the top picks of the day.

I promised updates on some of our young adult members last month and will be bringing those to you in the May *Journal*. Moving forward, we will further be determining our Join Hands Day donations, GTG donations, and considering possible GTG delegates. We are anxiously awaiting news on our Lodge Recognition Program application, as well. There are many exciting things coming!

We hope you continue to experience the “signs” of spring... robins chirping, warmer and longer days, bees and butterflies, budding trees, and even allergy symptoms. Bring it on, Mother Nature! We're more than ready! Have a blessed Easter and remember to check on someone you love today.

*With happiness and all the best
springtime wishes,
Sister Wendy Kurtz Lovell*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

A Pizza Party; and a Very Special Promise

Lodge Woodrow Wilson No. 377, Brookfield, Illinois – Apologies for not checking in last month – things were a little busy for me! You might think this means I have double the news to share, but not really.

I can report that our March in-person meeting was a very social pizza party, courtesy of the men in our active lodge group. It was a great time for socializing, to simply catch up with each other and enjoy each other's company – with a little bit of lodge business thrown in!



Chris and Jenn: proposal, acceptance, and celebration!

We were treated to an adorable video of one of our youngest and newest members, Lukaš Dropka, by his Babi, Missy. We also were delighted to have Nick Kosmas from the Home Office (and Lodge Betsy Ross) join us as a guest.

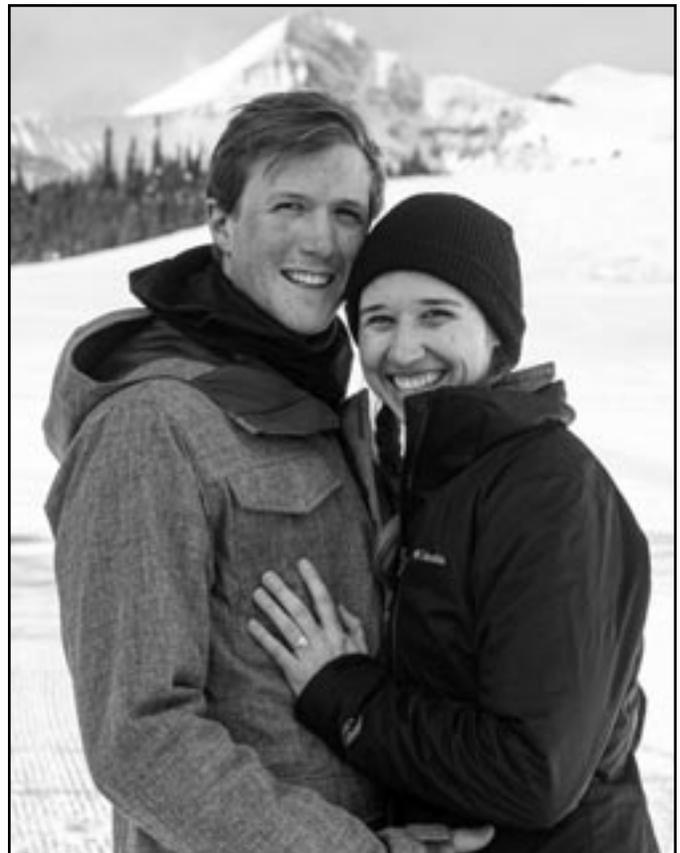
Lodge business includes that we are working on planning another active year, and we hope that you might be part of it with us. Please let me know if you are involved in any particular community projects yourself, so that we can add a record of your volunteer and service time to our reports – and perhaps even support your efforts in some way?

My personal big news is that my son, Chris, has become engaged to be married! No firm plans have been shared yet, but the proposal itself was unique and wonderful. His fiancé Jenn said “yes” on the top of a ski slope at Big Sky Resort in Montana, the same place where they first met. I, of course, and our whole family are so very excited about their news: it is truly clear to all of us just how happy they are together, and what a very good match they make. We wish them many, many wonderful adventures ahead!

Do you have any news to share with our members? Perhaps a graduation coming up soon, this Spring, or any other milestones? Please let me know!

Fraternally,

*Jean Hemzáček Laukant
hemzacek.j@gmail.com*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Let the Games Begin! (Game Day That Is...)

Lodge Cleveland Chapter No. 219, Cleveland, Ohio – We had our meeting on March 11, 2025 at the Parma Heights Library. There were nine members attending.

Judy brought in the annual report from “Journey”, one of our charities, for members to look over.

Ceska Sin Hall is having pork or chicken dinners starting April 23. The Sokol organization is having a Reverse Raffle on April 12. Our District meeting is on May 1. Lots of activities are coming up.

Freddie Shima handed out copies of the latest Lodge Recognition Program for everyone to look over. We will discuss what we have done and what we have to do to obtain the Platinum Award.

Freddie also began discussion on what we are going to do in the next months. In April, we will have a “game day” after our regular meeting. In May, we will make raffle baskets for a

DTJ event. In June, we will go out to lunch for Mother’s and Father’s Days. In July, we will have a meeting and picnic at Sylvia’s house. In August, we will bring in donations for Providence House and make raffle baskets for a DTJ event. In September, we will have a speaker, hopefully Jan Russell, as she has had many wonderful vacations in foreign lands.

Freddie is a docent at our Metropolitan Cleveland Zoo and announced that a baby sloth bear has recently been born.

Our 50/50 raffle was won by Kathy and Tony. We all sang “Happy birthday” to Tony. His birthday was March 12.

We ended the afternoon with some rousing games of bingo, with many winners.

The crocuses are blooming – welcome Spring!

*Fraternally yours,
Judy (Sevcik) Genco
Scribe*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Jigsaw Puzzle Competition

Lodge DuPage Pioneers/Edison No. 409, Lombard, Illinois
– Our March meeting was attended by nine members and our guest, Pres. Ken Dvorsky of District Council No. 12. Ken was kind enough to install our officers for the 2025 year: President Linda Burton, Vice President Lisa Cassai, Secretary and Scribe Gerri Romanelli, Treasurer Dale Burton, and



Sentry Jim Wozniak. Members applauded after the installation and wished officers a good “reign.”

Sis. Kelly Deegan and Bro. Ken gave us an update on the CSA/BetterLife merger. CSA Home Office staff will soon be traveling to Madison, Wisconsin to meet their BetterLife counterparts, compare notes, and get to know one another. All dealings sound very positive and CSA brothers and sisters look forward to this new fraternal path.

Members had lots of fun planning our Jigsaw Puzzle Competition to be held in April. Sis. Annmarie purchased a number of 100-piece puzzles with cute pictures. We felt 100 pieces was an amount everyone could work with. We have invited members of Lodges Brookfield and Betsy Ross to join the fun. Prizes will be awarded after the one-hour time limit for first, second, and third place. We know there are few good puzzlers who can assemble one quickly and win a prize!

Sis. Linda reported Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery will be holding a Memorial Day event with a Color Guard, special speaker, children from the T.G. Masaryk School, and a cemetery tour. This has always been a very popular and well-attended holiday event. For information, their website is www.friendsofbnc.org.

We wished Bro. Jim Wozniak a happy birthday, enjoyed refreshments, and lingered to chat and catch up.

*Happy Spring!
Gerri Romanelli*



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

Installation Ceremony

Lodge Laurel No. 452, Ashford, Connecticut – We held our meeting on February 23 at the home of Sister Marion Varga. We began with the Pledge to the Flag, led by youth member, Mason Varga, and the Sign of Courtesy. The new password was then given to us by Sister President Kirsten Varga. The first order of business was our Installation of Officers Ceremony. Deacon Brother Lawrence Goodwin conducted the installation. He read the charges to the officers, then proceeded

to administer the Oath of Office. The pictures show officers taking the oath. Deacon Larry then proclaimed all as “Obligated Officers of Lodge Laurel No. 452”.

We proceeded with our meeting, accepting last month’s minutes and the monthly and annual financial reports. We heard several communications, including the CSA Serves and Lodge Recognition Program activities and regulations. We decided on our CSA Serves Charities: the Windham-Tolland

4-H Camp, the Windham Theatre Guild, and Safe Net Ministries, a food and essentials pantry in Stafford Springs.

We made some decisions about Lodge Recognition activities and will continue with those as the year goes along. We discussed our Rada cutlery fundraiser. We all received catalogs and orders are due on May 5.

Sister Margaret discussed the 4-H Camp March Daily Raffle. Members purchased tickets for the raffle. Several members had also donated gift cards to the raffle. Good luck to us! Margaret thanked members for their donations. She also asked if anyone might be able to help set up for the 4-H auction, starting on April 16. We will check our calendars.

Following the meeting, our auditors did a great job of auditing the books and annual report. We all partook in delicious refreshments and camaraderie.

Looking forward to Spring!

*Fraternally,
Marion Varga*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Classes Resume at Czech School

Lodge Century of Progress/Bila Hora No. 231, Cicero, Illinois – Out of the darkness of Winter, we are well on our way to Spring. Although we can be surprised by a Spring snowstorm somewhere along the way, Spring is here! Our members, in fact, celebrated the fact that we are on our way to better weather. (See photo.) Yeah! We were celebrating getting back to our monthly lodge meetings. Yeah! Lodge No. 231 did not hold meetings in January and February due to inclement weather. We missed our colleagues.

We held our formal meeting with the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports accepted. The Secretary read the numerous communications we received from those soliciting for funds and those thanking us for our contributions.

The T.G. Masaryk School representative briefly reported on the numerous classes being held, including those held on Zoom, reaching throughout the world. To satisfy your curiosity, you

may want to go to their website: Czechschoolchicago.org/classes/for/adults.

Mary Ann Slavik continues her work with the children of Puerto Rico. Mary Ann, if you are reading this, you may want to send me some photos to include with these articles.

Ken Dvorsky was asked to explain the thought behind the merger of the CSA with BetterLife, which is a Wisconsin domestic fraternal benefit society. It seems that the regulatory environment for all insurance companies is becoming increasingly costly due to numerous state regulations, so a merger became necessary. Members were especially concerned about their policies and annuities and whether they are sustainable—the answer was yes!

The situation with the support of Ukraine in its effort to defend its country is uncanny and sad. Lodge members agreed. The Door County Candle Company, with local volunteers, began making sweet smelling candles in the

blue and yellow colors of Ukraine several years ago with the thought of raising funds to assist Ukraine in its efforts. I have visited with the candle company's lovely owner who is so devoted to the effort. She is sending the proceeds of the candle sales to Ukraine and to date she has sent over \$1 million and continues to contribute every day. To learn how to order a candle or two or more and join the drive to help Ukraine, visit doorcountycandle.com/pages/fundraising-program Please help.

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

*Fraternally,
Elaine Tejcek*



In Memoriam

Claim	Name	Lodge	Location	Date of Death	Age
55920	Henderson, Judith E.	002	KINGSVILLE, OH	02/18/2025	70
55927	Rakaczky, Joseph A.	004	ORLANDO, FL	07/28/2024	66
55904	Semenic, Jason	007	LEMONT, IL	09/02/2024	50
55913	Garbars, Darryl G.	007	PLAINFIELD, IL	01/14/2025	88
55903	Tumpa, Edward G.	077	LA GRANGE PARK, IL	10/30/2024	76
55931	Kovarik, Craig J.	151	LISLE, IL	03/02/2025	63
55910	Walkup, Joann M.	157	MONETT, MO	02/04/2025	87
55917	Asie, Mazola	211	MISSOURI CITY, TX	01/27/2025	90
55924	Knight, Mary	211	PLAINFIELD, NJ	02/22/2025	72
55921	Klima, Curtis R.	273	BELLEVILLE, KS	04/13/2024	79
55929	Burkiewicz, John F.	310	WHEELING, WV	02/25/2025	42
55930	Winzenreid, Helen J.	310	BELLAIRE, OH	02/22/2025	93
55914	Marcero, Thomas W.	366	CANTON, MI	01/26/2025	77
55923	Green, Diane M.	366	PORTER, TX	01/14/2025	90
55902	Phillips, Hana	377	RUSKIN, FL	12/16/2024	85
55912	Tomaskovic, Irene A.	377	DARIEN, IL	10/30/2024	95
55932	Portee, Elliott	388	ROCKFORD, IL	07/19/2019	70
55911	Cech, Martin J.	422	MORRISONVILLE, NY	11/08/2024	85
55933	Tortora, Rosalie	422	MARLBORO, NJ	02/01/2025	75
55906	Gowac, Lorraine A.	452	HADDAM, CT	01/25/2025	90
55908	Pivonka, Thomas E.	452	TOLLAND, CT	01/26/2025	68
55905	Debow, Dolores S.	458	GOLD CANYON, AZ	08/29/2024	92
55919	Lucas, John D.	469	WEST BABYLON, NY	02/09/2025	63
55925	Forbes, George	469	CONYERS, GA	02/02/2025	89
55915	Kraft, Lorraine	475	MADISON, WI	02/11/2025	92
55926	Rosenfeld, Grace A.	479	CHERRY HILL, NJ	07/03/2024	87
55928	Kolosky, Stanley J.	479	N. HUNTINGDON, PA	04/06/2020	67
55934	Horvath, Adrian	479	GREENSBURG, PA	01/20/2025	76
55909	Forbes, Eric	484	PHILADELPHIA, PA	12/23/2024	48
55918	Lamb, Aldora	484	PHILADELPHIA, PA	01/02/2025	91



In Memoriam

Marjorie Ann Kopecek Nejd, age 88, died March 10, 2025, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. A native of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, born October 8, 1936, to Helen Kroupa and Charles Kopecek, and a lifetime resident of the Cedar Rapids area, she was united in marriage to Edward John Nejd on June 1, 1957, in Hus Church, Cedar Rapids, where she has been a member since the early 1950's. She is survived by her children, Charles (DeeAnn), Cedar Rapids, and Phillip (Michelle) Brandon; grandchildren Emily Nejd, Waukee, and Tom Nejd, Independence; bonus grandchildren, Scott (Kasey) Szopinski, Hazelton; bonus great grandchildren, Wyatt, Emma, and Gerrett; sister-in-law Sheryl Nejd, Marengo; niece Lynne Marie Nejd Erger (Paul), Marengo; nephew Douglas Nejd (Brenda), Center Point; close cousins; and countless dear friends. She was preceded in death by her husband, grandparents, and parents. In consideration of the span of her life events, she has always considered her family to be of the utmost importance.

At the early age of 14, she began teaching beginners gymnastics for girls ages 5-12 through the auspices of Sokol Gymnastics Association. She continued teaching and coaching the Junior Division – teenage girls, and the Adult Women's Division gymnastics for 27 years. Among her accomplishments, she was the first certified judge of girls' gymnastics in the State of Iowa, being certified by the Iowa High School Girls Athletic Association.

This first generation Czech-American had the opportunity to experience childhood surrounded by Czechoslovakian folk art. Learning from her uncle, Martin Polehna, as a child, he and her mother prepared dyes and created treasured works of art. In 1955, following graduation from Wilson High School, Cedar Rapids, she attended and graduated in 1957 from the Rae Vogue Commercial Art School, Chicago Art Institute, in Chicago, Illinois. She continued to embrace her cultural heritage as an independent artist.

In the early 1970's, a museum of Czech and Slovak heritage began in

Cedar Rapids. Marj was a member of the Fine Arts Organization, the group that evolved into today's National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. It was during this time she became the first artist in residence and designed the first logo of the young museum. As time continued, she volunteered hundreds of hours to the perpetuation of Czech and Slovak culture and heritage, and received numerous accolades acknowledging her accomplishments. Her expertise in this field has earned both national and international acclaim, with her artistry being displayed at the Smithsonian Art Institute, in Washington, D.C.

As an extension of the Czech culture, she and Olga Drahozal formed the Czech Heritage Singers group.

Marj Nejd received the designation of Master Folk Artist in 1986. Consequently, the little nine-year-old girl, who learned from her uncle and mother, became the Master. In this capacity, and under the auspices of the Iowa Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, Marj Nejd educated and cultivated numerous Iowans accepted to the Apprenticeship Program, in the 'occupational and familial folk tradition' of the Czech and Slovak cultures. She continued teaching this practice. Every year, she taught classes, volunteering her time, for all to learn the folk art of egg decorating, perpetuating their cultural heritage.

An honor of a lifetime occurred in 2014, when she was co-commissioned to create a pin presented to Madeleine Albright, then the 64th U.S. Secretary of State, and gifted by the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library to her during her visit to the Iowa Museum.

Beginning in 2015, Marj began creating an original yearly design, which was then transferred to Christmas ornaments, and became available for public sale, as a collection of Czech folk art. Her God given talents have been shared with literally hundreds over the years. She considered it her privilege and pleasure to have been able to do so.

In the letter to Marj, announcing her selection, Iowa Department of Cultural



Affairs Director, William H. Jackson said, "your continued involvement as a master artist in the Iowa Arts Council's Folk Arts Apprenticeship program, excellence in artistry, and commitment and support toward the nurturing of Czechoslovak traditions in Iowa, clearly establish you as one of "Iowa's Living Treasures". Marj was only the second person in the history of the Iowa Arts Council to have received this award, up to 1992.

January 27, 2024, was proclaimed Marj Nejd Recognition Day – Iowa's Living Treasure by Cedar Rapids Mayor Tiffany O'Donnell.

Her life has been a symphony of volunteering in numerous organizations. These include teaching classes in Czechoslovakian egg decorating at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, at festivals, and other venues. She was a member of Sokol, Czech Heritage Singers, Federation of Czech Groups, Damska, Czech Heritage Foundation, CSA Fraternal Life, National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, and Guild of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant"!

The family requests memorial donation may be made to donor's choice of National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, Cedar Rapids; Sokol Gymnastics & Fitness; or Czech National Cemetery. The family sincerely thanks everyone for their outpouring of love and support.

In Memoriam



Sonja C. Blazek (né Zdenka Vlasta Cernoch) of Naperville, formerly of Darien and long-time resident of North Riverside, passed away on November 15, 2024 at Meadowbrook Manor in Naperville at the age of 98, one month short of her 99th birthday.

She was preceded in death by her husband Laddie Edward Blazek (né Ladaslav Blazek), father Rudolf Cernoch, mother Anna Tumova Cernoch, brother Rudolph G. Cernoch, and sister-in-law Joan Cernoch.

She is survived by her son Larry (Kathy) Blazek, daughter Vicky (Rick) Stumpf; grandsons Luke (Taylor) Blazek, Eric (Nichole) Stumpf; and three amazing great-grandchildren Gavin Stumpf, Layla Stumpf, and Mateo Blazek.

She will be remembered by her family as “Babi”, Czech for grandma. Ever proud of being Czech, which was her first language, she kept those traditions and cuisine alive her whole life. She graduated from Goodwin Grade School and then Morton East High School to begin work at Western Electric as a comptometer payroll recorder. She met Laddie after World War II, at Pilsen Park, a famous Czech outdoor dance venue. They married and she worked at

the LaSalle Hotel in payroll until becoming pregnant with Vicky, then stayed home in North Riverside to raise her and brother Larry who came five years later. She was very active and supportive of the kids’ school activities and never shied away from hard work, often helping Laddie with heavy yard work. After the children moved out, she was a volunteer with Brookfield Zoo for 25 years.

When grandchildren came along, she was a regular babysitter and often took the grandsons on special field trips downtown or to Wisconsin with Laddie. The boys just loved visiting and enjoyed their pristine pool in summer and all of her special Babi foods.

After Laddie died, she moved to a condo and had a wonderful time enjoying life, local field trips of her own, and socializing with new neighbors.

Ever the sassy one, she had the chutzpah to speak her mind, and was often hilariously blunt, more so as the years went on, to everyone’s amusement.

At her assisted living center and then nursing home, she regularly cracked staff up with her sassiness. She also made many friends, and will be greatly missed by everyone who knew her.

Babi was a force to be reckoned with.

A moment of silence was held in memory of Lodge Lincoln No. 7’s deceased member **Marvin Lanzel**. Lodge members voted to make a donation to the CSA Scholarship in his name.



With profound sorrow, we announce the passing of **Stan Papuga**, who left us on December 14, 2024, at 80. Born on April 29, 1944, Stan was the youngest of three siblings and lived a life full of dedication, service, and love for his family, friends, and community.

For decades, Stan was a respected attorney; his dedication to his work was unparalleled. He provided invaluable legal counsel and support to CSA Fraternal Life, where he served as their trusted attorney for many years. His commitment to his work was unparalleled, and he played a pivotal role in the company’s success and integrity.

A longtime member of Sokol Pilsen, Stan became a proud member in October of 1968. His dedication to the lodge was unwavering, and he made significant contributions to the lodge’s growth and success.

Above all, Stan will be remembered for his kindness, wisdom, and sense of duty to those around him. He leaves a powerful legacy that will continue inspiring those who knew him.

Stan will be deeply missed by all who knew him. We invite you to share your memories and stories of Stan, as we come together to celebrate his life. May his memory be a blessing.

A full obituary will be published in a future issue of *the Journal*.

Lodge Cleveland Chapter No. 219 held a moment of silence for their past member, **Elmer Soos**, who passed away recently. Elmer was a long-time member of CSA who will be missed.

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Much to Celebrate!

Lodge Lincoln No. 7, Berwyn, Illinois – Congratulations are in store for the Wilt family! In December, Lauren Wilt graduated from the School of Law at UIC. While working full time, she completed a four-year night school program in 3.5 years! We are so very proud of you, Lauren! Now on to the Bar! Meanwhile Adam and Lauren welcomed their miracle baby, Theodore “Theo” Gary, who was born on February 5. They blessed Grandma Vera Wilt with a precious grandson, Aunt Alix Fron with a handsome nephew, and Garrett Wilt with a cousin. We are so very happy for your whole family!

The February 16 meeting was held at the new home of Vera Wilt. We came hungry and Vera served us a meal of chili. She prepared two pots of chili which were both from prize winning recipes; regular beef chili and white chili. Matt brought an appetizer of tasty cheese sticks with meat, and John Pritasil baked delicious cornbread. For

dessert, Pat Smolucha baked chocolate chip cookies and individual cherry cheesecakes. President Matt Schultz called the meeting to order, and then we recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. There were seven members in attendance and one visitor. Chris Lanzel’s son-in-law, Johan, who lives in Germany, joined us for our meeting. Matt expressed his hopes of us receiving the Platinum Award for our previous year of activities and service to CSA. We reviewed possible activities and decided to reach out to our youth with a mailing in April. We are also thinking about a nomination for Fraternalist of the Year.

On March 22, we met at 9:00 a.m. to volunteer at Operation Support our Troops America. Afterwards, we had lunch at the Bavarian Lodge in Lisle and had our monthly business meeting.

In April, we will meet at 2:30 p.m. at the home of Vera Wilt located at 377 DesPlaines Avenue, Riverside, Illinois.

We will enjoy pizza while socializing and writing cards to our youth.

We will not be meeting in the month of May, but look forward to seeing everyone in June!

Sending Easter blessings to you and your family! We hope that you are enjoying the beautiful spring weather!

*Fraternally,
Pat Smolucha*





Hoppy Easter

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

BASKET
 CANDY
 CHOCOLATE
 EASTER
 SPRING

BONNET
 CARROT
 DINNER
 EGGS

BUNNY
 CELEBRATION
 DRESS
 FAMILY

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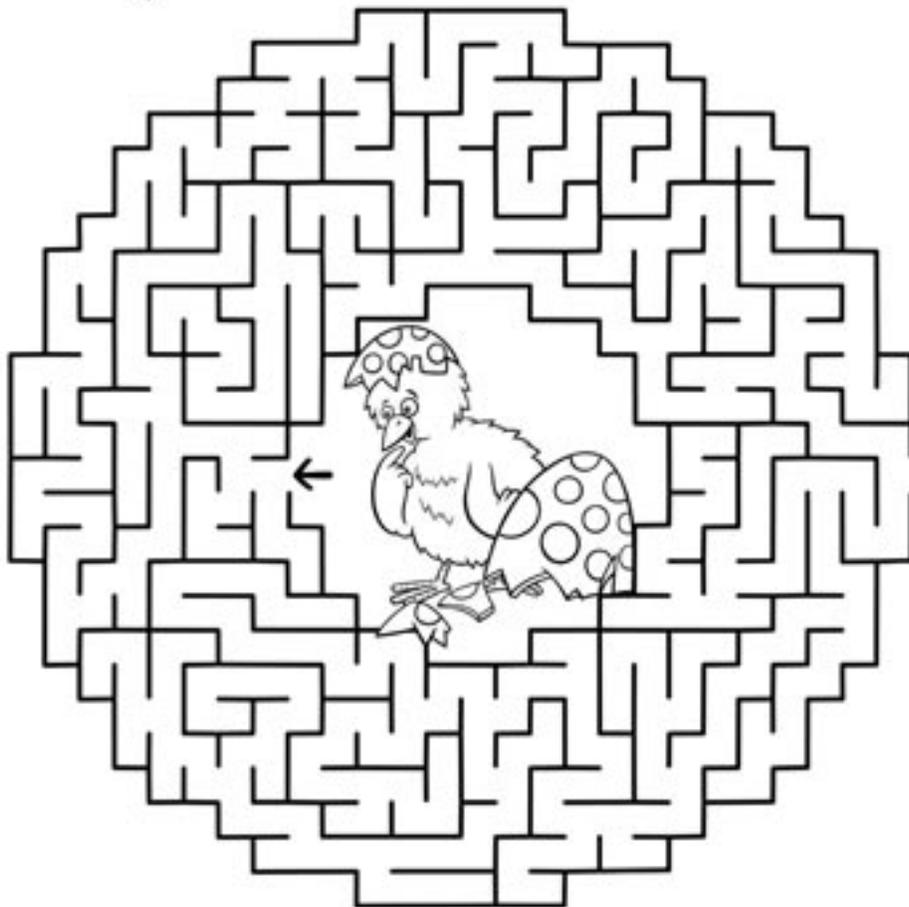
Happy Easter

Vítej Jaro

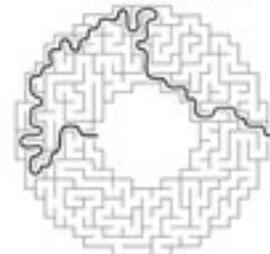
Welcome Spring

Přivonět ke květinám

Smell the flowers

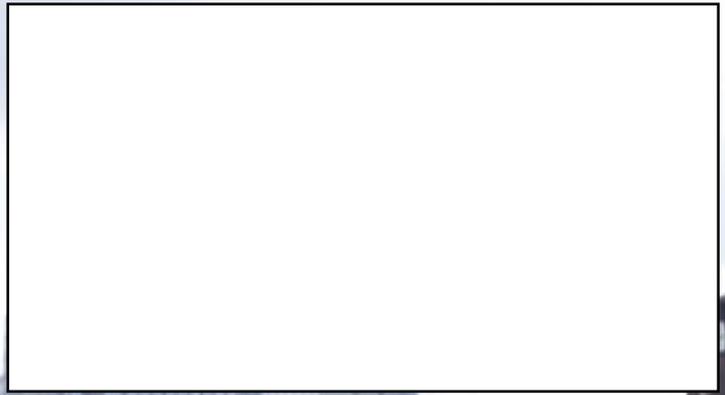


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