



Journal

December 2024





Member Writes on Ancestry Page 25



Czech Myths and Legends Page 31

On the Cover

Lodge Missouri No. 1 member Carla Strnad and Dan took a trip to Africa in September, which included three countries! For more information and photos, please see her article on pages 16 - 19.



Fire Safety Page 29

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President's Piece

Enjoy the Holidays, Health, and Happiness

Brothers and Sisters,

On behalf of my wife, Lynette, and the entire CSA Fraternal Life family, I want to extend warm wishes for a joyful holiday season and a Merry Christmas to each of you! As I write this in mid-November, we are enjoying a beautiful fall, with the crisp air and vibrant colors reminding us of nature's seasonal shift. When you read this, we may already be wrapped in the cold of winter here at the Home Office, with the holidays quickly approaching.

The partnership between our Board and management team continues to benefit CSA as we continuously work toward keeping CSA Fraternal Life safe and secure. Together, we remain focused on our mission: to uphold the proud traditions of CSA Fraternal Life, enhance both our fraternal and financial offerings, and continue working diligently toward a brighter future.

One of the highlights of the year was our 2024 Get-Together in Nashville. Our Home Office team of Kelly Deegan, Anna Trush, Julie Souza, and Molly May did a wonderful job hosting the event. This event was truly memorable, bringing together many of our members and celebrating the spirit of CSA. At the event, we had the honor of crowning Delaney Schretter as our National Miss CSA. Delaney has truly embodied the spirit of CSA and continues to represent our organization with grace and pride.

Additionally, we were thrilled to recognize Chuck Michalek as our Fraternalist of the Year. Chuck's dedication and service to CSA, along with the many others who selflessly contribute to our fraternal life, reminds us of what makes CSA truly special. We are fortunate to have such committed members who live our values every day.

As CSA Fraternal Life evolves, we are steadily moving toward our 171st Anniversary. Together, we are continuing to lay the foundation for a vibrant and sustainable future, ensuring that CSA remains a vital force in the lives of our members.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the upcoming opportunities to gather with members and celebrate our shared fraternal spirit. I hope to see many of you at our 2025 Get-Together in Cleveland, Ohio, in August. If you've never been to one of our Get-Togethers, I encourage you to attend. It's an experience you won't want to miss!

As we close this year, I want to express my thanks for your continued support and commitment to CSA Fraternal Life.

May you all enjoy a holiday season filled with health and happiness. Stay safe, stay well, and, as always, thank you for your ongoing support.



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



UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2, 2024

Deadline: CSA Serves Matching Funds requests

December 3 at 7 p.m. & December 6 at 9:45 p.m.

Decoding Kafka: A Cinematic Interpretation

Doc Films, a student-led, volunteer-run movie theater and film society at the University of Chicago presents the film, *After Hours*. Paul Hackett is trapped in Manhattan. The more he desires escape, the more onerous his bonds. He meets various quirky night dwellers, and thinks they may be commiserators, but it all goes nowhere. Kafka's work can be understood as empty of "claim"; there are no lessons to be learned, just the inflexible dilemma. So, too, in *After Hours*: stakes are high but, what are they? More than a fable of modern life in the big bad city, *After Hours* is a comedy that would have made Kafka, who regularly laughed out loud when reading his own stories, chuckle.

Doc Films, 1212 E. 59th St., Chicago, Illinois

Tickets are \$7.

Visit <https://tickets.uchicago.edu/Online/seat> for tickets

January 2, 2025

Miss CSA Application Available (website)

January 2, 2025

CSA Scholarship Application Available (website)

January 2, 2025

Home Office Closed for New Year's Day

January 20, 2025

Home Office Closed for MLK Day

January 31, 2025

Deadline: 2024 Lodge Recognition Program submissions

February 1, 2025

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

February 17, 2025

Home Office Closed for President's Day

March 15, 2025

Deadline: CSA Scholarships Application and Transcript

March 31, 2025

Deadline: Lodge Financial and Election Forms due in Home Office

April 18, 2025

Home Office Closed for Good Friday

May 3, 2025

Join Hands Day

May 26, 2025

Home Office Closed for Memorial Day

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CSA Journal

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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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Today's Fraternal

Essential Updates to Upcoming Programs

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

As we approach the year's final stretch, we are reminded just how quickly time has flown. The days have felt like a whirlwind of activity, with many of us juggling personal commitments, professional goals, and all the little tasks that come with the year's closing months. Yet, despite the busyness, there's something invigorating about this time of transition—both in our schedules and the seasons.

With that in mind, we want to inform you about a few essential updates regarding upcoming programs. Due to scheduling changes and other logistical factors, some of our program dates have been adjusted. The Photo Contest deadline is now in September and the Bowl-o-Rama is in October. Please check the updated calendar and event listings on our website and on page 9 of this issue,

or contact our team if you have any questions. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding as we adapt to these changes and work to offer you the best possible experience.

The weather is changing, and winter is settling in; we hope you find time to slow down and enjoy the season. The changing weather often brings with it a chance for reflection and renewal — whether it's cozying up with a good book, taking in the beauty of the changing leaves, or simply embracing the crisp air with a walk outdoors.

We are into December, and the holiday season (my favorite time of the year), and we want to take a moment to wish you all a joyful, peaceful, and fulfilling time with your loved ones. We know that the holidays can be both joyful and hectic, but we encourage you to step back and live in the special moments of



this time of year. Whether celebrating with family or friends or enjoying some well-earned quiet time, we hope you find space for rest, joy, and connection.

Thank you for your support and for being an integral part of our community. We are excited about the upcoming year and the opportunities it will bring. We look forward to continuing our shared journey with you soon.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season with warmth, happiness, and well-deserved rest. Your well-being is important to us, and we hope you take this time to recharge and enjoy the festive season.

*Fraternally,
Kelly Deegan
Fraternal Programs Manager*

Journal Themes for 2025

January - Day of the Establishment of the Slovak Republic

February - Lodge Recognition Program

March - Happy Birthday, CSA!

April - Get Ready for the Get-Together

May - Join Hands Day

June - Flag Day

July/August - Czech and Slovak Festivals

September - Recap of 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.

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

BOARD REPORT

NOVEMBER 1, 2024

Committees of the Board of Directors meet via Zoom prior to the in-person meeting held on November 1. All members were present.

Our November meeting is always a special one because we have lunch with the staff. CSA is fortunate to have so many wonderful and dedicated staff members. They work very hard to meet our members' needs, whether it is in fraternal, sales, claims, or just answering questions. Thanks to you all for jobs well done.

November is also the month to elect new lodge officers. Congratulations to all the officers and good luck for the coming year.

Watch the Fraternal Calendar (page 9) as deadlines for the Photo Contest submissions and Bowl-O-Rama registrations have been moved to September. This will ease the crunch for the department since lodge reports, LRP submissions, scholarship applications, and vari-

ous fraternal deadlines fall at the beginning of the year.

Sister Deegan has also been exploring additional fraternal benefits for our members.

Molly May, who is in charge of the marketing and social media, indicated that Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are the three internet apps that are most often used by our members. The goal is to increase brand awareness on these sites. If your lodge has a video or pictures of an event, please send them to her. These types of postings increase our viewership and create interest.

The Board and Officers are always exploring ways to keep expenses low. With the Convention coming up in less than two years, there have been discussions on ways of making our Convention even more efficient. We will continue to update membership on the upcoming (2026) Convention.

President Kielczewski reported that our portfolio remains very stable and continues to yield 4.2% when adjusted for Annuity Reinsurance. Sales continue to be stable, and we should reach our Life Premium goal. We will fall short of the Annuity goal mainly because the Federal Reserve has lowered rates. Banks are able to offer CDs at higher rates to their customers without the 5-7 years penalty for early withdrawal that we have to charge. Working with Parkway Advisors, our investment firm, we are looking for ways to increase the investment return.

The next Board meeting will be via Zoom on March 7, 2025. Please be sure to contact your Director with your concerns.

*Fraternally,
Irma Drahota Farrell
Chair*



HOLIDAY CHEER!

Greetings brothers and sisters,

The year 2025 is almost upon us and 2024 has been a busy year. Looking back at 2024, I attended several lodge and District Council meetings, the Nashville Get-Together, the AFA Symposium, Lunch & Learns, several LIC Committee meetings, and the New England Fraternal Alliance Annual Meeting. These events were informative and fun, and I met some great people.

On November 1, during the 4th Quarter meeting, we had our Annual Home Office Staff Lunch with the Board. Everyone had a good time catching up with the Board members. The next Board meeting will be virtual in March, 2025.

The holiday season has started at the Home Office. Holiday decorations are popping up everywhere.

This is the season of giving! At this time of year, we must remember those who need help and try to donate when we can. We are so fortunate to have many lodges that do charitable work during this time and throughout the year.

We hope you have a great holiday season with your families and friends!

Lisa and I wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Happy holiday season!

*Fraternally,
Nick V. Kosmas
Secretary / Treasurer*



Miss National CSA

Czech and Slovak Folklife Festival

Greetings, brothers and sisters,



Last month, I went to Virginia for the Czech and Slovak Folklife Festival and I had the most amazing time! It was a smaller festival than the one in Texas, but I really enjoyed how close-knit and personal it felt!

As expected, it was wonderful to watch the dancers perform, eat some tasty food, and represent CSA, but, by far, my

favorite part was talking to all types of people there. I'd love to tell you all about them.

I talked to a man who spent the summer in the Czech Republic, learning the language. He taught me a phrase in Czech, but I really should have written it down because I cannot remember it now.

I talked to a woman and her husband while in line for Chrušćiki. They had met in college, and they were very cute together. It was the woman's first time at a Czech/Slovak event despite her deep connection to her heritage, and her husband was just there with her.

I talked to a little girl who was dressed in all purple. She came up, took a picture with me, and then put her hand on her hip, and asked, "are you a prom queen?" We bonded over our shared favorite color (purple, of course!), our favorite candies, and the fact we both had brown hair. What are the chances? She was adorable.

I talked to another little girl in her beautiful kroj. Both she and her parents told me that she had been coming to this festival since she was very, very young. She told me about her favorite subjects, what she wants to be when she grows up, and her friends at school. Her parents told me about what they did for work and encouraged me to follow my passions into the workforce.

Going to this festival made me so thankful to share a culture with all of these interesting, well-rounded, friendly people. I really had the best time in Virginia and I cannot wait for my next CSA event!

*Until then!
Fraternally,
Delaney Schretter,
Miss National CSA 2024-2025*





Fraternal Calendar

January	2	Miss CSA Application available (website)
	2	CSA Scholarship Application Available (website)
	2	Home Office closed for New Year's Day
	20	Home Office closed for MLK Day
	31	Deadline - 2024 Lodge Recognition Program submissions
February	1	Deadline - 2024 President's Reports forms due in Home Office
	17	Home Office closed for President's Day
March	15	Deadline - CSA Scholarship Applications and Transcript
	31	Deadline - Lodge Financial & Election forms due in the Home Office
April	18	Home Office closed for Good Friday
May	3	Join Hands Day
	26	Home Office Closed for Memorial Day
June	6	Deadline - Miss CSA Application and Photos
	27	Deadline - Fraternalist of the Year Nomination Application
July	2	Deadline - Kropik Scholarship Application
	2	Deadline- Recipeint 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.



88th Annual Get-Together

District Council No. 10 of Northern Ohio – As we enter into 2025, the lodges of District Council No. 10 of Northern Ohio invite all of you to join us in Cleveland, Ohio for the 88th Annual Get-Together. The rock weekend starts on August 1, 2025, and will roll on until August 3. We have chosen the Double Tree by Hilton Cleveland Downtown for the accommodations, located at 1111 Lakeside Avenue E. Room rates are \$159 per night plus tax (includes breakfast). Book your room by calling 1-800-445-8667, code CSA. (See flyer on page 11 for online booking.)

Friday will be check-in and hospitality in the afternoon. Starting at 5 p.m., we will transport you to the Bohemian

National Hall for dinner, and the Miss CSA contest. We ask that everyone come dressed comfortably, wearing your favorite rock-n-roll T-shirt. After the contest, plan on dancing to your favorite rock songs. Transportation back to the hotel will be throughout the evening.

Saturday morning will be the service project and group photo. Hope Starts With CSA, so the service project will be for the Journey Center for Safety and Healing. Their mission is to provide services that foster safety and healing for those affected by child abuse and domestic violence, and to prevent abuse through education, advocacy, and systemic change. We will offer two day trips to choose from: The Rock Hall and

a luncheon cruise on the Good Time III. In the evening, we will have a cocktail hour and a formal dinner, announcement of the winner of the Miss CSA Contest, and then a very special entertainer.

Sunday morning will be a brunch and a speaker from the Journey Center.

We have a wonderful committee working hard on a fun-filled, fraternal, and affordable weekend. Registration fee covers all meals, hospitality room, giveaways, and transportation. Please join us!

More to come in the upcoming *Journals*...

Fraternally,
Diane DiBianca





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/clelstdt-csa-0dd1e9fc-a165-47c5-a792-fd305fa8be61/>

Handy Hacks to Take the Stress Out of Holiday Hosting

(Family Features) Hosting is a big responsibility, especially during the holidays when the pressure is on to create a magical and memorable experience. Planning a menu and decorating for the occasion is just the start.

Hosting also means ensuring all dishes are cooked to perfection and kept warm until serving time. Guests' dietary needs are considered and table conversation topics are ready. Then, of course, there's the post-dinner cleanup.

This holiday season, consider these tips to help tackle your hosting duties with grace and create an event you can enjoy, too.

Request RSVPs

Planning a party is even more complicated when you don't know how many guests you'll be entertaining. If you create a guest list and ask invitees to let you know their plans, you'll have a better idea whether you should double your favorite dishes. You'll also know who has special dietary needs and be able to plan a seating chart that puts everyone at

ease. Be sure to include a date that gives guests a specific RSVP deadline and plenty of time for you to adjust your plans before the big day.

Meal Prep as Much as Possible

Get as much of the food preparation out of the way ahead of time as you can. Some dishes can be prepared and even cooked ahead of time so you're just reheating, but you can also save a lot of time by organizing ingredients for the dishes that must be prepared the day of the event. A good rule of thumb: If it doesn't have to wait until the day of the party, do it before. That frees up your time so you can handle any unexpected hiccups that arise without piling on more stress.

Simplify the Cleanup Situation

Rely on tried-and-true products that do the heavy lifting for you when it's time to clean up after the meal. (See tips on page 15.)

Create Designated Spaces

Guests are likely to arrive with items in hand that need a place to go, like coats, shoes, handbags, and gifts. Avoid clutter by determining ahead of time where you want to put these items. If you have a coat closet with space, that's a good solution, but a nearby bedroom may also be an option. Especially if you're hosting a potluck meal, be sure to plan ahead for where each course should go, with appetizer bars, dessert tables, and a countertop with protective pads for warm foods.

Send Guests Off with a Parting Gift

A memorable event can be made even more so when guests have a token to take with them. Send everyone home on a happy note with a simple gift like a prewrapped holiday treat. Be sure to tuck these away someplace near the door so they're a pleasant surprise you can access easily when guests begin to make their exits.

Happy Hosting!



Showstopping Holiday Meals Featuring Premium Pork

(Family Features) If you're wondering what to serve for a delightful holiday meal, look no further than pork – a perfect match for festive menus as it's easy to prepare, versatile, budget-friendly, and pairs well with seasonal ingredients.

Try flavorful, mouthwatering recipes like Apple Cider Balsamic Glazed Pork Loin and Stuffing-Filled Pork Chops. These elevated, seasonal pork recipes offer a delicious and unexpected twist your friends and family will love at your next holiday gathering.

Apple Cider Balsamic Glazed Pork Loin

Prep time: 10-15 minutes
Cook time: 45-60 minutes
Servings: 6

1 Coleman Pork Loin (4 pounds)
salt and pepper to taste
1 tablespoon olive oil

Glaze:

1 cup apple cider vinegar glaze
6 tablespoons whole grain mustard
4 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon minced rosemary
1 teaspoon minced sage
1 teaspoon minced thyme
2 teaspoons minced garlic
salt and pepper, to taste
2 tablespoons olive oil
4-6 sliced apples

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a sheet pan with parchment paper. Set aside.

Remove pork from packaging and pat dry with paper towel. Season all sides with salt and pepper, to taste.

To make glaze: In bowl, whisk apple cider vinegar glaze, mustard, balsamic vinegar, rosemary, sage, thyme, and garlic. Add salt and pepper, to taste. In steady stream, slowly add olive oil to emulsify while whisking.

In large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Sear pork loin 2-3 minutes on each side.

Move pork to lined baking sheet and brush on about half the glaze. Roast 30 minutes.

Remove pork from oven and spread sliced apples around pork loin. Brush remaining glaze over pork and apples. Bake 20-30 minutes, or until internal temperature reaches 150 degrees.

Let pork loin rest at least 10 minutes before slicing.

Stuffing-Filled Pork Chops

Prep time: 10-15 minutes,
Cook time: 30-45 minutes
Servings: 6

Stuffing:

1 small box biscuit mix
1 stick butter
2-3 stalks finely diced celery
1 finely diced onion
1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
1-2 cups chicken broth
1 bag cornbread stuffing mix
2 eggs, beaten
salt and pepper, to taste

6 Coleman Natural bone-in or boneless pork chops
oil
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon minced sage
1 teaspoon minced thyme
1 teaspoon minced rosemary

To make stuffing: Bake biscuits according to package directions, one day ahead. Dry biscuits will absorb more broth.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In skillet, melt butter, then add celery and onions. Saute until onions are translucent, then add poultry seasoning and half the broth. Set aside to cool.

In bowl, combine stuffing mix, crumbled biscuits, and eggs.

Add onion mix to bowl and mix well. Add leftover broth if mixture is too dry. Set aside.

Slit each chop on rounded side, cutting almost through to the bone, to create deep pockets for stuffing.

Season chops with garlic, sage, thyme, and rosemary. Fill each chop with stuffing mixture. Use toothpicks to keep chops closed.

Preheat skillet with oil over medium-high heat and sear each chop 2-3 minutes on each side.

Once chops are seared, add remaining stuffing to pan, cover with foil and bake 30-45 minutes until chops reach 140 degrees in center. Remove foil for last 10 minutes to brown top of stuffing, if desired.



Enjoy!

Classic Desserts that Combine Christmases Past & Present

(Family Features) If holiday gatherings have started to feel more overwhelming than celebratory, it's time to go back to the basics with seasonal desserts that are easy yet elegant.

Wow your crowd this year with a mouthwatering Hummingbird Cake or Coconut Cake that call to mind holidays past without requiring hours spent in the kitchen (like grandma used to do). Or for a classic take on an old favorite, these Christmas Cinnamon Cookies can even let the kiddos get involved – just make the dough then have your little helpers use their favorite cookie cutters to make festive shapes before the oven does the rest of the work.

Hummingbird Cake

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

1 spice cake mix
1 cup sugar
1 cup banana cream Greek yogurt
3 eggs
1 cup crushed pineapple
1 cup crushed pecans
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons melted butter

Frosting:

1 stick butter, softened
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup heavy whipping cream
5 cups powdered sugar
1 package pecans (optional)

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

In mixing bowl, combine spice mix and sugar. Blend in yogurt, eggs, and pineapple. In separate bowl, mix pecans, flour, and butter. Then add to cake mixture.

Grease two 8-inch cake pans with butter. Pour half the mixture into each pan, then bake 45 minutes. Cool on rack before icing.

To make frosting: In mixing bowl, mix butter, cream cheese, and heavy whipping cream. Slowly blend in powdered sugar.

Ice cake and then decorate with pecans, if desired.

Coconut Cake

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

1 vanilla or white cake mix
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar
1 cup coconut Greek yogurt
1 cup milk
2 tablespoons melted butter
3 eggs

Frosting:

1 stick butter, softened
1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup heavy whipping cream
5 cups powdered sugar
2-4 cups shredded coconut

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

In mixing bowl, mix cake mix, flour, and sugar. Blend in yogurt, milk, butter, and eggs.

Grease two 8-inch cake pans with butter. Pour half the mixture into each pan and bake 45 minutes. Cool on rack before icing.

To make frosting: In mixing bowl, mix

butter, cream cheese, and heavy whipping cream. Slowly blend in powdered sugar.

Ice cake, then pat shredded coconut gently into icing.

Christmas Cinnamon Cookies

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

1 2/3 cups self-rising flour
2 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ginger
1/8 teaspoon cloves
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 egg
2 tablespoons water (optional)
1 cup powdered sugar (optional)

In mixing bowl, combine flour, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, sugar, brown sugar, and egg to make dough. If dough is too dry to form into ball, add water. Form into log and wrap in parchment paper. Refrigerate 1 hour.

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Roll dough out and cut into shapes with cookie cutters. Place on cookie sheet covered in parchment paper and bake 8-10 minutes. Let cool on rack then dust with powdered sugar, if desired.



Post-Party Cleaning Tips

1. Don't be afraid to ask for help, especially from your partner or children.
2. Prep your table the night before. Get sparkling dishes and glassware by using a product which assists in drying and helping your dishes shine when used in the rinse cycle.
3. Start by collecting trash and clutter. Throw trash away and create piles of items that need returned to their proper places. Remember that taking a few extra minutes to organize things like seasonal decor as you go can help make next year's event easier.
4. Complete each job before moving to the next. Some prefer to tackle a room at a time while others prefer to finish a specific chore, like sweeping the floors throughout the house, before moving on.
5. Be realistic about what must be done before you sleep. Some tasks really do need immediate attention, like collecting and emptying glasses that could be spilled, and safely storing leftover food. The rest can likely wait until after you get some rest.

Transform Holiday Leftovers into Vibrant, Flavorful Meals

(Family Features) Once your holiday feast comes to pass, you're almost certain to find your refrigerator stuffed with leftovers. However, that doesn't mean you want to eat the same meal again and again in the days that follow.

The star of many seasonal celebrations, turkey, can be reused in a variety of post-holiday dishes to cut down on food waste and create fresh new meals your whole family can enjoy. Featuring a unique blend of 100% natural chili peppers, lime, and sea salt, Tajín pairs perfectly with turkey, making it a go-to for creative leftovers.

Gone are the days of simply reheating turkey and stuffing or making a turkey sandwich. Instead, reinvent your holiday extras through fresh takes on classic dishes like this comforting Leftover Holiday Biscuit Pot Pie.

Leftover Holiday Biscuit Pot Pie

Total time: 45 minutes

Servings: 4

Biscuits:

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1/2 cup cold, unsalted butter
- 2/3 cup buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted

Turkey Pot Pie Filling:

- 1/2 cup turkey fat
- 1 1/2 cups diced onion
- 1 1/2 cups diced carrots
- 1 1/2 cups diced celery
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic

- 1 tablespoon chopped thyme
- 1 tablespoon diamond crystal coarse salt
- 1 tablespoon coarse black pepper
- 1 cup all-purpose flour, divided
- 8 cups cold turkey stock
- 1 tablespoon Tajín Clasico Seasoning, to taste
- 6 cups leftover cooked turkey, chopped

To make biscuits: In mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder, sugar, salt, and cream of tartar.

Grate butter and mix with dry ingredients.

Carefully add buttermilk and mix until incorporated.

Fold over 5-6 times, roll out, and cut into 10-12 rounds.

Place cut biscuits on floured surface.

Refrigerate 30 minutes.

To make turkey pot pie filling: Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Heat large pot over high heat and add

turkey fat.

Add onions, carrots, celery, bay leaf, garlic, thyme, salt, and pepper; gently sweat.

Add 1/2 cup flour and cook 2-3 minutes.

Add turkey stock, 2 cups at a time, allowing to thicken before adding more.

In bowl, mix remaining flour with turkey.

Add turkey to pot, bring to simmer until thickened.

Add seasoning, to taste.

Add pot pie filling to casserole dish and gently place biscuits closely together on top.

Brush biscuits with melted butter and bake 25-30 minutes.

Remove from oven and cool 10-15 minutes before serving.

For more holiday recipe inspiration, visit tajin.com/us.



An African Adventure of a Lifetime!

Africa and safaris were something I thought about for a long time since reading about the experiences in my travel magazines and seeing documentaries on TV, admiring big game animals and their natural surroundings, the unique, colorful culture of the people, and how different life would be there. So, when Dan and I were discussing where to travel next, he mentioned, "How about Africa?" I immediately said "Yes!" and thus started a rewarding journey filled with wonder and awe and something that far exceeded any of my preconceived thoughts!

We went with TAUCK travel to the Wildlife Odyssey Tour which visited Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa, and lasted 12 days (but we added one more, September 17, Dan's birthday!) This tour had a wide variety of experiences that included not only exciting safaris but other activities to give us great immersion of the culture of these countries.

TAUCK travel sent our olive green, roomy duffel bags with rollers a month before our trip and we were allowed a carry-on. They were specific with the list of clothing colors (khaki, cream, olive, neutral), and hiking shoes, and layers for weather changes within the three countries. Temperatures ranged from the 40s to the 80s in Cape Town!

When we finally landed in Victoria Falls, we were greeted with male dancers and singers in front of the airport and they were very enthusiastic, joyful, energetic, and loved to sing in their loud harmonious voices. They clapped and stomped loudly the entire time to their beat. This was our first photo op!

Our first night before the official start of our tour, we stayed in a hotel in Victoria Falls and hopped on the shuttle to take us into town! Colorful little shops and a mar-

ket nearby made it fun and interesting. Some men would come up to try to sell us their wares. They were always friendly, but very persistent! We were amazed when we saw a warthog roaming along the sidewalk and a baboon by a store, but it is normal, and no one thinks anything of it!

The next day we were off to our Elephant Camp, our first official day of the tour, set in Victoria Falls National Park overlooking the Zambezi gorges. What a picturesque setting with a wide vista, beautiful lodge, pool, fire pit area for all, and our own personal, separate, and spacious tent "homes," that even had our own deck, private pool, and outdoor shower! We met for the first time with our group (16 of us) and our guide, Chris Morrison. Everyone came from the United States on our tour, and we meshed right away!

Our first safari ride was in the afternoon going into sunset. We stopped for conversation, snacks, and drinks at the breathtaking Zambezi Gorge with the river down below. The stunning sunset made everything simply beautiful!

Meals at all our gorgeous lodges were outside, but under a roof. Many times, the chefs would come out to greet us, and a couple evenings we had more singers and dancers come to visit us!

Our walking tour of Victoria Falls was truly outstanding! This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, and also the largest waterfalls in the world. It was a sunny day, so the rainbows always added to the beauty! The loud rush of the water was so impressive, and the length of the falls just went on and on in great glory! Since it was the dry season, we didn't need to wear raincoats or cover our cameras, but we could see more of the depth of the falls and getting different perspectives and views of

these vast, magnificent falls was truly a highlight! You can wade in the water in a designated area at the edge of the falls! But with our binoculars, it looked like there was someone who watched so you wouldn't go overboard! I'm not sure I would be that brave but there were a handful of people out there!

The next stop for the day was so special and memorable as we went to the Elephant Sanctuary for a private visit with a family of elephants out in the bush! The handlers gently led the elephants to strategic spots so that we could pet them, and hug them. We had to watch our feet to keep from being stepped on! The male elephant was huge. They didn't mind that we were all gently petting and touching them, even their ears! Then we took a hike to another area as the elephants walked single file with us, and there were baskets of molasses treats for them, and we got to give them these treats! You say, "trunk up" or "trunk down" and you get close and toss the treats into their mouths or, when trunk is down, into the trunk the treats go! The female elephant we fed was named "Coco" and I took home a print to frame, on a paper fiber made of elephant excrement. I know, it sounds strange, but they eat so much fiber, it's possible! Coco's footprint is on the print with the Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust logo. I loved bringing some of Coco home with me!

We then visited The Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust Clinic, renowned for promoting environmental conservation in Southern Africa. We visited the medical care facility and orphanage dedicated to the health and welfare of Africa's wildlife. We also met the naturalists and doctors who work there, learning about their efforts to protect animals injured by traps, snares, and poachers, and meeting the wildlife they rescued, like one of the vultures. I'm glad we had this private tour to get the behind-the-scenes experience of the care and safety for these magnificent animals!

Our tour guide bought us colorful cloth drawstring bags, made by the African women, to put our shoes into, as the soles had to be washed with a chemical solution. The tour company did for us! We also each walked over an area with the solution to clean the soles of the shoes we were wearing and our bus had to go through a solution on the tires, all to thwart the possibility of bringing the highly contagious Foot and Mouth Disease into their country. There have been breakouts among cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats.





Chobe Game Lodge in Chobe National Park is Botswana's first national park and attracts large herds of elephants and Cape Buffalo that frequent the Chobe River. Our late sunset cruise was so beautiful and serene. On one side of the river was Botswana, and the other side was Namibia! The stillness of our surroundings as we glided along the river, and the elephants (including babies) on the shore chomping on the large grasses and reeds, were so fun to watch. We also saw big herds of water buffalo.

The safari guides were excellent and immensely knowledgeable about the animals, their habits, and all safety needed for with dealing with any challenges. The animals pay no attention to the jeeps as they are used to them and know that they are not a threat! But, there is jeep etiquette: No standing or loud voices, and arms and limbs must stay within the jeep. It was very exciting when we were following an animal on the hunt, and the driver whisked us off-road (only on private reserves, not national parks) at great speed to follow them. We were able to follow lions, wild dogs, and hyenas, and even knocked over trees on our expedition. The drivers are knowledgeable on which trees that they can't run over. I held on during the very bumpy ride, ducked with branches coming near my face (and they would warn us!), and was glad my seatbelt worked. I felt like I was in a *National Geographic* documentary!

We were both in the national parks and a private reserve, but the animals are always totally able to move about any-

where without restrictions, even roaming to other countries. When in a private reserve, the parameters of our jeeps were strictly enforced as large fines would be administered if they went over to the national park area.

The trackers memorize every road in the bush with letters and numbers assigned (but no actual signage), and when a pack of lions or a leopard is spotted or there is something unusual to see, they radio the other jeeps, and they all converge and come over in a hurry! It was truly a thrill to watch the animals in their natural habitat, how alert they are, and how they hunt. It was also fun to pass herds of impalas, kudus, and giraffes. Even though they are not afraid of you, they stop and observe you! Monkeys in the trees, frolicking and grooming each other, jumping from limb to limb, were entertaining, as were the baboons! We also saw exotic and colorful birds as we had some avid and knowledgeable birdwatchers on our trip! The hippos in the water were exciting as we waited for them to come up for air so we could see their big jaws, and we did see one laying in the sun by the water! We also saw crocodiles! Baby monkeys getting a ride on their mothers' backs were another treat to see!

The biggest thrill was to turn a corner in the bush and see these different animals for the first time! The first time we saw one lion was breathtaking, just by himself languishing in the morning sun, so quiet, majestic, and serene. Once, on another morning, there was a pack of six of them as we turned the corner! They glanced at

us but were enjoying the warmth of the morning sun and we got to see them frolic and roll around! The giraffes were a lot of fun, chomping the limbs on the treetops. They were so graceful when they walked, and they stood together, swaying, and wrapping their necks around each other.

Most impressive were the elephants and there were so many! And, so many sweet babies! They are so protective of their families, and the way they lumber along with their big ears flapping is really interesting and fun to observe! We watched them trek down together to get water in the river, and the little ones always stay by their mother's side or almost underneath her as she patiently waits for her baby to nurse. Since this is the dry season, the elephants also reach down and gather dirt and mud and fling it on their bodies to protect their skin from the sun, repel insects, and regulate their body temperature! So, some looked quite dirty!

We visited a women's co-op at a local village in Botswana, filled with beautiful and colorful handmade fabrics, wares, and baskets, and the ladies were singing and swaying and twirling in their full skirts. They loved our visit!

Our tour guide leads a not-for-profit organization, and we had an interesting experience loading two flat screen TVs onto our jeeps to be used by a school for learning purposes. These children were very sweet but neglected by their parents; such a shame. The school was colorful but very simple. The children were probably 5-10 years old, and they were so cute! All the children learn to speak English (very common in Africa), and we enjoyed their singing of the "ABC's," "Wheels on the Bus," etc., and the TVs we brought (and one little one they were watching when we got there!) were definitely the most technological items they had! Everything else was just in two large, but airy, rooms with a tall metal cabinet full of books, art and craft items, and wallboards with the alphabet, numbers, etc. The school director and teachers were very nice, and you could tell they took good care of the children.

Going into their grocery store was fun! So many American manufacturers were represented but there were also different kinds of products geared to their culture. There was lots of candy and, of course, M&M's! We saw a McDonald's in town, too!

The safari game drives were continuous morning and evening, and we would meet at 5:30 a.m. for prepared coffee, tea, and delicious little pastries and fruit, and off we went from 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. and then come back for a beautiful breakfast afterwards! The game drives in the afternoon were also about three hours and we needed to be out of the bush by about 6:30 p.m. The sunsets were gorgeous and getting photos of elephants, etc., with the sun setting behind them, was so striking. One evening, we extended our 6:30 p.m. curfew and it was dark. The spotlight the tracker uses when he sits in a seat in the front of the jeep (without a seatbelt...not sure why he wasn't flung off!) is very bright and on the way out he would be able to spot the bright eyes of animals in the reflection of his flashlight. He once spotted a chameleon! I asked if we could stop the jeep in the dark and turn off all the lights to see the majestic stars and moon and experience the quiet of the bush except for any animal sounds. It was so neat. It felt a little dangerous, but very special!

We all know that beyond the wonder and beauty of the bush lies the reality of danger and harshness for all the animals watching out for predators, while being on the prowl for food for their own survival. One day our jeep passed a site that was unforgettable, and luckily farther away. It was lions devouring an elephant, which they don't usually hunt, and our guide said was very unusual. The elephant didn't seem large or old, so it was surmised that it may have been ill. Nonetheless, it was rather shocking to see. Luckily, the stench was not too strong as we eventually moved on from an unforgettable sight.

Another fun story was when our jeep was on a path and we saw a herd of elephants that was crossing our road, so our driver just stopped, and we all sat very quietly as the elephants passed us on all sides. It was a little intimidating, but so exciting! Seeing them all coming right at us was a little unnerving, but they lumbered past us, ears flapping, babies with their mamas, stopping to scratch themselves against trees, and it was really a great experience to be right in the middle!

Since this was the dry season, some of the watering beds and small rivers were totally dry and sandy and there were a couple times when it was getting dark and our jeep got stuck in the sand! We were all looking at each other thinking, "OK, this is it! We're done for!" It really took a lot of maneuvering and sand and dust flying everywhere before we got going, and everyone clapped when we did!

We ended up seeing a leopard, lots and lots of elephants, rhinos (mother and baby), lions, giraffes, water buffaloes, zebras, hyaenas, warthogs, hippos, baboons, monkeys, eagles, a falcon, mongoose, kudus, impalas, badgers, crocodiles, and wild dogs (which are becoming quite rare), and many beautiful and exotic birds.

At our lodges it was always mandatory to call the front desk to be escorted to and from our rooms by a lodge guide to be protected from any wild animals roaming around since we were in the bush. They would have danger signs here and there on the grounds to warn us. We would see animals occasionally, so we heeded to this! Also, we had outdoor evening dinner events that were surrounded by a wall to protect us

from animals, and that was called a "Boma." The dinner would be elegant with china and linen but everything, the chefs cooking, desserts, music, singers and dancers, and even fire pits, were all enclosed by this wall, and it was a magical sight with the candles, fire, and lighting, knowing we were really in the bush with the animals, and moon and stars above! All of our safaris included a refreshment stop where a table would be set up with linens, fancy nuts, bakery items, water, coffee, and alcoholic drinks were even available! But even though we had these special perks, the safaris, guides, and animals were totally authentic, so we had appreciation for the best of both worlds!

My favorite story and biggest thrill were while we were in Chobe National Park in Botswana. We had been looking to find and see our first leopard, which happened to be hard to locate (usually up in the trees!) and it was our second day trying to find one. It was dusk and our driver got a call from a fellow jeep driver who had finally spotted a leopard, and we drove at break-neck speed to get to this spot (we were holding on for dear life and flying!) and we were the second jeep to get there! Close by our jeep stood this little metal shelter where the leopard supposedly was. In the meantime, many jeeps that were also alerted zoomed up behind us. We all waited with bated breath and then we saw the beautiful leopard slinking around the building, but not paying any attention to us! Everyone was very, very still and quiet, their cameras ready, (including me!). It was walking slowly toward our jeep, walked over by Dan's side, walked underneath our jeep, and then he stopped and actually sat right next to me on the ground! I could have patted him on the head he was so close, and I just held my breath and clutched my camera with my heart pounding even though I think I stopped breathing, and then, he looked up right at me! My photo! What are the chances of that? I was so thrilled. It is kind of scary when I think of it now...what if he pounced? The one leopard we saw on the whole trip, that took over a day to find, sitting next to me? I will never forget this!

Another unique event was at our Ngala Lodge in Botswana. We had an infinity swimming pool. Elephants would come down the hill (remember, our lodge was in the bush!) and come up to the pool where right below the run-off of the regular pool was another layer for just animals. So, we saw a big elephant lumber down from the hill for a drink right at our pool!



Another thrill was our safari walk (only eight of us decided to be brave!). We had no jeep, we just walked with a guide who had a rifle. It was a little intimidating and made me feel vulnerable, but it was exciting, too! Our guide showed us his signal with his hand in case of an emergency so we could be quiet and freeze. Luckily, we didn't see any animals close by and we learned about the bush and its fascinating fauna and flora, identifying tracks and scents of animals that have passed. Walking safaris are only permitted on private lands and not in Africa's national parks. We made it back to the lodge unscathed!

Next, off we flew to impressive and beautiful Cape Town! We stayed at the gorgeous and historical Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel, painted pink for peace in 1918, and nestled on a lush garden estate at the foot of Table Mountain. The scenery and shipping port, terrain, and energy of the city is really palpable!

Amongst the beautiful homes near the bay is a huge section of rows and rows of connected metal shacks. It is very sad and unbelievable how these poor people live, although, interestingly enough, they each have a satellite dish.

Our scenic drive to two beautiful and prestigious wineries near Cape Town, in a town named Franschhoek, was stunning. It is surrounded by lush natural beauty, water, and mountains, and the wine tastings were very special. The town of Franschhoek is very quaint, charming, and upscale with 45 wineries in and surrounding it! I loved the Huguenot Fine Chocolate Shop and other charming shops and art galleries filled with lots of beautiful artistic gifts. There also was a colorful open-air market. The town was very busy and had a lovely vibe!

My first helicopter ride ever over Cape Town gave us a bird's eye view over the city and followed the outstanding coast to see Table Mountain, The Twelve Apostles, Chapman's Peak, and the bays and towns that line the shores of the Cape Peninsula.

The weather and clouds and lots of wind can change very quickly in Cape Town, so we took advantage of getting our ride in even though it wasn't the sunniest day, but so incredibly beautiful nonetheless! The terrain is outstanding and the bright aqua water outlining the shore made for beautiful and colorful photos. I loved it! Cape Town has a population of about 4.8 million and is where the very first

heart transplant in the world took place in 1967. We passed the Groote Schuur Hospital where it was performed.

Dan and I took a cable car ride up to Table Mountain, the iconic flat-top summit overlooking Cape Town with breathtaking views and even clouds you feel you can almost touch! The flat top is perfect for walking to get 360-degree views of the peninsula and coastlines. The cable cars have a state-of-the-art rotating floor to ensure that all visitors get a well-rounded view for the 5-minute ride up the mountain! A restaurant and refreshments are at the top.

Our drive to see the African Penguins was not planned but our tour guide added it for us since we couldn't fly into our one lodge in Botswana in the bush because of foggy weather, so I'm so happy we added this beautiful experience! These endangered birds can be observed at close range on the beach in a residential area, wandering freely in a protected natural environment. This is between Simon's Town and Cape Point, and called Boulders, which has become world famous for its thriving colony of African Penguins and magnificent wind sheltered, safe beaches.

We also passed the Victor Verster prison where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated and eventually released from. We took group photos by the Nelson Mandela statue.

It was very colorful and interesting to go to the Cape Town waterfront, "Historical Victoria and Alfred Waterfront and Cape Town Link to the Sea," with their Robinson Dry Dock. It is one of a few left in the world for ship repair and

one was actually being worked on. One of their three moving bridges there opens and closes sideways for these ships. We saw the first hotel called Victoria and Alfred, the building from 1904, a former cold storage warehouse, and lots of colorful shops and restaurants, boat tours, a huge mall, etc. This is a very thriving, fun, high energy location with many people! The Watershed, a huge indoor market for the best in local art, ceramics, jewelry, clothing, and more, was very fun to walk through and find gifts. We also visited their Two Oceans Aquarium, so there was a lot to see, do, and absorb in one, sprawling spot! With the backdrop of Tabletop Mountain and the water, it was very picturesque!

I brought five African Rand bills home for my scrapbook as each one has one of the "Big Five" animals on it.

Our long (almost 16-hour flight) back to the USA from Cape Town to Atlanta (en route to our final St. Louis destination) was the longest one either of us had experienced, but we survived!

This African trip was truly a journey of incredible sights, sounds, and experiences. Filled with adventures, unpredictability, rough tracks, dust, and so much beauty, it was all part of a magnificent experience that is hard to express! But it filled me with great emotion and was very moving. In Africa, it's all about timing, patience, and flexibility. It truly was a trip of a lifetime and the authenticity, rawness of nature, beauty, and wonder very much opened my eyes to this other fascinating world - one that I will never forget!

Carla Strnad





ROBERT TOMANEK AND SOKOL MUSEUM & LIBRARY PUBLISH TRANSLATION OF
Legendary Sokol Marie Provozníková's Memoir

To byl Sokol (That was Sokol) is a historical memoir by the legendary Sokol Marie Provozníková, who documented the role the Sokol movement played in gymnastics, culture, and the democratic values of the Czech people from the first decade of the nineteenth century to 1948.

Provozníková's book was first published in 1988, but only in Czech. Emilie Martinet, Albert Pokorný and Grace Cahlander, members of Sokol Baltimore, translated this important work in 1991, but it was not published. A copy of the type-written

translation of the book was given to the Sokol Museum and Library by Provozníková's granddaughters, and was edited.

The current book includes 1) the English version of her book with editorial comments, 2) the history of her life in Bohemia, and 3) her life in America after her defection from the 1948 Olympics in London.

The significance of *To byl Sokol* is that it is a detailed account of the struggles of the Czech people during their lives under the Austrian and

Austrian-Hungarian Empires, World War I, and then under oppression by the Nazis during World War II, and the Communist coup in 1948. Provozníková, an official in the Czech Sokol organization and the International Gymnastics Federation, was personally involved in all of the historic events detailed in her book. The new information included in this publication completes her story and its significance.

To byl Sokol is available at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library's award-winning store. [STORE.NCSML.ORG](https://store.ncsml.org/)



Robert Tomanek, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of Anatomy and Cell Biology at The University of Iowa and a member of CHF. He has written numerous books about his Czech homelands, and is a passionate student of Sokol. He is shown here in 2015 speaking in the Skala Bartizal Library about the history of Moravia.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NCSML

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Looking Forward to the Holidays

Lodge DuPage Pioneers/Edison No. 409, Lombard, Illinois – Our November meeting was held on a damp, cold, rainy day. Our Fall weather had been beautiful, and warm, filled with the changing colors, with lots of blue sky and sunny days. Our lodge day, unfortunately, was not one of them.

President Linda Burton called the meeting to order with the Pledge and asked members for the 2024 Password. All present responded correctly. After the minutes were read, the first order of business was the Election of Officers for the 2025 calendar year. All Officers received unanimous votes: President Linda Burton, Vice President (Nominated) Lisa Cassai, Secretary Gerri Romanelli, Treasurer Dale Burton, Sentry Jim Wozniak, and Scribe Gerri Romanelli.

Interim Treasurer Bro. Dale Burton reported on our lodge's finances. Happily, we are in sound financial shape and will be for years to come. Thank you, Dale, for a very comprehensive analysis of our assets

and expenses over the year 2024. We will discuss charitable contributions for 2025 at our meeting in January.

President Linda reported on improvements at Bohemian National Cemetery, spearheaded by Friends. The Civil War Monument is being refurbished and cleaned. Bro. Dvorsky made a generous contribution to the Cemetery for the repair and maintenance of the fence along Pulaski Avenue. Thank you, Ken! Friends of BNC are planning a membership meeting for 2025. The purpose of the meeting is a "Meet and Greet" to recruit volunteers to take an active part in Friends activities, fundraising, and tour events.

Sis. Gerri gave an entertaining talk, courtesy of Podcaster Dana of the Czech Republic, on some unusual Czech Christmas traditions. Members had more than a few laughs learning of carp fish in bathtubs, Coca Cola as Christmas gifts, and fasting on Christmas Day resulting in delusions of

Golden Pigs bringing good health and luck. Members joined in with their own Czech traditions and memories of holidays past.

Members were reminded of our Christmas Party to be held at Del Rhea's Chicken Basket in Willowbrook, Illinois, on December 9 at 11 a.m. Great food, fun, games, prizes, and fraternal chatter are all on the agenda.

The meeting closed with our Annual Memorial Service honoring our brothers and sisters we lost this year. Sis. Linda made special mention of our past President and Treasurer, Jerry and Helen Gaydusek. We miss their friendship, good works, and decades of dedication to Lodge No. 409 and CSA.

*Happy holidays to all
with best wishes for 2025,
Gerri Romanelli*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Spooky Halloween with Creepy Snacks

Lodge Paramount/Southgate No. 372, Maple Heights, Ohio – On October 24, we had a very pleasant day for our meeting that was held at the DTJ in Taborville, Ohio.

We had our Nomination/Election of Officers and they will remain the same. Congratulations to President Mary Ann Toncar, Vice President/Scribe Annette Reichman, Treasurer Diane DiBianca, Secretary Kris Marek, and Delegates Johnny Weiss, Donna Stepka, and Bruce Marek.

Johnny had a team with Bill Miller and non-members Bruce and Jeff Gray for the Ohio/Penn Bowling Tournament

in Pennsylvania. He said it was nice and they had a good time.

The Get-Together 2025 Committee has been hard at work getting things ready! The hotel will be The Double Tree in downtown Cleveland. A reservation link has been created and can be found on page 11 of this *Journal*. Remember to save the date, August 1 – 3, and have your favorite band or concert T-shirt when you come!

Congratulations to our 50/50 winners: Mary Ann, Annette Reichman, Diane, and Mary (she said to pick again). Bruce thanked her when his ticket was pulled.

We played two rounds of Bingo. Congratulations to Annette and Johnny who won prizes provided by Mary Ann.

I provided the creepy snacks of spider sliders, tater salad, Eye of Newt, acorn cookies, peanut butter and chocolate bat bits, apple cider, and trick or treats. Donna added potato chips and Mary Ann also had trick or treat bags for everyone. We hope everybody had a spooky Halloween!

Our Christmas Luncheon will be on December 19. Come to a meeting, reconnect with friends, and have a tasty snack. We would love to see you!

*Fraternally,
Annette Reichman*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Happy 90th Birthday

Lodge Prokop Velky No. 137, Cedar Rapids, Iowa – Our lodge members were happy to help long-time member Don Pulkrab celebrate his 90th birthday on October 12, 2024. An open house was held in honor of Don by his wife and children. Don is a member of a lot of Czech organizations including Sokol, Federation of Czech Groups, National Czech & Slovak Museum, and Better Life #62.

In addition, Don has ridden in the RAGBRI bike ride for 42 years as a member of the Linn County Trails Association and the Hawkeye Bike Association. Don worked at Cherry Burrell in Cedar Rapids for 45 years and has been a member of St. Wenceslaus Church for 67 years. He has had a busy, full life and still finds time to volunteer at the Czech National Cemetery and is always on board to help with making the

Czech bread dumplings for Sokol. We wish Don many, many more years to come.

On October 20, we held our fall outing at the Ox Yoke Inn in the Amanda Colonies. We had their Sunday brunch, which was delicious with all kinds of pastries, a wonderful breakfast variety, and also lunch items and desserts. Everyone left with their stomachs full.

We will be holding our Christmas Party on December 6 at Parlor City in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. We hope everyone will be able to attend.

We also hope everyone has a very festive holiday season.

*Fraternally yours,
Rai Ann Stratton*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Award Winning Chili!

Lodge Brookfield No. 475, Brookfield, Illinois – Quite a few members of Lodge DuPage Pioneers/Edison No. 409 attended our Annual Fall Festival last month and it's no surprise that more than half a dozen Lodge Brookfield members were thrilled to attend Lodge DuPage's recent Chili Cook-off. This was a perfect event for the autumn sea-

son.

Each attendee sampled a number of tasty chili recipes and was given an opportunity to vote for their favorite. Yours truly was honored as second runner-up for my turkey chili recipe. I have been perfecting my recipe for years but now, in all honesty, I can say that my chili is truly award-winning. Thank

you, Lodge DuPage Pioneers!

We hold our meetings at noon on the second Tuesday of the month at the CSA Home Office in Lombard, Illinois. Members and guests are always welcome.

*Fraternally,
Kimberly Silhan*



Scholarship Fund Report

October 10 - November 10, 2024

IN MEMORY OF HELENKA GAYDUSEK

Lodge Prokop Velky No. 137
Gary, Wendy, Amanda, and Elijah Lovell,
Lodge No. 121
Lodge DuPage Pioneers/Edison No. 409

IN MEMORY OF DECEASED LODGE MEMBERS

Lodge Kruh Osvojenych Zen a Panu No. 121

IN MEMORY OF DECEASED LODGE MEMBERS

Lodge Queensdale No. 422

**IN MEMORY OF BROTHER BRADFORD JAMES
"BUNZIE" KURTZ**

Gary, Wendy, Amanda, and Elijah Lovell,
Lodge No. 121

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

Lodge Lincoln No. 007

Total Donations

\$3,300.00

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Community Learning and Helping

Lodge Woodrow Wilson No. 377, Brookfield, Illinois – We were delighted to join Lodge Yankee-Jungmann No. 077 at their November meeting! Both lodges enjoyed a presentation by our own Anna (Nolč) Ramirez on a history of Chicago's Little Village (South Lawndale) neighborhood. Anna had been asked by the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) to write a piece for their quarterly journal, *Naše rodina (Our Family)*, about the neighborhood, to which her ancestors immigrated, regarding her own experience growing up there. She shared with us a preview of that article, along with photos and other memorabilia related to her family history and experience. Thanks, Anna: you did a wonderful job!

Our own lodge had a short business meeting via Zoom earlier in the month for Election of Officers. Thanks to all our officers for serving this past year; we are grateful to have the same dedicated group agree to continue serving in 2025!

We are delighted to introduce you to some new members this month! Christiana Dropka, wife of long-time member Michael, and their new son, Lukas, have both joined our membership. As part of the Dropka family, Chris has been part of the 'extended family' of our lodge for a while, and

we're so pleased she's now "official" – along with their baby boy.

Our holiday drive is already underway, to supply families in need with some necessities as well as gifts to offer a bit of joy for the season. Thanks once again to the Porter family for coordinating the effort, by 'Joining Hands' with a local school to help local community members. If you would like to contribute, please reach out to me as soon as possible; we would truly welcome your participation!

Happy holidays to all!
Jean Hemzáček Laukant
hemzacek.j@gmail.com
630-915-9745



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Happy Holidays

Lodge Kruh Osvojenych Zen A Panu No. 121, Dillonvale, Ohio – Greetings to all! It's hard to believe, but the holi-

day season is upon us once again! Hopefully, you're fully decorated, have the gifts wrapped and ready, and are

stocked with the necessary Christmas delectables which help make the season yummy!

We recently participated in a luncheon with the members of the Dillonvale Presbyterian Church. Members of the congregation as well as members of Lodge No. 121 gathered for a covered dish meal celebrating the birthdays and anniversaries of those in attendance. Church members Chris Bauknecht and Jessie Peltz are pictured with lodge members. We were especially happy that Jessie and Chris stayed for our business meeting after the luncheon.

Our recent donations included monetary gifts to St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Tiltonsville, Dillonvale Presbyterian Church, and the CSA Scholarship Fund.

Members also recently worked for the Annual Pancake Breakfast at the Dillonvale Presbyterian Church, donating work hours, supplies, and money. Members further helped decorate the church sanctuary for the holiday season.

We donated winter items (coats, blankets, scarves, gloves, etc.) and hygiene supplies to The Friendship Room in Steubenville along with gently used clothing and household items to our local Salvation Army.

Lodge No. 121 officers for 2025 will be President Wendy Lovell, Vice-President Bonnie Snider, Secretary Mariann Ebright, Treasurer Gary Lovell, Guide Charles Ebright, Sentry Jack Snider, and Youth Coordinator Elijah Lovell. We are thankful to all members for accepting their officer positions. Please consider joining us for a meeting in the new year!

We would like to wish all members nationwide a happy holiday season and a blessed new year! We hope you enjoy your celebrations with those you hold most dear. Remember to check on someone you love today.

*Vesele Vanoce a Stastny Novy Rok,
Sister Wendy Kurtz Lovell*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

“Night at the Races”

Lodge Cleveland Chapter No. 219, Cleveland, Ohio – Greetings, everyone! Are you ready for the holiday season? Soon it will be Christmas. We hope everyone has good and blessed holidays. Our meeting was held on November 12 at the Parma Heights Library; 10 members attended.

The Bowling Tournament in Pennsylvania was a fun time. Many of us bowled terribly, but we had fun. Some of our members did win some money prizes, though. Our local bowling league is going well. We still need one or two more people due to some folks getting ill. Won't you join?

The DTJ facility held a “Night at the Races” fundraiser on October 12. Our lodge sponsored a horse named “Guardian” and he won us \$40! Yay, Guardian! Also, that night, there was a

potluck fundraiser at the Sokol Ceska Sin Hall. My sister (pictured) won first place for her yummy dessert!

The Sokol chicken or pork dinner was well attended in October. Their next one is in April.

Nine members are going to the District Christmas Party on December 5. Our lodge's Christmas Party/meeting will be on December 10 at Max & Erma's Restaurant at 11:30 a.m. A small stipend will be provided.

Our 50/50 raffle was won by Freddie and Sue. Nominations were held for officers: President Freddie Shima, Vice President Sue Garofalo, Secretaries Jan Russell and Carole Cirillo, Treasurer Tony Genco, Scribe Judy Genco, and Sentry/Guide Sylvia Lorincz. Thank you, everyone, for accepting these positions.

Happy news! Jan Russell's youngest son, Kurt Russell (a CSA member), got engaged to his girlfriend, Kalie. They were on a vacation in Alaska when he popped the question. Kurt is an engineer and Kalie is an optometrist. They live in Charlotte, North Carolina, with their dog, Spencer. Congratulations to the lovely couple.

Please think about which charities we would like to sponsor for next year: the same or other ones? Also, please think about who you would like to nominate for Fraternalist of the Year. One name was brought up at this meeting: Freddie Shima.

Happy holidays, everyone! Please stay in good health and spirits.

*Fraternally yours,
Judy (Sevcik) Geno
Scribe*



*Fraternal Well
Wishes*

Elmer Soos
Lodge Cleveland Chapter
No. 219

LODGE HAPPENINGS

“Hospoda”

Lodge Lincoln No. 7, Berwyn, Illinois – John Pritisil hosted our October lodge meeting at his home in La Grange Park. We felt as if we were in the Czech Republic because of the numerous Czech artifacts displayed throughout his home. It made us all think about the heirlooms that we each have in our own homes. He even carried on the tradition of former Lodge Sionilli by serving apple cider and donuts in addition to an almond coffee cake decorated like a

jack-o-lantern. “Kitty” Hartzel made chocolate dipped pretzel rods for all to enjoy. We celebrated Stan Smolucha’s and John Pritisil’s birthdays by singing “Happy Birthday” to both of them and then enjoyed a delicious triple chocolate cake. A game was played and we found out that John has 29 pumpkins in his home! Matt Schultz was our winner. At the end of the night, each of us went home with a pumpkin as a gift from John.

During our business meeting, we had a discussion about the various organizations that we would like to support this year and these organizations were cho-

sen by our lodge members: Bohemian National Cemetery, Salvation Army, Red Cross, CSA Scholarship in Memory of Deceased Members, Operation Support our Troops America, Best Buddies, and Guardian Corps of America. We also collected necessities and health care items that were delivered to Guardian Corps of America for homeless veterans a few days before Veteran’s Day.

The Moravian Cultural Society hosted “Hospoda” at Sokol Spirit. Vera Wilt was serving delicious Czech dinners and desserts while John Pritisil was tending the bar, serving plenty of pivo and Czech spirits. There was even a Prazky Walk! Stan and Pat Smolucha and Angeline Bultas and her daughter came to enjoy the delicious Czech food and music throughout the evening.

Mark your calendars for our December Holiday Party and Annual Meeting. It will be held on December 8 at noon at Grand Duke’s Restaurant located at 980 75th Street in Downers Grove, Illinois. We look forward to seeing many of you there!

On January 16, we are planning for a Zoom meeting at 7:00 p.m.

We wish a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy holiday season to our members and friends!

Vesele Vanoce!

*Christmas blessings,
Pat Smolucha
(s.smolucha@sbcglobal.net)*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Fire Safety Presentation

Lodge Groveton No. 4, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania – In October, Lodge Groveton hosted the Penn-Ohio Bowling Tournament. Terry, Chet, Tammy, and Mickey had a great time bowling alongside our Ohio friends. Top winners were Dusty Clark in Men's Singles, Tammy Lewicki in Women's Singles, and Jeff and Bruce Gray in Doubles. Scott Krecow, Ryan Malkus, Andrew Malkus, and Shawn Jacklich won in the Team category. Thank you to all the bowlers who participated! We look forward to the next Ohio-Penn Bowling Tournament.

Millie Grannis celebrated her 90 birthday in October. She was surrounded by family and friends, as her daughter and grandsons threw her a party. Happy birthday, Millie! We hope you had a great day and that the year ahead is full of many blessings!

There were two highlights of our



November meeting. First, Chester Yurkovich gave us a presentation on fire safety and how to properly use a fire extinguisher. Second, we held our Election of Officers. We voted to keep everyone the same. The following officers have agreed to continue their roles: President Terilyn Bichler, Vice President Chester Yurkovich, Secretary Patty Yurkovich, Treasurer Terry Placek, Guide and Sentry Vince Shulin, and Scribe Hunter Rae Yurkovich. Our auditors will be Don Obeldobel, Tammy Lewicki, and Patty Yurkovich. We will install our officers in the New Year.

Lodge Groveton's next meeting and Christmas Party will be at Napoli's Restaurant in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania, on December 4 from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. January's meeting will be held on the 8th at Groveton Fire Hall at 7 p.m. Members are encouraged to come a little early to enjoy the food and refreshments at every meeting. We would like to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas!



May you all find health, happiness, and peace during the holiday season and throughout the coming year. See you in 2025!

*Fraternally,
Sis. Hunter Rae Yurkovich*

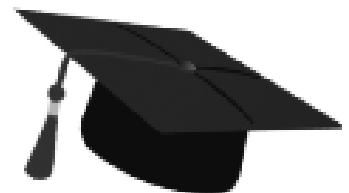
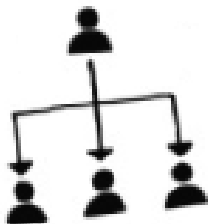


In Memoriam

Claim	Name	Lodge	Location	Date of Death	Age
55773	Camilli, Helen A.	013	WOODHAVEN, MI	09/17/2024	80
55777	Victor, Edith	211	ROSELLE, NJ	04/05/2024	91
55763	Cuda, Mary Ann	231	WAPPAPELLO, MO	09/25/2024	81
55768	Sanek, Joseph	231	PLAINFIELD, IL	01/10/2023	93
55760	Lomax, Earnestine R.	279	ROCK ISLAND, IL	11/22/2020	90
55771	Cech, Carol L.	372	MONTEREY, CA	05/18/2024	85
55762	Devalk, Neal	377	ST. JOHN, IN	10/02/2024	78
55775	Taylor, Donald R.	404	FAIRMONT CITY, IL	10/07/2024	81
55765	Pojman, Walter H.	409	LOMBARD, IL	09/25/2024	82
55770	Rich, Donnell	422	NEW YORK CITY, NY	09/30/2024	44
55766	Stevens, Janice A.	428	CROWNSVILLE, MD	08/10/2024	91
55767	Lechowicz, Maryellen B.	428	PASADENA, MD	10/11/2024	95
55774	Green, Vera	448	ROCHESTER, NY	07/15/2024	83
55764	Smart, Frederick D.	450	ST. ALBANS, NY	09/23/2024	78
55776	Linek, Peter J.	463	ST. PETERSBURG, FL	04/04/2014	66
55778	Cullins, Christine	481	NEWARK, NJ	05/01/2024	89



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



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Czech Myths and Legends

Lodge Washington No. 30, St. Louis, Missouri – November started off at the Czech Cultural Club event at the ACEC, with Jenny Zeman giving a presentation on Czech myths, legends, and a few holidays (with a little help from me). We told everyone about the White Lady, All Souls' Day, a few Easter traditions, St. Martin's Day, festivals (hody), plus a few others, along with the story of the water sprite, Vodnik. If you don't know it, you may have to look it up. In the earlier days of the Czech School here, kids of a certain age learned about him from an animated movie shown by one

of the teachers, and most still remember it more than 50 years later. With input and questions from others in attendance, it was a lively session.

Then it was our Annual Bake Sale, with lodge members pulling out baking sheets, mixing bowls, and oven mitts at home to make a wide variety of brownies, cookies, pumpkin and banana breads, and Gail's famous gooey butter cake (even though it took her a while to find her recipe!), and the result was a table full of sweet stuff. All the profits will be donated to the Veterans Community Project, and with the Home Office matching funds, we'll be able to give them a nice sum to help their work building tiny houses for homeless vets. We had a few items leftover, and Karen Ditz took them to a local firehouse where they were very much appreciated.

The week after that, we each went on a shopping spree (with the lodge's financial support) to purchase items for hygiene packs that the VCP hands out to the vets who come to their Outreach Center for assistance. Take a look at the impressive collection pictured below!

November always includes a combined social with our friends in Lodge Missouri, and we were glad to play host this year. After both lodges held short meetings to take care of business, it was on to the fun part. We enjoyed dessert and coffee, followed by a couple of

games with fabulous prizes. We played a guessing game with a jar full of beads and some other items such as an ornament, a key, a Scrabble tile, and a whole lot more. Some items eluded the players, but Karen Ditz was the big winner and Connie Wolf took second place. We also played a round of cornhole, and some of our members hoped to draw on their experience with the CSA Bowling League here when aiming for the target. Apparently, that skill doesn't translate when you're holding a bean bag. Mary Ann Sulz was the winner in that game, and Mike Wolf was the runner-up. Congratulations to all the winners! Now, we're ready for a local cornhole tournament – or at least we think so.

We sure know how to stay busy, don't we?

From our lodge to yours, here's wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas!

*Fraternally,
Deborah Zeman*



LODGE HAPPENINGS

Soles for Souls and So Much More!



Betty, Patsy, Susan, and Shirley at the beer booth

Lodge Svetlo No. 277, Caldwell, Texas – Our lodge had a busy summer and is gearing up for the holidays and the New Year. In August, Carolyn Doonan and Shirley Vavra attended the Get-Together in Nashville. The lodge participated in the Back-to-School Blast in August by donating CSA pencils and pencil sharpeners. School supplies were given to over 300 students from Burleson County at this year's event.

In September, the lodge participated at the Annual Kolache Festival. We worked the beer booth, donated beverages for the bands, and welcomed Kelly

Deegan and Miss National CSA Delaney Schretter to our festival and to the heat of Texas.

Our September charity was Soles for Souls. We donated over 20 pairs of shoes to the cause.

We observed Czech Heritage Month in October by donating homemade cookies to make trays for the Caldwell schools, the Caldwell Police Department, and the Burleson County Sheriff's Office. A total of nine trays were made and delivered.

*Fraternally,
Susan Skrabanek*



Susan Skrabanek, Kyle Skrabanek, and Betty Suehs with cookies for Czech Heritage Month.



Susan, Shirley, Betty, and Patsy with Soles for Souls donations.



Susan and Betty work the booth at the Back-to-School Blast.



Betty Suehs, Patsy Story, Susan Skrabanek, Delaney Schretter, Kelly Deegan, and Shirley Vavra attend the Kolache Festival.

LODGE HAPPENINGS

Invitation to Czech National Day

Lodge Century of Progress/Bila Hora No. 231, Cicero, Illinois – Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Thanksgiving is now in the past and we are all looking forward to the Christmas holidays. We hope everyone enjoyed Thanksgiving with family and friends. I'm so happy the election is over, although we can't be sure what the future will bring!

At this writing, I am reporting on two meetings. The first (I was not in attendance) was a shortened meeting held on October 9 at PJ Klem's Restaurant. The venue changed because of the lack of parking at the school in Cicero. All reports given were accepted, communications were acknowledged, food was taken to the food pantry, and a donation was made to the T.G. Masaryk School.

The second meeting was held on November 13, 2024, at the T.G.

Masaryk School. Both minutes and Treasurer's Reports for September were accepted. The Secretary gave us an update on the lodge roster, reporting that there were several new policies written, but that there was also a reduction in membership due to death. A donation was made to the CSA Scholarship Fund as well as to the Salvation Army.

Lodge delegates received an invitation letter to attend the Christmas Party on December 5 to be held at McCook's Restaurant. In the meantime, it was reported that there has been no activity at the Bohemian National Cemetery other than trying to keep up with the elimination of the dead trees and the renovation of the Civil War Monument.

The lodge received a letter from Maria Pappas, joining the community in commemorating the Czech National Day recognizing the 106th Anniversary

of the birth of the Republic of Czechoslovakia in 1918. She also sent an invitation to attend her Christmas Party held at her offices in downtown Chicago, 118 N. Clark on December 10, 2024.

I gave a two-hour Watercolor Techniques class to Des Plaines Art Guild members on November 2. Our lodge held its annual Memorial Service. (See photo.)

Our meetings take place 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 T.G. Masaryk School, 5701 W. 57th Place, Cicero, Illinois. For more information, contact Ed Slavik at 708-423-5267.

*Fraternally,
Elaine Tejcek*





Just Kids

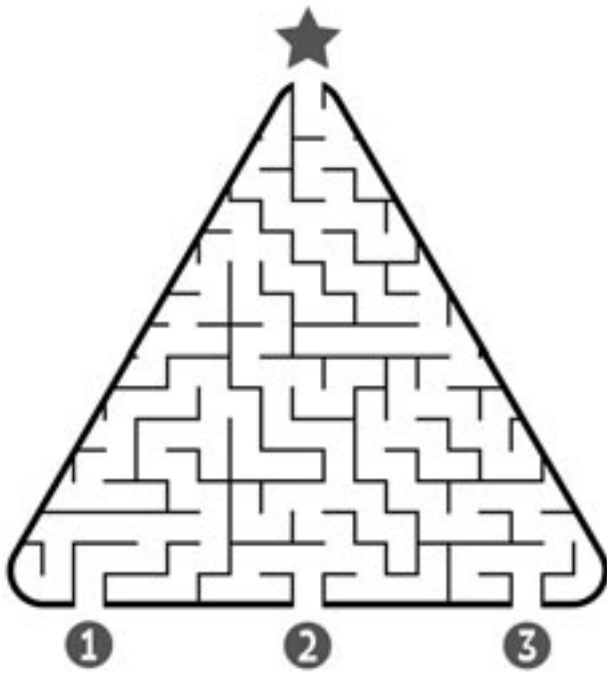
Send Just Kids your stories, riddles, etc.

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

P.O. Box 249, Lombard, IL 60148

Email to: CSAJournalEditor@gmail.com

Czech to English

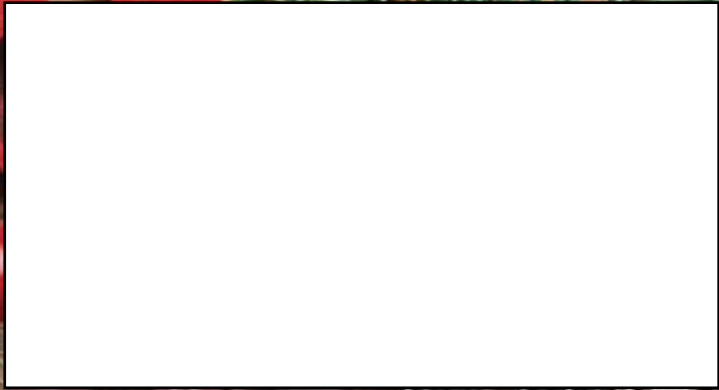


- Prosinec.....December (pro-si-nec)
- Vánoce.....Christmas (Vá-no-ce)
- Stromeček.....Christmas Tree (stro-me-ček)
- Ozdoba/okrasa.....ornament for the tree (oz-do-ba/o-kra-sa)
- Dárky.....gifts/presents (dár-ky)
- Štědrý Den.....Christmas Day/Eve (Šťed-drý den)
- Svatý Mikuláš.....Saint Nicholas (Sva-tý Mik-u-láš)
- Perníkový srdíčko...Gingerbread heart (per-ní-kov-ý sr-díč-ko)

WORD PUZZLE GAME

E	I	S	N	O	W	F	S	O	C	N
K	O	S	E	K	A	L	P	O	P	O
S	L	I	G	W	F	S	O	B	A	G
A	E	L	F	E	L	K	C	S	N	O
N	G	H	T	T	G	I	N	G	E	S
T	A	D	E	D	A	E	R	B	R	O
C	M	R	E	L	S	T	O	C	A	T
A	I	K	I	O	L	L	I	P	O	H
P	R	E	S	S	P	R	O	M	P	G
B	R	D	E	N	T	U	C	E	W	I
S	A	H	T	A	H	O	U	S	E	S

1 Santa 2 Spruce 3 Present 4 Elf 5 Sock 6 Snowflakes
7 Houses 8 Deer 9 Gingerbread 10 Bag 11 Lollipop



Merry Christmas

&

Happy New Year

