



NSS Life
Family Matters...

Národné Noviny

DECEMBER 2024

Providing Fraternal Life Insurance Since 1890 | NATIONAL NEWS | NUMBER 3596 | VOLUME 116



NSS Life Attends a Wheeling Nailers Hockey Game



2024 Requests for Disbursements Deadline
Friday, December 13, 2024



2024 Pumpkin Decorating Contest Winners
Overall Winner: Anna Kostrej - #0108
Page 9



2024 National Service Christmas Card Collection
Page 23

“UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD...GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, & ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.” – LUKE 2:11; 2:14



National Slovak Society

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EDITOR

Lori Crowley
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NSS EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Joseph Stefka, Jr., *FIC, President, CEO & Elder*
Linda M. Strom,
Secretary/Treasurer, CFO
Robert F. Katricak, *FIC, Chairman of the Board*

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FSWFE HONORARY OFFICERS

Justine Wesnak, *President* • Reverend Monsignor Thomas V. Banick, *Spiritual Advisor*
FSWFE merged with NSS in 1997

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Could you use a little extra "Green?"

RECOMMENDER FORM

As a proud member of NSS Life, now is the best time to share your experience with family and friends. Best of all, you will receive a cash reward (\$25 or \$10 for a youth term product) for recommending each person we issue a policy.

Recommender Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Prospect Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Do you need a Change of Address?

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

Please use this form to register your change of address for the *National News* and mail to the Home Office. Upon receipt of this form completed in its entirety, the staff will immediately implement the change. *Thank you.*

Change of Address Information:

Full Name: _____
Certificate #: _____ Assembly #: _____
New Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Former Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Activities At A Glance

REGION 2

Assemblies L075, 0617

February 12, 2025
August 7, 2025
November (TBA)

Assembly 0617, Meeting, Theos Metro, Kingston, PA at 1:00 pm
Assembly 0617, Fraternal Day (Tenatively set)
Assembly 0617, Join Hands Day at St. Vincent de Paul Kitchen

REGION 5

Assemblies 0039, 0100, L105, 0108, 0123, L161, 0377, 0434, 0441, 0588, 0731, 0737, 0774

December 1
December 7
December 7
December 8
December 14
December 14
February 22, 2025

Assembly 0377, Meeting, Hugo's Restaurant, Brownsville, PA at 3:00 pm
Assembly 0731, Christmas Party, Boardman Park's Lariccia Center Rotary Room 1:00
Assembly 0737, Holiday meeting, (Time & place to be announced)
Assembly 0123, Christmas Party, Rockefeller's Grille in Kennedy Twp 1:00 pm- 3:00 pm
Assembly 0039, Annual Christmas Party, Columbia Assoc. Social Hall at 2:00 pm
Assembly L161, Christmas Party, Avonworth Community Pk Pittsburgh, PA 11:30-2:00 pm
Assembly 0123, Mystery Dinner (TBA)

REGION 8

Assemblies 0004, 0070, 0160, 0432, 0595

December 1
December 10
December 13
February 9, 2025

Assembly 0070, Meeting/Luncheon, Dr. Martin Luther Church, Brooklyn, OH at 11:00 am
Assembly 0432, Christmas Dinner/Meeting, at Tony K's, Berea, OH at 6:30 pm
Assembly 0432, Funny Bus Tour of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH at 6:30 pm
Assembly 0432, Tobogganing, Strongsville Chalet, Strongsville, Ohio at 6:00-9:00 pm

REGION 14

Assemblies R059, L102

December 7
December 8
December 11
January 12, 2025

Assembly L102, Matching Funds, Hokey AA, Breakfast with Santa
Assembly L102, Matching Funds, Camelot
Assembly L102, Matching Funds, Kiwanis Club, Emma, PA
Assembly R059, Meeting, Lahutsky residence, TBA

AT LARGE

Assemblies L002, R019, L040, 0110, 0236, 0267, 0381, 0554, 0568, 0586, 0705, 0800, 0813

December 6
December 8
December (Friday & Saturday)

Assembly 0586, Christmas Party, Maggiano's Restaurant, Oakbrook, IL. (TBA)
Assembly 0110, Christmas Luncheon, Olivetto Pizzeria & Ristorante, NY at 12 Noon.
Assembly 0800, Matching Funds Project, Selling Pirogies and nut rolls

REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR PERSONAL ACCOUNT INFORMATION CURRENT

Please contact our NSS Life Member Services Department at 724-731-0094 or 1-800-488-1890 with any of the following changes:

- MARITAL STATUS • MAILING ADDRESS • BENEFICIARY UPDATES • EMAIL ADDRESS
- IRA MINIMUM DISTRIBUTION REQUESTS • BANK ACCOUNT UPDATES FOR DEPOSITS OR WITHDRAWALS

ANY REQUESTS FOR DISBURSEMENTS FROM THE NSS FOR 2024 SHOULD BE DELIVERED TO THE HOME OFFICE BY: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13TH, 2024.

The President's Page...

Joseph Stefka, Jr., FIC, President, CEO
Email: jstefka@nsslife.org



The month of December is a special time of the year. Children are excited with the anticipation of the Christmas Holiday. Families spend time preparing for the holiday, shopping for special gifts, baking and preparing special recipes, and making plans to get together. These are all important aspects of the season. However, the most important is the precious time families spend gathering together to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ while enjoying Slovak customs and traditions that have been passed down through the generations. These customs and traditions are the things that have made Christmas such a special holiday for this writer over the years. Memories of gatherings on Christmas Eve, the pleasing aromas from freshly baked bread and bobalky, mushroom soup made with sauerkraut juice, and fried fish filled my grandmother's small kitchen as she meticulously made sure everything was perfect. The prayer offered by my father, in a darkened kitchen with the Christmas candle burning in the center of the table, was the prelude to the remainder of the evening, and the delicious dinner! The recipes for the dishes served came from memory as they were brought to the United States by our immigrant relatives in the early twentieth century. It is hard to imagine that somehow sixteen people were able to squeeze into that small kitchen in a former coal company house to celebrate together each Christmas Eve. Of course, during dinner, the kids' table was in another room. Grandma Stefka made sure nobody went away hungry as she was quick to offer more of each course of the meal. She also made

sure that everyone "tried" some of each of the recipes prepared because it was a Slovak custom to eat those foods on Christmas Eve. The Christmas Eve family gathering and dinner in my grandmother's kitchen was an important Slovak tradition that continued every year. The customs, traditions, and values that my grandmother conveyed to her family are an everlasting connection to Slovakia and gave special meaning to Christmas. Spending time together as a family is a Blessing and the memories will be cherished forever! Our marketing slogan... "*NSS Life where Family Matters*" fits perfectly at this time of the year! Enjoy the time making cherished memories with your families this Christmas Season.

On behalf of the National Slovak Society Officers, Board of Directors, Home Office Staff, and my family, I would like to wish each of our members and their families a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and Happy New Year!

The NSS Home Office will be closed on December 24th – 25th for the Christmas Holiday. The offices will also be closed on December 31st and January 1st for the New Year Holiday.

News of Narodniars

Sending a special Happy Birthday wish to my lovely wife, Annette and to my son-in-law Brett Bernardo! Happy Birthday wishes to National Slovak Society Directors Abigail Gross and Sue Ondrejco, to Home Office Staff members Brigid Delien, Cyndi Salat, Frank Tomic, and Michelle Walton, Michael Dvorsak, John and Kevin Crowley, Braidon Shriver, Janice Krynak, David W. Blazek, Fran Blazek, and all others celebrating a birthday this month.

Happy Anniversary wishes to everyone celebrating a wedding anniversary during the month of December!

My deepest sympathy to the Ondrejco and Lako families on the recent passing of Michael Lako of Assembly L161, brother of NSS Director Sue Ondrejco, and to the Tomaskovic family on the recent passing of Irene Tomaskovic. Irene was the wife of the late NSS Director Joseph Tomaskovic, Jr. May God provide Peace and comfort to the Ondrejco, Lako, and Tomaskovic families at this most difficult time.

Congratulations and Thank You Linda!

An announcement regarding Linda Strom's retirement from her position as National Slovak Society Secretary-Treasurer/CFO on December 31, 2024, has appeared in earlier issues of the *National News*. This writer has known Linda since our youth days as NSS members attending various District 5 events in the Pittsburgh area dating back to the 1960's and would like to share some of Linda's accomplishments over her career.

Linda has been an active member of the NSS serving in many capacities at the local assembly, region, and national levels. Linda has served as recording secretary, financial secretary, and treasurer of NSS Assembly 108. She has served as the recording secretary of Region #5 of Pittsburgh since 1995. Linda was first elected to a national position as National Director in the National Slovak Society at the 1990 30th Quadrennial Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She was reelected by the delegates to continue to serve as a National Director at the following three conventions in 1994, 1998, and 2002. Her fellow National Directors elected her as Secretary of the Board of Directors during her 16-year term as a National Director. At the 2006 34th Quadrennial Convention and the 2010 35th Quadrennial Convention Linda was elected by the delegates to serve as the National Slovak Society Secretary-Treasurer/CFO. Following the adoption of Board Governance based By-Laws and the Conventions in 2014, 2018, and 2022, the Board of Directors hired Linda as NSS Secretary-Treasurer/CFO for four-year terms in the position. Linda has served as a National Director and an Executive Officer during the greatest period of growth in the Society's 134-year history.

Prior to beginning her full-time position as our Secretary-Treasurer/CFO, Linda had a distinguished career with the H.J. Heinz Company in several technology roles in the Heinz North America Operations and Heinz Global Operations spanning 34 ½ years. Linda has not only served in her role at the NSS but has also been active serving as member of the Board of the Western Pennsylvania Slovak Cultural

Association; President and Committee Member of the Fraternal Societies of Greater Pittsburgh and being named its Fraternalist of the Year in 2017; and President and Board Member of the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance and receiving the PFA John Jordan Upchurch award in 2014 for her distinguished and exemplary service to fraternalism. She also served at the national level as the Fraternal Congress of America, which is now the American Fraternal Alliance, President and Board Member of the Secretaries Section.

Linda has served as a volunteer at the Allegheny County Summer Special Olympics games, the Fraternal Soci-

eties of Greater Pittsburgh Kidz Bowling for Kidz fundraisers to support the charities of Pittsburgh's Children's Hospital, and with NSS National Project supporting the Blessings in a Backpack program at a local school district.

Linda's dedication and devotion to fraternalism and to the National Slovak Society has been exceptional. She is a person that always finds time to assist with community fraternal projects or projects at the Home Office of the NSS. Linda has been exceptional in her role as a National Director and as our Secretary-Treasurer/CFO over the past 34 years! NSS is a better place because of Linda's commitment to our

NSS membership and she has helped lay the foundation for continued success of the Society. We are Blessed to have had Linda as a leader in our Society for the past 34 years. I have been Blessed to have Linda as a friend and to have had an opportunity to work with her as a fellow Executive Officer since becoming President four years ago. Linda will be greatly missed in the Home Office as she moves on to the next phase of her life...retirement.

Linda on behalf of the Executive Officers, the Board of Directors, and the members of the National Slovak Society we wish you the best. May God Bless you with good health and relaxation in your retirement!



A Page From My Notebook...

Linda M. Strom, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Email: lstrom@nsslife.org

What To Focus on Next?

This past year and a half has brought with it several changes and events that have made an impact on my time here at NSS. As some of you may know I was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 2002. The progression of the disease has been slow and so I have had the opportunity to enjoy life to its fullest. Many of you may remember that in 2019 I was involved in a car accident which I feel has caused my PD symptoms to slightly be more pronounced. I am fortunate that my mobility has only slightly deteriorated.

Those that know me also know that the NSS is, and has been, a huge part of my life having grown up learning about my heritage from my grandparents, my parents and of course, members of NSS. This may sound crazy but coming to work always felt like coming home. However things change when you least expect it. I began thinking about my age and that it may be the right time to retire. After much thought and many, many tears, my final day as your Secretary-Treasurer/CFO is December 31, 2024. I am proud of what I have accomplished and that my family is proud of me. That is really all that matters.

To the staff, both old and new, I can't thank you enough for enriching each day at NSS. You are all the best of the best and you need to believe that what you do REALLY matters. Especially to those that call us for help. Open your Hearts and Be Kind. You may think you are helping the caller when in fact they have helped you become an even better person.

I am certain that the NSS will continue to grow and prosper due to its leadership and dedication to its future. New Staff have been brought on board to bring fresh ideas and expertise to the NSS: from Sales to Finance, IT to Operations, Community Engagement to HR, Marketing to AI, Compliance to Controller and Life Pro to Equisoft. My thanks to our Executive Leaders and Board of Directors for creating a strategic plan that ensures a bright future for the NSS.

And finally I'd like to thank the leaders of all the brother and sister fraternalists that I've had the opportunity to get to know. I've learned so much from each and everyone of you. Good Luck as you lead your organizations into the future. Don't Forget To make sure that all of your personal account information (i.e. address changes, beneficiaries) is current. Also make sure that you send all requests for disbursements for 2024 into the Home Office by the 13th of December.

Until Next Time! 

Current Interest Rates

★ Effective January 1, 2024 ★

Optimum 3 - 5.00%

Preferred 5 - 4.00%

New Preferred 8 - 6.50%* (For First Year Only)

Existing Preferred 8 - 4.25%

(Preferred 7 and Flex earning 4.25%, these plans are no longer available.)

Please contact your NSS Life financial service representative or
Joe Elliott in the Home Office at 1-800-488-1890.



Did you know...

You can add money to almost any Annuity with NSS, just send us a check. Any additional funds will not increase the time period on early withdrawal penalties.

Access your account values 24/7 by going to the website: www.nsslife.org and login/register as a member.



2024 Annuity Contribution Coupon

Any time is a good time to invest, but investing earlier can maximize the compounding effect on your money. Consider making your 2024 contribution as early as possible.

Name _____

Certificate No. _____ Deposit Amount _____

Traditional IRA for 2024 _____ Roth IRA for 2024 _____

If you wish to make a deposit into an existing account with the National Slovak Society (NSS Life), simply complete this coupon and return it with check payment to our Home Office.

From the Sales Department...

Greg Felton, CLU, ChFC, Sales Director
Email: gfelton@nsslife.org



RMD Rules

A required minimum distribution (RMD) is the minimum amount you must withdraw from your retirement accounts each year. This rule applies to traditional IRAs, SEPs, and 401ks (with some exceptions.) The RMD is necessary once a person turns age 73. To calculate an RMD, at age 73, use the Dec. 31st account balance divided by a life expectancy factor (currently 26.5). The amount to be withdrawn would be \$38/1000 or \$380 on \$10,000 or \$3,800 on a \$100,000 balance. The year you turn age 73, that first RMD may be delayed until the following April 1st but keep in mind another RMD must be taken that same year by Dec. 31st and every year thereafter. The RMD age is scheduled to rise to age 75 by 2033. The reason for this is because people are living longer. At one time the penalty for not taking an RMD was one of the most onerous the IRS could levy. Currently, the penalty is 25% but maybe less. We recommend that you always check with your tax advisor since each individual's situation is unique.

There are also new rules regarding RMDs for beneficiaries. This topic will be covered next month.

Using Checks Safely

Everyone uses checks to make payments. But how do we protect ourselves from fraud or abuse? Here are a couple of points to consider. The number one rule and the most important is don't write a check if you don't have to. Use your bank's check writing service and have them pay the bill for you. Or pay your bills online whenever possible. Make sure you monitor your account for fraudulent activity. Keep your checks in a secure place and the same for any canceled checks if you have them. When you mail a check put it in a secure envelope and drop it off at the post office. Do not use a drop off point as they are not secure. When signing the check use a flair or roller ball type pen. Do not use an ink pen as these are easier for thieves to check wash. Protect your account numbers since this is all a thief would need to make a fraudulent purchase. Checks are a wonderful convenience and easy to use, just take some basic precautions. These simple tips may save you a lot of time and trouble in the future.



The Christmas Gift

We are all guilty of spoiling our children and grandchildren. It is only natural since we want them to have more than we had. We want them to achieve more and to be better than we are. One way to give your family a head start is to use life insurance. The gift of life insurance can be tailored to fit any budget or amount. Life insurance is an amazing financial product that teaches thrift while providing ownership in a valuable piece of property. A life insurance policy purchased for a young person provides the maximum amount of coverage because of their youthfulness. It also protects their insurability. Finally, a permanent plan would start the clock on the cash value account and the dividends, if any. So what does a life insurance gift cost? Well, it doesn't cost – it pays. A plan may be started for \$10 a month. Or a \$1,000 one-time payment would buy a single premium policy. The more you pay the greater the cash value and dividends will be over time. The real question is how much do you want your child to have later in life? Call your local NSS representative or Joe Elliott in the Home Office for more information..

Thought For The Month:

One day you will just be a memory for some people. Do your best to make it a good one.

Slovak proverb

 **NSS Life**
Family Matters...

give the gift of
life insurance
This Holiday Season!

The Community Corner

Bethany Bonnar,
Member & Community Engagement Coordinator
Email: bbonnar@nsslife.org



The year is almost over. I just want to thank everyone who made me smile. You are one of them, so here's a big HUG & a big **THANK YOU.**

Season's Greetings!

Happy Holidays from the Fraternal Department of NSS Life! During the most wonderful time of the year, I feel it is important to take time to relax, reflect, and refocus. As the days grow shorter, yet the to-do list continues to grow, I find it helpful to take some time to slow down during the holidays. Prioritizing relaxation can actually bring forth more energy and light into your life! When you take that time to relax, it can allow for more time for reflection. As the year is coming to an end, I suggest looking back on the past year, celebrate your accomplishments, mourn any hardships, and process where you are now as opposed to where you started. This reflection lets us refocus for the year ahead! I encourage you to refocus on what is truly important to you and pursue that in 2025. Happy holidays from our NSS Life fraternal family to yours!

Recent Events

We sure haven't had a "silent night" around here lately because of all the fraternal activities going on! Congrats to all the Pumpkin Decorat-

ing and Photo contest winners! I can't wait for you all to see their creations in a later edition – they sure turned out great! The winners of the Christmas Ornament Contest will also be revealed shortly!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Christmas Card Collection! I cannot wait to share with you the joy you have helped to bring once we deliver all the cards to nursing home residents across Pittsburgh. The commitment of NSS life members to helping those around them never ceases to amaze me!

NSS Disaster Relief

In response to the devastation caused by Hurricanes Helene and Milton, NSS Life sought to support our members living in these areas by donating to multiple local charities that are proving on the ground support. NSS Life completely funded a \$5,000 grant requested by **The ARC Tampa Bay**, which is an organization that operates over 16 group homes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Florida. The grant went towards repairing the extensive damage caused to their facilities and funded the removal of fallen trees blocking their facilities.

A \$5,000 donation was made by NSS Life to the organization **Beloved Asheville**, who has been providing critical necessities (such as food, water, and healthcare) to hurricane victims in Asheville, North Carolina. An additional \$5,000 was donated to the **East Tennessee Foundation's** Neighbor to Neighbor Fund that supports commu-

nity needs and disaster recovery efforts at the local level in eastern Tennessee. The board of directors is also still accepting applications for the NSS Disaster Relief benefit for those affected by the hurricanes. Email bbonnar@nsslife.org or call 412-770-2093 for more details. We are proud to support these incredible organizations and stand beside our members affected by these disasters.

2025 Fraternal Program

The new year is a perfect chance to start taking advantage of your NSS Life benefits! Signups for 2025 fraternal programs will be available in January! Programs like **Fitness Matters** where you can participate in "Cardio Matters" or "Working out Matters" to earn prizes while you achieve your fitness goals! For the kids, we have **Reading Matters** where NSS kiddos are rewarded for reading books by getting to have NSS donate to a charity of their choosing! We can't forget the **Senior Scholarship Program**, where our NSS senior citizens receive reimbursement for taking continuing education classes. Keep an eye out for these programs in January, or email bbonnar@nsslife.org for more information now!

Social Media

Stay up-to-date with all things fraternal by following NSS Life on Social Media! Give us a follow on Instagram (@NationalSlovakSociety), Facebook (@NSS Life) and LinkedIn (@NSS Life) to receive updates and learn about your member benefits!



The NSS Home Office staff dressed in their costumes for Halloween.

2024 NSS Pumpkin Decorating Contest Winners

(See Front Cover for Best Overall Winner: Anna Kostrej – #0108)



Carved Category (12 & Under): 1st Place
Mariah Cherevka - Assembly C108



Carved Category (12 & Under): 2nd Place
Lucas Urcho - Assembly C377



Carved Category (12 & Under): 3rd Place
Caroline Bernardo - Assembly C588



Carved Category (Teen): 1st Place
Anthony Cherevka - Assembly C108



Carved Category (Teen): 2nd Place
Zachary Martini - Assembly C731



Carved Category (Teen): 3rd Place
Bella Bernardo - Assembly C588



Carved Category (Adult): 1st Place
Robert Metil - Assembly L161



Carved Category (Adult): 2nd Place
Stephanie Ciuccio - Assembly L075



Carved Category (Adult): 3rd Place
Tom Piccoletti - Assembly L075



Painted Category (12 & Under): 1st Place
Alexandra Schwer - Assembly C039



Painted Category (12 & Under): 2nd Place
Lilliana Ratley - Assembly C102



Painted Category (12 & Under): 3rd Place
Ellie Kowalishen - Assembly C102



Painted Category (Adult): 1st Place
Magdalene Semego - Assembly 0108



Painted Category (Adult): 2nd Place
Mary Martini - Assembly 0731



Painted Category (Adult): 3rd Place
Andrew Karkosiak - Assembly 0070

NSS Employee Spotlight: Bethany Bonnar *Member and Community Engagement Coordinator*



Hello! My name is Bethany Bonnar and I am the Member and Community Engagement Coordinator for NSS Life. With NSS, I manage and maintain our Fraternal Benefit Programs, philanthropic initiatives, event planning, and social media accounts! I like to joke that I get to handle all of the

fun things that happen here at NSS.

To share a little about me, I am a Pittsburgh girl through and through! I am the proud daughter of two music teachers and musicians, and I lived in a small town outside of Pittsburgh for most of my life!

In 2023 I graduated from Thiel College as the salutatorian of my class. At Thiel I was a triple major in Public Relations, Political Science, and Public Policy. I was the captain of our women's soccer team where I happily played every game as our goalkeeper. I am a lifelong member of Sigma Kappa Sorority, where I learned my love of event planning and philanthropy!

In my spare time I love staying active, reading, making crafts, and trying out a new recipe from one of the many cookbooks I own. I spend most of my time with my sweet boyfriend Max who is a paralegal here in Pittsburgh. Every day I feel extremely lucky to have him and my incredible family and friends in this beautiful life we are fortunate to live.

My favorite NSS benefits that I've helped launch during my time here include the Reading Matters program and the Christmas Card Collection. I love meeting and interacting with our members, so please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or are interested in participating in any of our fraternal programs!

Bethany Bonnar

Deadline For Publication

Please be advised that all articles, notices, etc., **MUST BE received by the Home Office no later than the 5th of the month.** Every effort will be made to publish the article and photos in a timely manner and space permitting.

Also, all articles should be **typewritten in regular type or emailed to the Home Office.**

No Exceptions!



NSS Employee Spotlight: Christopher Lucas *Human Resources Manager*



Hello and welcome! My name is Christopher Lucas, and I serve as the Human Resources Manager for NSS Life. As the Human Resources Manager, I have the privilege of supporting our dedicated team. I've been serving in this capacity for a little over a year now and enjoy every day in the office! Before

joining NSS Life, I spent 11 years serving as a Human Resources Director. In my role, I focus on enhancing the overall employee experience, ensuring compliance with laws and regulatory updates, and overseeing payroll and benefits administration. My overall goal is to ensure we maintain a supportive and engaging work environment for the home office staff.

As a proud Pittsburgh native from the West Hills, my professional career has largely been rooted in the mental healthcare sector. My employment journey began after obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Art Therapy, which initially guided me into the mental health field to work with children and adolescents. Although I am an advocate for mental healthcare, this is not where my heart and passion reside. I was fortunate enough to discover my true calling in life within the human resources realm. I enjoy contributing to organizational success and employee well-being. To further enhance my expertise, I pursued a Master's degree in Human Resources Management with a focus on Strategic Management and Leadership. This educational foundation has equipped me to lead HR initiatives that align with both organizational goals and employee needs.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my three large-breed rescue dogs, who are a source of joy and companionship. I also find solace in nature, whether spending time in my backyard or exploring local parks and trails. Additionally, I enjoy tackling DIY home projects, which I find to be both therapeutic and a great way to de-stress.

I believe that the success of any organization is built on strong teamwork, continuous learning, and a shared vision for progress. As I move forward within NSS Life, I am eager to contribute my skills and experiences to support the continued growth of the organization, while always striving for personal and professional development. Thank you for taking the time to learn a little bit about me and for being a member of the NSS Life family.

Christopher Lucas



Slovak Heritage Festival



NSS display table at the University of Pittsburgh Slovak Heritage Festival: Jeff DeSantes, NSS Field Development Manager, Annette Stefka, President Joseph Stefka, Jr.



Slovak Ambassador to the United States Radovan Javorčík with Annette Stefka and Joseph Stefka, Jr. at Breakfast Meeting with University of Pittsburgh Slavic Department, Fraternal Leaders, and Slovak Government Officials.



Scenes from the Ohio Fraternal Alliance

The 107th Annual Session of the Ohio Fraternal Alliance took place in Independence, Ohio, on October 12, 2024. Many Ohio Fraternal Societies were represented. NSS Chairman of the Board, Bob Katricak (OFA Treasurer), NSS Director Mike Czarney (OFA Immediate Past President), and NSS Director Laurie Fox (OFA Director) attended the meeting. Guest speaker Peter Anderson, Executive Director with Enterprise Infrastructure Services presented an interesting program about "Artificial Intelligence Implication in the Workplace." During the evening banquet, Bob Katricak presented this year's "Fraternalist of the Year" award to well-deserving Alice Teynor from Catholic Ladies of Columbia (CLC).



Assembly L102



Assembly L102 will do a matching funds with the Kiwanis club of Em-maus on **December 11th**, and Camelot for kids on **December 8th**. Breakfast with Santa for Hokey AA will be held on **December 7th**.

A huge Thank you to President Stefka and his wife Annette for their visit with our assembly for our summer picnic. Lots of great information and always a good time. L102 will hold our Holiday party on **January 4th** at 2:00 at the Wesnak's house in Whitehall.

Our matching funds for ALS was another huge success. Tina Pradel and her family and friends raised over \$8,200.00.

Sharon Wesnak
Secretary

ASSEMBLY 0039 Uniontown, PA

Remember: The date for our Annual Christmas Party has been changed from Sunday, December 8th to Saturday, December 14th at 2:00 pm. We will again be giving away a large screen HD-TV, conducting a Slovak Auction for the PVR Scholarship Fund, as well as sharing many, many door prizes. We will be looking forward to seeing you.

Our deepest sympathies go out to the families of these assembly members who now rest in the loving arms of the Risen Christ: Dennis Ballas, Barbara Berdar, Ruth Blycheck, Melinda Fernandez, Sandra Musick and Dolores Omatick.

The home office is looking for old Christmas cards, artwork and greetings to be delivered to local nursing homes. Last year, we delivered over 1,200 cards to residents in four nursing homes. Mail your cards to the home office. Contact Bethany Bonnar at bbonar@nsslife.org if you have any questions.

Now is the time to get you creative juices flowing and make an ornament for the NSS Christmas Ornament Contest. A free NSS t-shirt for all who enter. Rules are in the latest issue of the *National News*.

If you are looking for a special Slovak gift, this Christmas, the NSS Heritage Museum is offering Slovak custom items as well as Slovak music CDs. Check the latest issue of the *National News*.

As we approach the new year, remember that the NSS offers a Senior Scholarship Program for members. Information is on the NSS website at www.nsslife.org. Yes, you can teach an old dog new tricks.

Our first meeting in 2025 will be held on Sunday, **March 9th** in the community room of the Bob Evans Restaurant, Uniontown, PA at 6:00 p.m. This will be our Annual Lenten Dinner. Mark your 2025 calendar today!

May the birth of the Christ Child bring you and your family peace and joy.

John Payerchin
President



ASSEMBLY R059 Bethlehem, PA

Our October 20 meeting took place at St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem PA. We held a very successful matching funds luncheon that day as well with proceeds benefitting St. John Chrysostom Academy. Our food drive to benefit the Allentown Rescue Mission was held in October and November. We are planning an early spring hot dog luncheon at St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church to benefit the Miracle League of Northampton County.

A meeting will be held on **January 12, 2025** at the home of Paula and John Lahutsky and election of officers will be held. November birthday greetings to Protodeacon Michael (Robert) Sawarynski and Dorothy Stafiniak. Our best wishes to both.

Michele Guydan
Recording Secretary

ASSEMBLY 70 & C70 Brooklyn, OH

Our assembly will be having our Christmas Luncheon and Meeting on **December 1st**, at Dr. Martin Luther Church, 4470 Ridge Road, Brooklyn, Ohio. Meeting at 11:00 a.m. and luncheon at 12:00 Noon. This is a catered event, so please call John Karkosiak at 216-741-6990 if you plan to attend, so we can plan for our choice of meals. Deadline for reservations is November 24th. If you are able, desserts would be appreciated.

John Karkosiak
Treasurer

ASSEMBLY L075 Duryea, PA

Assembly L075 conducted matching funds for the Montage Mt. Ski Patrol for the 3rd year. We made a basket, sponsored a hole on September 22nd, and attended the dinner.



Nominations & election of officers were held at the Oct 12 meeting. Congratulations to our current officers as they will continue for another 2 years. Installation of officers will be held at the January Fraternal meeting. Bone Appetite matching fundraiser for Region 2 was held on November 3 at the Woodlands in Wilkes-Barre for the SPCA and sent a basket for them and attended the dinner at 4:00 p.m. We sponsored a corn hole fundraiser for the Old Forge Diamond Devils softball team on November 24th at Montage. The Mt. Veterans Day pizza party and bingo is was on November 24th. We provided pizza and drinks during bingo for the Veterans and provide canteen books for them.

On **December 7th** we will be conducting matching funds for Avoca Boy Scout Troop 316 at the Ladore Lodge Craft Fair where we will sell chili and hot dogs for the troop.

Shopping for the 2nd annual Christmas angels' program was in November and bagging and tagging with delivery in December for the South Side Head Start.

The Audit Committee will meet to conduct the audit in December. Future dates for the **2025** year:

January 11, 2025 - Grandes Birney Ave Moosic at 1:00 p.m. for Installation of officers

April 12, 2025 - Fraternal meeting, Grandes in Moosic , PA

May 10, 2025 - Join Hands Day 12:00 Noon at the KOC Hall in PA, with the postal carriers. The fraternal summer picnic date is TBA along with the annual Veterans bingo in November.

For more information contact Lehrae Edwards 570-569-2181.

Lehrae Edwards
Treasurer

ASSEMBLY 0110 New York, NY

Our annual Christmas luncheon will be held on **December 8th, 2024** at Olivetto Pizzeria & Ristorante, 190 New Hyde Park Road, Franklin Square, NY at 12 Noon.

We hope to see you there.

Rich De Sanctis
Financial Secretary

ASSEMBLY L161 Pittsburgh, PA



*Christmas comes but once a year, let's get together for some holiday cheer!
Food and fun for all ages!*

Saturday, December 14
11:30 - 2:00 pm
"Cabin"

Avonworth Community Park
498 CAMP HORNE ROAD, 15229
Hopefully you responded at
SUE.ONDREJCO@GMAIL.COM

ASSEMBLY 0123 Coraopolis, PA

We ended the year with another successful year for our assembly. We filled the year with activities and volunteering. Let us do the same if not better next year. Much of that is up to you, the members, to produce suggestions and ideas.

I want to give "Best Wishes" to Linda Strom, NSS Secretary-Treasurer, who is retiring. She has always been most helpful to me on matters concerning our assembly. May many happy, healthy years be yours. Good luck to the new Secretary-Treasurer John Payerchin. We look forward to working with you.

A mystery dinner, sponsored by the Carnegie Legion Auxiliary and the Oakdale American Legion will be held on Saturday, **February 22nd**. Our assembly will partially subsidize the tickets. More information will be in next month's magazine.

Remember if you have a special event or occasion that is happening in your life or your family member's life, be sure to let us know so we can give you or them some recognition. Also, along that vein, if you do a volunteer activity, please let us know. If you can get photos of this activity, it would be nice to put them in the magazine.

May each of you and your families enjoy all the happiness and blessings of the wonderful Christmas season. I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year.

Bill Knoll
President

ASSEMBLY 0377 Bentleyville, PA

A meeting will be held on **December 1, 2024**, at Hugo's Restaurant, 687 National Pike Road, Brownsville, PA at 3:00 p.m.

At each meeting, we discuss business and ways to help the community. As always, please RSVP at 724-207-3171 or Bob Matko at 724-331-4122.

Suzanne Skrypak
President

ASSEMBLY 0432 Fairview Park, OH

Come and enjoy a fun evening of tobogganing on Sunday, **February 16th, 2025** at the Strongsville Chalet, 16200 Valley Parkway, Strongsville, Ohio at 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Food and refreshments will be provided by our assembly.

Shawn Pytel
Publicist

ASSEMBLY 0586 Chicago, IL

Our Christmas party will be held on **December 6th**, at Maggiano's Restaurant, Oakbrook, IL. Any questions please call Janet.

Janet Tomaskovic
Fraternal Director

ASSEMBLY 0617 Ashley, PA

Assembly 617 has had a very active late summer and fall. Among the activities was the annual Fraternal Day held in August at Knoebels Amusement Resort in Elysburg, Pennsylvania. The assembly provided hoagies, bottled water, and books of ride tickets to assembly members. Members brought desserts and snacks to share with the group. The assembly's Matching Fund Basket Raffle were on display for members to view. Funds raised will support the mission of Father John Ostrowski a member of our assembly in El Salvador. Youth circle participated in games to guess the value of coins in a jar and the number of cookies in a container, prizes were awarded for the best guess in each contest. Slovak theme door prizes were also awarded to lucky members. In addition, donations were accepted for the Holy Family Food Pantry during the Fraternal Day.

During October, members of the assembly participated in the annual litter cleanup on the Back Mountain Hiking Trail, and provided financial support to the Holy Family Food Pantry. Also in October, the Assembly held a business meeting and social event. At this meeting, programs for the remainder of the 2024 fraternal year and programs for 2025 were reviewed. Among the events discussed were: Join Hands with St. Vincent de Paul Kitchen will take place in November, **Fraternal Day** was tentatively set for **August 7, 2025**, new litter pickup along the Susquehanna Trail, and the possibility of an Easter meeting for the assembly. The assembly also discussed the possibility of attending an Assembly Officer Seminar in March 2025.

Special congratulations were offered at the meeting to Evelyn and Jacob Ostrowski for their success with the NSS Art Contest.

A meeting will be held on **February 12, 2025** at Theos Metro beginning at 1:00 p.m. in Kingston. Any member planning to attend the meeting please contact John Kurilla, 570-239-5936 - 570-287-4163 - jkkurilla@aol.com

Members of Assembly 617 wish all of the NSS family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Vesele Vianoce a Stastny Novy.

John Kurilla
President



ASSEMBLY 0731 Lowellville, OH

URGENT: Christmas Party will be held on **December 7th**, at Boardman Park Lariccia Center's Rotary room at 1:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Kathy Cessna or Laurie Fox, 330-717-4705. We need the number of adults and number of children who will be attending by December 1st.

Assembly 731 members took advantage of the warm, sunny days we had so far this Fall. Families and individuals gathered on various days for the NSS Septemberfest in McMurray, Pa., Region 5's day at Irons Mill Farmstead in New Wilmington, Pa., at Camp Frederick's Fall Festival in Rogers, Ohio, at our local Countryside Pumpkin Farm in Poland, Ohio, and our county's Canfield Fair in Canfield, Ohio. We enjoyed time together and the many activities each event offered.

We will also begin to plan our 2025 activities. We hope to have a lot of input from members.

Assembly 731 is helping sponsor a community event during the first week in December. Santa will ride his sleigh throughout our town making stops at various homes where neighborhood children get an opportunity to meet Santa, have a few refreshments, sing Christmas carols and possibly do a craft. "Poland Express" is made possible through the efforts of a non-profit organization, "*Rosalie's Forever Footprints*" that relies on sponsorships and donations to bring this event to our community each year. We're excited to be able to help with this very special event for our town.

Laurie Fox
President



Note of Appreciation

Dear Mr. Stefka, Jr. and NSS Life Scholarship Committee:

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for selecting me as the recipient of the 2024 PVR Scholarship and the 125th Anniversary Scholarship.

Receiving these scholarships will allow me to pursue my dreams at Villanova University where I will be majoring in Biology.

NSS Life's commitment to helping local students further their education is greatly appreciated. Your support and generosity will not be forgotten. Thank you again!

Anna Layden

ASSEMBLY 0737 North Huntingdon, PA

Our assembly plans to hold their Holiday meeting on Saturday, **December 7, 2024**. Time and place to be announced. For further information, please call/text 412-558-0314 or leave a message at 724-423-3992 no later than November 18, 2024. All members are welcome.

Andrea Garbon
Treasurer/Secretary

ASSEMBLY 0800 Matching Funds Project

Pirohy Pierogi, or Pirohi, at All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church, 10291 Bayshore Road, North Fort Myers. FL 33917.

**Open last Friday of the month
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

**Last Saturday of the month
11:00 am - 1:00 pm**

This is a matching funds project to help support All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church. Members and friends of the National Slovak Society, Assembly 800 helps make these delicious home made treats.

12 potato and cheese \$8.00

12 potato and onion..... \$8.00

Home made Nut Roll \$15.00

Come out and support this great project and support our local Church fundraiser. Thanking everyone in advance to make this a great experience.

Gary Cepko
President

Assembly 0123



Our assembly members volunteering their time for a Matching Funds Project at the World Vision Center.

Assembly 0813 Matching Fund

Assembly 813 presented a check to the Wiregrass Area Food Bank as part of their matching funds program. The total raised was \$6,508 and the assembly participated through frequently volunteering at the Brown Bag program by packing bags of groceries for senior citizens at or below the poverty level in Southeast Alabama. Assembly 813 has participated in the Brown Bag program for the past 17 years, and this year more money was raised than ever before. Pictured below are (front row) Monica Jackson, Brown Bag coordinator, Mary Jo Holker, Assembly 813 and Gayle Jackson, bookkeeper for the Wiregrass Area Food Bank. In the back row is George Henderson, Food Bank warehouse manager and David Hanks, director of the Wiregrass Area Food Bank.

Mary Jo Holker
President



Assembly 0731 Activities



Linda Estes, Ida Lewis and Mike Fox help with the PVR Scholarship Basket Raffle at Septemberfest



Mike Fox Jr. and his son Walter enjoyed pumpkin decorating at Septemberfest



Irons Mill Wagon ride was enjoyed by Assembly 731 members during Region 5 day.



Zip lining at Camp Frederick - Teen youth members enjoyed zip lining at Camp Frederick

Assembly 731 members took advantage of the warm, sunny days we had so far this Fall. Families and individuals gathered on various days for the NSS Septemberfest in McMurray, Pa., Region 5 day at Irons Mill Farmstead in New Wilmington, Pa., at Camp Frederick's Fall Festival in Rogers, Ohio, our local Countryside Pumpkin Farm in Poland, Ohio, and our county's Canfield Fair in Canfield, Ohio. We enjoyed time together and the many activities each event offered.

We will meet in November to finalize plans for our annual Christmas Party that will be held on **December 7th** at Boardman Park's Lariccia Center. Details to RSVP have been shared with members on Facebook over the past few months and will continue to do so until party day. We will also begin to plan our 2025 activities so we hope to have a lot of input from members.

Assembly 731 is helping sponsor a community event during the first week in December. Santa will ride his sleigh throughout our town making stops at various homes where neighborhood children get an opportunity to meet Santa, have a few refreshments, sing Christmas carols and possibly do a craft. "Poland Express" is made possible through the efforts of a non-profit organization, "Rosalie's Forever Footprints" that relies on sponsorships and donations to bring this event to our community each year. We're excited to be able to help with this very special event for our town.

Laurie Fox
President

News from Region 2



NSS sponsors event



Lehrae Edwards, wine basket winner



Group of NSS supporting the event on November 3rd, 2024 Bone Appetite for the SPCA of Luzerne County

NSS members of Region 2, Assembly L075 and guests attended SPCA Bone Appétit on November 3, 2024. Region 2 did matching funds, sponsored a few attendants and a basket. Assembly L075 sponsored members as their annual Holiday party event and a basket. The Woodlands in Wilkes-Barre was packed with local area restaurants serving food, drinks and fantastic desserts.

The big winner this year was Lehrae Edwards with a prize basket of wine. There was also a basket raffle and a 50/50 raffle. NSS Region 2 President, Marlin Petro provided the event with NSS brochures, novelties and ink pens. This year we had 20 people attend to represent NSS.

I can not thank everyone enough for attending and making this year one of the best.

Marlin Petro
President



Region 5 Visits Iron Mill Farmstead, New Wilmington, PA



Many members from Region 5 attended a fun family day at Irons Mill Farmstead in New Wilmington, PA, on October 19th. Numerous activities were available for all ages of youth and adults. The fall activities included a wagon ride, a fantastic corn maze, corn pit, pig races, huge jumping areas, zip line for kids, skill games and on-stage entertainment with Bluey & Bingo and Paw Patrol characters.

An added activity was the gathering of NSS members at a tent area with fire pit where everyone enjoyed cooking hot dogs for lunch and marshmallows for S'mores. Families had plenty of time to enjoy the beautiful sunny, warm, fall day.



NSS SCHOLARSHIP FOR SENIOR MEMBERS A NATIONAL SLOVAK SOCIETY FRATERNAL PROGRAM

~ PURPOSE ~

To encourage our older members to continue their education and to make fuller use of their leisure time.

~ MEMBER ELIGIBILITY ~

Any life insurance or annuity member, fifty-five (55) years or older, who has enrolled and successfully completed a continuing education or adult education course. Members may submit up to two (2) applications in one calendar year.

~ COURSE ELIGIBILITY ~

Vocational schools, community colleges and universities offer a variety of short-term courses which may include areas like computer training, cake decorating, photography, landscaping, small engine repair, ballroom dancing, etc. This program does not cover courses that assist you to maintain your current full or part-time job. (Example: We will not reimburse life insurance or real estate agents who take continuing education credits to maintain their licenses.)

~PROCEDURE ~

Members should enroll and pay for the course of their choice. Once the member has finished the class, he/she must submit an application, along with verification that the class was successfully completed, to the Home Office for approval by a National Officer. If the scholarship application is approved, the NSS will reimburse the **full tuition for the course up to, but not to exceed, one hundred dollars (\$100.00)**

For more information, you may find it on our NSS Life website:
www.nsslife.org

NSS Life at the Wheeling Nailers Hockey Game

Recently the NSS home office staff attended an unforgettable night at the Wheeling Nailers hockey game, Friday, November 8th. It was wonderful to see everyone with their friends and loved ones, sharing in the energy of the crowd and enjoying the thrill of the game together. From the awesome food to the prime seating, the night was filled with fun and great memories. We appreciate everyone who made it out to make the event better, and to those who couldn't make it this time, we hope to see you at the next big event.



PVR Scholarship Fund Donations SEPTEMBER 2024

In Memory of departed members from
Assembly 0123:

Karen S. Bohin

William D. Bradley

James R. Broscoe

Leo Hegner

Joseph Hyk, Jr.

Richard Jewell

Grace M. Kriley

Geraldine Malecki

Louise May

Virginia Paulsen

Betty Supples

Mary Wrisght

Lois M. Wyke..... 100.00

In Memory of **Joseph and Elizabeth**

Resovsky:

From the McEvoy family 25.00

Joseph and Elizabeth were long time
members of the NSS and truly believed
in helping "Our future leaders" achieve
their academic goals.

In Memory of husband and father:

Clifford Moeller:

From the Moeller Family.... 100.00

In Memory of our son and brother,

Shaun Logan Crowley:

From Kevin, Lori, Kevin Jr.,

& John Crowley.....20.00

**Donations for September Basket Raf-
fle::**

Assembly 0236 500.00

Assembly 0434 100.00

Assembly 0595 200.00

Assembly 0705 200.00

Assembly 0432 100.00

Assembly R059..... 100.00

Assembly 0617 25.00

Assembly L040 200.00

Assembly 0381 250.00

Assembly 0267 100.00

Assembly 0813 100.00

Assembly 0039 150.00

Assembly L102 250.00

Region 14..... 250.00

Funds raised from Septemberfest

Basket Raffle 1,360.00

Continued on Page 19

DEPARTED MEMBERS OCTOBER 2024

Name	City and State	Date of Death	Assembly
Abbott, Monica	Wilkes Barre, PA	09/30/2024	0617
Anderson, Everette G	Grand Haven, MI	07/11/2023	0381
Ashmore, Martha A	Washington, PA	08/30/2024	0588
Ballaban, Anna	West Mifflin, PA	10/07/2024	0441
Bartek Jr, John	White Oak, PA	09/20/2024	0441
Benkoski, Sharon	Hanover Twp, PA	07/22/2022	0617
Blechle, Susan	Chester, IL	09/24/2024	0586
Boocks, Thomas	Cranberry Twp, PA	09/21/2024	0123
Brown, Agnes E	Shadyside, OH	09/29/2024	0774
Brown, Stanley A	Ludlow, MA	07/15/2024	0774
Carpenter, Myron B	Marienville, PA	09/23/2024	0554
Chittester, Christine M	Seneca, PA	10/15/2024	0554
Copeland, Ernest	Meadville, PA	10/01/2024	0731
Cox, Rufus H	Lumberton, NC	09/21/2024	0774
Craig, Ricky	Dawson, PA	07/02/2022	0039
Crosby, David C	Sterling Heights, MI	01/11/2023	0381
Dee, Gary	Shipperville, PA	09/17/2024	0554
Donohue, Kathleen K	Huron, PA	10/16/2024	0160
Duch, Lucille A	Esseyville, MI	10/09/2024	0381
Duffner, Barbara A	Blairsville, PA	10/01/2024	0737
Dunn, Thomas A	Washington, PA	09/20/2024	0434
Elm, Rita L	Aliquippa, PA	09/02/2024	0123
Fantauzzi, Patricia A	Monessen, PA	09/28/2024	0377
Fenner, Norman R	Sheboygan Falls, WI	09/30/2024	0774
Ferguson, Joshua	Clayton, NC	01/26/2024	L075
Ferrara, Anthony	Naples, FL	10/22/2024	0800
Fitzgerald, Deborah J	Columbus, OH	11/12/2023	0595
Flint, Janet L	Fairborn, OH	09/18/2024	0595
Forinash, Lois	Clarksburg, WV	06/01/2024	0774
Freeman, Deborah	Brownsville, PA	09/26/2024	0377
Frolo, Larry	New Eagle, PA	09/16/2024	0377
Ganley, Ruth	Brockway, PA	10/06/2024	0554
Geraghty, Mary Ann	Racine, WI	10/18/2024	0774
Gibbons, Michael P	Pittsburgh, PA	10/01/2024	0123
Gilley, Jerrel M	Canfield, OH	06/26/2024	0731
Giordano, Arthur P	Monroe Twp, NJ	06/18/2024	0110
Gisewhite, Gary	Meadville, PA	09/15/2024	0731
Gluhosky, Beverly	Palm City, FL	09/18/2024	0800
Graves, Ralph	South Charleston, WV	10/05/2024	0774
Grove, Mildred M	Pittsburgh, PA	09/05/2024	0123
Guzman, Rene A	New Brighton, PA	01/15/2024	0123
Harris, Margaret	Mount Lookout, WV	09/05/2024	0774
Hess, Virginia	Martinsburg, WV	09/06/2024	0774
Hetrick, Donald	Chicora, PA	06/02/2024	0123
Hill, Brandon Paul	Pittsburgh, PA	10/20/2024	0100
Homyak, Anthony	Pittsburgh, PA	02/12/2023	0588
Hubbard, Howard	Montgomery, WV	08/11/2024	0774
Hughes, Sharon	McKeesport, PA	10/10/2024	0737
Jenkins, Carol	Cahokia, IL	09/04/2024	0586
Jones, Sharon	Hollidaysburg, PA	09/26/2024	0267
Kapinski, William E	Poland, OH	10/12/2024	0731
Kinard, Julia M	York, PA	08/26/2024	L102
Kodak, Dorothy	Pineville, WV	12/28/2023	0774
Kovacic, Elizabeth Ann	Rochester, PA	09/24/2024	0123
Kovalcheck, Timothy	Carmichaels, PA	08/13/2024	0039
Kulha, Mary C	Sugar Land, TX	10/03/2024	0434
La Guardia, Arthur W	Monroeville, PA	08/17/2024	L105

DEPARTED MEMBERS OCTOBER 2024 (Continued from page 18)

Name	City and State	Date of Death	Assembly
Leser, Mary	Raleigh, NC	10/12/2024	0774
Louis, Beverly	Harwick, PA	10/23/2024	L105
Lurvey, Judith A	Dousman, WI	08/21/2024	0774
Lydick, Wanda	Wheeling, WV	09/04/2024	0108
Mann, Elma	Charles Town, WV	07/04/2024	0774
Marti, Donna M	Auburndale, WI	09/02/2024	0774
Martincheck, John	Westmoreland City, PA	03/26/2024	0737
Martindale, Geraldine	Pearland, TX	07/05/2024	0236
Mazlarz, Margaret	Saegertown, PA	10/04/2024	0774
Mazza, Rosemary	Natrona Heights, PA	10/17/2024	L105
Mc Steen, Francis J	Punxsutawney, PA	05/19/2024	0554
McArdle, John	Atlantic, PA	10/12/2024	0731
McCall, David	Slippery Rock, PA	10/05/2024	0731
McLaughlin, Al	Ellerbe, NC	09/30/2024	0774
Moran, Josephine	Pittsburgh, PA	09/26/2024	0100
Mottura, David	Sarver, PA	08/06/2024	0774
Mucho, Carole	Washington, PA	10/01/2024	0434
Mulhollen, Gerald	Johnstown, PA	08/28/2024	0267
Murtaugh, Cecilia	Pittsburgh, PA	09/16/2024	0100
Owen, John	Peebles, OH	10/17/2024	0595
Panasuk, John J	Hummelstown, PA	10/13/2024	L102
Panzer, Robert R	Warrington, PA	10/06/2024	0774
Parrinello, Margaret	Cranberry Twp, PA	10/02/2024	0123
Piatt, Joanne H	Washington, PA	09/06/2024	0434
Pierce, Regan	Blairsville, PA	10/19/2024	L105
Plybon, Benjamin	Ronceverte, WV	10/23/2024	0774
Posadny, Mary M	Sylvania, OH	09/21/2024	0381
Reed, Shirley	Corry, PA	09/24/2024	0774
Reese, Nancy	Pittsburgh, PA	09/19/2024	L161
Ritz, Patricia	Danielsville, PA	09/29/2024	R059
Robatin, Mary Ann	Johnstown, PA	09/04/2024	L161
Saetern, Seng	Merced, CA	09/15/2024	0568
Sahlaney, Anne	Houtzdale, PA	05/25/2021	0267
Salvadori, Florence	Burgettstown, PA	10/10/2024	0588
Sanchez, Teresa	Donora, PA	07/07/2024	0377
Schneider, John D	Schuylkill Haven, PA	10/09/2024	L102
Shaffer, Isabel M	Lake Mary, FL	08/25/2024	0813
Silverstein, Edward	New York, NY	05/30/2022	0110
Snider, Henry Roger	Lexington, NC	11/14/2023	0774
Sonni, Julia A	Plumville, PA	10/15/2024	0774
Stack, Katherine	Ashley, PA	09/21/2024	0617
Suttmiller, Eileen	Johnstown, PA	08/28/2024	0737
Swank, Carol A	Peoria, IL	08/11/2021	0586
Taylor, Mary L	Warren, PA	10/11/2024	0774
Temple, Robert	Manchester, CT	09/24/2024	0774
Uhrin, Ruth G	Greensburg, PA	10/17/2024	0737
Van Dyke, Lena	Punxsutawney, PA	09/19/2024	0554
Vanderhorst, Barbara J	Bridgeville, PA	08/26/2021	0434
Vastine, Robert A	Pittsburgh, PA	09/13/2024	L161
Warner, Doyle	Boyne City, MI	06/26/2024	0381
Watts, Roger Wade	Mingo Junction, OH	09/18/2024	0774
Whitmer, Gloria J	Amity, PA	09/08/2024	0377
Wilhelm, Harry A	Gibsonia, PA	09/30/2024	0123
Wincek, Ronald P	Clymer, PA	10/25/2024	0267
Winchilla, Monica A	Wilkes Barre, PA	08/30/2024	0617
Yang, Domonic	Aiea, HI	08/15/2024	0774
Yeich, Lloyd	Marion Heights, PA	09/04/2023	0774
Yurkovich, Dolores	Belle Vernon, PA	10/19/2024	0377
Zechiel, Larry L	Culver, IN	09/12/2024	0705

Continued from Page 18

PVR Scholarship Fund Donations SEPTEMBER 2024

Matching Funds Contribution:

Assembly 0039	50.00
Assembly 0588	170.00
Assembly 0774	170.00
Assembly L161	170.00
Assembly R059	100.00
Assembly 0737	147.50
Assembly 0441	147.50
Assembly 0588	147.50
Assembly 0731	147.50
Assembly 0108	147.50
Assembly L161	147.50
Assembly 0731	147.50
Assembly L040	200.00
Assembly 0381	250.00
Assembly 0432	100.00
Assembly 0434	100.00
Assembly 0441	170.00
Assembly 0731	170.00
Assembly 0617	25.00
Assembly 0004	500.00
Assembly 0267	100.00
Assembly 0236	500.00
Region 14	250.00
Assembly 0595	200.00
Assembly 0813	100.00

Donations from Region 5 Raffle and Picnic

Assembly 0737	147.50
Assembly 0441	147.50
Assembly 0731	147.50
Assembly 0588	147.50
Assembly 0108	147.50
Assembly L161	147.50

Donations:

Start Hearing, Inc.	400.00
Genworth Life Insurance.....	20.88



Irene Tomaskovic Assembly #0586



Irene Tomaskovic, Assembly President for Assembly 0586, passed away suddenly on October 30, 2024.

Irene is the loving mother of Janet, Eric (Lois) and John Tomaskovic, loved wife of 69 years to the late Joseph Tomaskovic Jr., caring older sister to Evelyn Christensen and godmother, aunt and dear friend to many. She was loved by all who met her, including caregivers and neighbors, and had an amazing gift for making friends instantly. When she became involved with various charities and projects she wholeheartedly threw herself into making them successful ventures.

The elder daughter of Anna and George Antol, Slovak immigrants to Chicago, Irene started out strong, riding the streetcar downtown to her part time office job after school at the age of 13. She graduated fourth in a class of 1,000 from Austin High School in Chicago, receiving a scholarship and attending DePaul Business College. Working full time as a bookkeeper, she attended a dance at Stefanik Hall in the Pilsen neighborhood, where she met a handsome Slovak American young man. She married Joseph Tomaskovic Jr. in 1950 and kept the books for his family's construction business. Joe Sr. adored his beautiful bookkeeping daughter-in-law.

Irene best loved her career raising her three children. She would have done anything for us and did! When we were grown, she enjoyed being employed for 22 years at Hinsdale

Hospital, working for physicians and department heads.

One Sunday morning In 1999 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Naperville, Irene learned of a mission trip to help with the building of a Lutheran church in Nitra, Slovakia. She and Joe would make five annual trips to Slovakia, home of their parents, with family members and church mission members to aid in the construction and funding of that church and also of a new Lutheran school, the Center for Christian Education (CCE) consisting of grammar, high school and Bible college in Martin, SK. With the mission group she also made trips to local orphanages, bringing suitcases full of clothing and toys, spending time with and cheering the children with visits. One trip to a women's and children's shelter consisted of hours of landscaping a rough back yard play area and making the shelter safe for its inhabitants.

An enthusiastic fraternalist, Irene was president of Chicago Assembly 586 of the National Slovak Society of America, making many national convention trips with husband Joe. She enjoyed planning meetings and activities and was looking forward to their annual Christmas party.

One of her favorite charitable pursuits was to encourage fellow members of her various groups to collect and donate items for Operation Support Our Troops America to ship to members of our military serving overseas. Her initiative began after hearing a story about a friend's Marine grandson serving in Afghanistan who wrote home asking his grandparents to send cotton socks as his company often went uncomfortably for a week without the ability to shower or even change socks. Irene then made it her mission to collect boot socks, shampoo, snacks and other items for shipment to servicemen and women. NSS graciously doubled monetary gifts via matching funds to cover the cost of shipping the items. Through its PVR scholarship fund, the 125+ year fraternal organization had also granted college scholarships over the decades to her three children, nieces, nephews and their own children, whose NSS memberships Irene and Joe had purchased as new baby gifts.

Above all else, Irene's chief occupation in her life and her joy derived from raising and helping her children,

visiting with extended family and her dear friends. She looked forward to holidays and birthdays and loved buying and giving gifts. Everyone who knew her learned from her and loved her very much. She made us feel as special as she actually was and left us with a desire to be regarded as wonderful and good a person as as she was.

The NSS expresses our deepest sympathy to the Tomaskovic family. May Irene rest in peace.

Christmas Memories

*When snowflakes dance on winter winds
And colored lights shine Christmas cheer,
When children's laughter fills the air
And family gathers from far and near,*

*I try to celebrate with them
And not let my hurting show,
But the empty spaces within my heart,
At this season, seems to grow*

*'Till often times it fills the days
And many night times too,
With aching thoughts and memories
Of Christmases I spent with you.*

*So for now I'll wipe away the tears
And join with loved ones dear
To celebrate this Christmas time,
For I know that, in my heart,
you're here.*





**DONATE HOLIDAY CARDS,
ARTWORK, AND LETTERS FOR
NURISING HOME RESIDENTS**

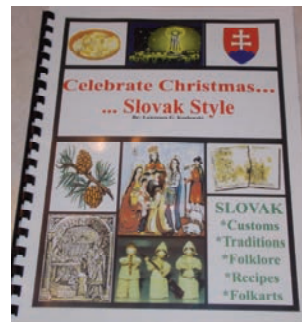
MAIL TO 1301 ASHWOOD DRIVE,
CANONSBURG, PA 15317 BY DECEMBER 8TH



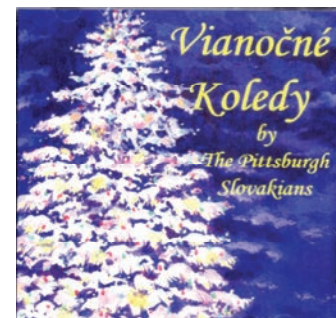
Available from the NSSHM Gift Shop while supplies last!



OPLATKY:
Package of **4 large** wafers **\$4.00**
Small wafer with Christmas Blessing ideal for placing inside Christmas cards. Available in **English OR Slovak.**
Please specify. **\$2.00 ea.**



Christmas Slovak Style:
Remembering the Priceless Treasures of Christmases Past and an Inspiration for Christmases of the Future
\$12 (includes postage and handling)



Slovak Christmas CD
Sung and produced by the Pittsburgh Slovaks.
Features 14 traditional carols. **\$17.00**



EXCLUSIVE! Slovak Christmas CD
Sung and produced by the Carmelite Fathers in Lorinčik, Slovakia. Features 21 traditional carols.
Limited Supply Available \$17.00



Make checks payable and mail to:
NSS Heritage Museum 351 Valley Brook Rd. McMurray, PA 15317



Veselé Vianoce

V tichej noci, svätej noci zem sa s nebom spojila. Svätá Panna v Betleheme Ježiša nám zrodila.

Podťe k jasliam, podťe všetci, tu spi Božie Dieťatko. Oddajme Mu svoje srdcia, nech sniva v nich presladko.

Nech je vianočné Božie požehnanie s Vami a nech šťastím je naplnený každý deň v novom roku.

Pokojné, príjemne a radostné vianočné sviatky našim členom a priateľom želá

Hlavný úrad Narodného Slovenského Spolku

Čo vieme o vianočných symboloch ?

Vianočný stromček Symbol Božej lásky, ktorá nikdy nezvädne. Spomienka na rájsky strom pokušenia. Strom je vždy symbolom života.



Hviezda žiarila nad Betlehemom a viedla k novonarodenému Mesiášovi pastierov aj kráľov, mudrcov aj chudobný ľud.

Zvončeky, zvony upozorňujú, že prišiel čas, ktorý máme venovať Pánu Bohu, počúvať Božie Slovo, aby sme nezablúdili na ceste k večnosti.



Anjeli priniesli svetu posolstvo o príchode a o narodení Ježiša Krista.

Svieca Sviečka je symbolom svetla v tme. Príchodom Krista na svet „Kristus svetlo sveta“ prišlo svetlo sveta pre celé ľudstvo. Sviecu zapálime pred štedrou večerou keď zasadáme ku stolu, ako symbol Krista medzi nami.



Dohviezdny večer

Dohviezdny—štedrý večer podľa ľudovej tradície sa začal potom, keď na oblohe vyšla prvá hviezda. Až potom sa na stole zapálila sviečka a začala večera. Veľká jasná hviezda sa zjavila trom mudrcom na východe a ukazovala im cestu do Betlehema. Preto sa stala symbolom vianočných sviatkov.



Prvé drevené jasičky ...

boli pravdepodobne postavené už v 7. storočí v bazilike Santa Maria Maggiore v Ríme. Časové umiestnenie vianočných sviatkov (24. december - 5. január) sa od vydania Rímskeho misála roku 1570 viac menej nemenilo. Vianočný čas sa aj dnes slávi od prvých večerí dňa 25. decembra do prvej nedele po Zjavení Pána. Táto nedeľa sa v latinskej cirkvi nazýva nedeľou Pánovho krstu.



Vianočné zvyky a tradície na Slovensku

Blížia sa Vianoce - najkrajšie sviatky roka, sviatky pokoja, radosti, hojnosti, kedy oslavujeme narodenie Ježiša Krista. Mnohí si z detstva pamätáme vianočné zvyky, ktoré majú svoje čaro a dodržiavame ich dodnes.

ORECHY V KÚTOCH – po večeri ich do každého kúta rozháďže najstarší člen rodiny, aby bola v dome hojnosť počas celého roka.

ŠUPINY Z KAPRA – symbol bohatstva. Šupiny vložené do peňaženky majú zabezpečiť, aby sme netrpeli počas nasledujúceho roka núdzou a aby sa peniažky len tak sypali.

PENIAZE POD OBRUSOM – majú zabezpečiť, aby sa nasledujúci rok peniaze v rodine rozmnožili a pribudlo ich.

KRÍŽIK MEDOM NA ČELO – urobí ho hlava rodiny každému členovi rodiny, aby ho po celý rok ochraňovali anjeli.





Youth Circle Page

Youth Circle of National Slovak Society • 1301 Ashwood Drive, Canonsburg, PA 15317

Assembly 731 Welcomes Two New Youth Members to our NSS Team



Killian (3) and Jameson (1) are the sons of Justin and Kim (Budd) Hanzelka from Hubbard, Ohio. We look forward to seeing them join us for assembly events. In addition to their parents, they have grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who are also NSS members.

Candy Cane Reindeer

All you need is paper, glue, googly eyes, and glitter. These could be great for a class treat at Christmas time or even an ornament for the tree!

By the way, I used Spree flavor candy canes instead of the regular kind. Tape two candy canes facing outwards together. Tape a piece of brown construction paper around the middle of the candy cane. Glue some googly eyes on it and put a big dot of glue. Sprinkle some red glitter to be Rudolph's red nose.



Enjoy these Christmas Games with friends and relatives during the holidays.

Ring the Reindeer Antlers



Consider this game the holiday version of ring toss. Pick up a reindeer antler headband or make your own if you're feeling crafty. Twist red and white pipe cleaners together to make candy cane-striped rings, then have one person put on the headband, while the rest try to toss the rings onto the antlers. This game works great for indoors or outdoors, if you live in a warmer climate.

Christmas Dance Freeze



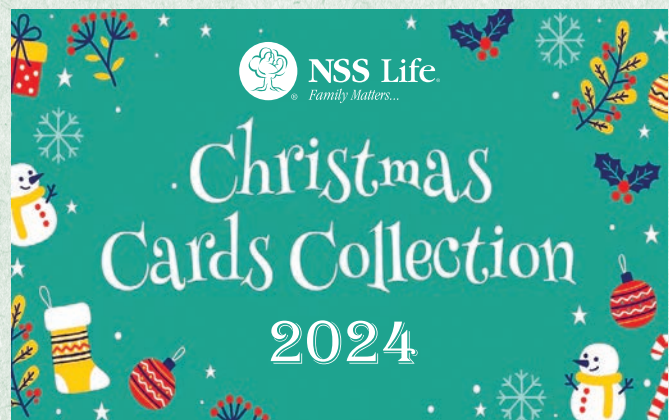
Turn rockin' around the Christmas tree into a game by holding a holiday dance-off. Throw it back to your elementary school days by playing dance freeze. Turn on the music and get groovin', then shut it off without warning and shout, "freeze!" Whoever stops moving last is out.

CHRISTMAS CARD COLLECTION A NATIONAL SERVICE OPPORTUNITY!

DEADLINE DECEMBER 8TH, 2024

- The holidays can be one of the hardest times of the year for senior citizens who are isolated in a hospital or nursing home environment. Help us spread some holiday cheer this year by participating in NSS Life's Second National Service Opportunity! National Service Opportunities are a new way for you to get involved with NSS community Outreach by participating in events, collections and fundraising events from anywhere in the country.
- For the this year's initiative, NSS Life is asking members like you for donations of Christmas cards/ letters/artwork that will be distributed to isolated seniors living in nursing homes in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Write a letter wishing the reader a happy and healthy holiday season! Have the little ones paint a picture or make a heartfelt card! All donations will be sure to make a huge difference in someone's morale. Members are permitted and encouraged to send as many cards as they wish. The more creative and personal the better!
- Mail in all submissions to the home office at: 1301 Ashwood Drive, Canonsburg, PA 15317. Don't worry about the envelope! Santa's Elves over at the Home Office will package them in new envelopes and address them to seniors in need. Please include your name on a separate sheet of paper, so that all participants in this initiative can be properly thanked and recognized in a following edition of the *National News*.

Deadline for submissions is December 8th, 2024.



National Slovak Society
1301 Ashwood Drive
Canonsburg, PA 15317

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