

The National Slovak Society of the United States of America



NSS Life
Family Matters...

Národné Noviny

JUNE 2026

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**NSS National Golf Tournament
& Non-Golf Fraternal Activity**
Pages 19-21

**Fraternalist of the Year &
Youth Achievement Award**
Pages 22-23

**103rd Western PA Slovak Day
Kennywood Amusement Park**
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Convention

ISSUE



★ National Slovak Society's 39th Quadrennial Convention • June 14th-18th • Huron, OH ★



★ Delegate Listing and Board of Directors Candidate Biographies Included in this Issue ★



National Slovak Society

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John G. Payerchin, *FIC, CRCMP, Secretary-Treasurer, CFO*
Robert F. Katricak, *FIC, Chairman of the Board*

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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

July 15	Assembly 0617, Meeting, King's College, Wilkes-Barre, PA
August 2	Assembly L075, Summer Picnic, Mercatili Segilia Park, Moosic, PA at 1:00 pm
August 13	Assembly 0617, Fraternal Day, Knoebels at 12:30 pm
August 15	Region 2, Meeting, Grottos, Wilkes Barre, PA
September 21	Assembly L075 Montage Ski Patrol Golf Tournament
October 10	Assembly L075, Meeting, Grandes Restaurant, Moosic, PA at 1:00 pm
October 24	Assembly L075, Join Hands Day, CEO Weinburg Food Bank, Pittston, PA at 9:00 am

REGION 5

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

June 7	Assembly 0039, Meeting/BBQ, Columbia Association Picnic Pavilion at 1:00 pm
June 7	Assembly 0377, Meeting/Picnic, Richardson Park, Bentleyville, PA at 3:00 pm
June 12-13	Board of Directors Spring Meeting, Sawmill Creek Resort in Huron, OH
June 14-18	NSS 39th Quadrennial Convention, Sawmill Creek Resort, Huron, OH
June 27	Assembly 0123, Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Walk
July 16	Region 5, NSS Slovak Day at Kennywood Amusement Park, West Mifflin, PA
July 17-19	NSS National Golf Tournament, Kennsington Golf Course, Canfield, OH
July 26	Assembly 0123, Meeting/Picnic, Settlers Cabin Park, Pittsburgh, PA 1:00-5:00
July 31	Assembly 0731, Mahoning Valley Scrappers game, Eastwood Field in Niles
August 7	Region 5, Pirates Night at PNC Park vs New York Mets, Pittsburgh, PA at 6:40 pm
August 23	Region 5, Family Picnic, Cedar Creek Park, Pavilion #1, Belle Vernon, PA at 1:00 pm
August	Assembly 0731, Picnic/Outdoor movie night (TBA)
September 2-7	Assembly 0731, Members can join in a fun Scavenger Hunt at the Canfield Fair
September 13	Assembly 0377, Meeting, Sesame Gourmet, McMurray, PA at 3:00 pm
September 14	Assembly 0588, Meeting, Stefka residence, Gibsonia, PA at 5:00 pm
September 26	Septemberfest, NSS Heritage Museum, McMurray, PA
September 26	Assembly 0123, Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation (Virtual Walk)
October 11	Assembly 0731, Halloween Hayride, Countryside Farm (TBA)
November 9	Assembly 0588, Meeting, Stefka residence, Gibsonia, PA at 5:00 pm
November 28	Christmas Around the World, NSS Heritage Museum, McMurray, PA
November	Assembly 0731, Meeting/Christmas ornaments (TBA)
December 5	Assembly 0039, Columbia Association Social Hall starting at 2:00 pm.
December 6	Assembly 0377, Christmas Party, Hugo's Restaurant, Brownsville, PA at 3:00 pm
December 13	Assembly 0731, Christmas Party, Boardman Park's Elton Beard Cabin at 3:00 pm

REGION 8

Assemblies 0004, 0070, 0160, 0432, 0595

June 28	Assembly 0070, Summer Picnic, Dr Martin Luther Church, Brooklyn, OH at 11:30 am
October 4	Assembly 0432, Red Wagon Outing, Red Wagon Farm (TBA)
October 20	Assembly 0432, Meeting, Pytel Residence, North Olmsted, OH at 7:00
December 8	Assembly 0432, Meeting, Arturo's Restaurant, North Olmsted, OH at 7:00
December 8	Assembly 0432, Holiday Party, Arturo's Restaurant (After meeting)
January 17, 2027	Assembly 0432, Tobogganing (TBA)

REGION 14

Assemblies R059, L102

July 26	R059, Meeting at St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, Bethlehem, PA.
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AT LARGE

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

June	Assembly 0800, Pierogie's, last Friday of the month, 4-7, last Saturday 11-1 pm
July 11	Assembly 0705, Butwin Family Reunion, Fraternal Activity Fund
August 30	Assembly 0705, Meeting, Buck Home, Seelyville, IN at 1:00 pm
October 25	Assembly 0705, Meeting, Buck Home, Seelyville, IN at 1:00 pm

The President's Page...

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



The month of June brings us Flag Day on June 14th and Father's Day on June 21st. June 21st also marks the official beginning of summer. Summer is the season that children look forward to each year. School is out, summer sports are taking place, summer family vacations occur, and time is spent with friends and family each day. Be extra cautious driving everywhere but especially near parks and athletic complexes during the summer months to protect our children!

Father's Day is a time to celebrate and remember all the things that our fathers did to make our lives special. From encouraging us at games and activities, taking us to events, being there to talk with and listen to us, celebrating special occasions in our lives, providing a foundation for our future decisions, and sharing their love. On this Father's Day, remember the great things your Dad did for you during your lifetime and be sure to thank him!

39th Quadrennial Convention

The National Slovak Society 39th Quadrennial Convention will be held from **Sunday, June 14th to Thursday, June 18th** at Sawmill Creek Resort in Huron, Ohio. The 195 delegates to the Convention, including Officers, Directors, Honorary Officers, and delegates elected by NSS Assemblies and Regions, will help set the course for the Society over the next four years by making decisions during the Convention. The information to make those decisions will be gleaned from the delegate packet received prior to the Con-

vention, the presentations during the Convention, and from meeting and talking with the candidates running for the Board of Directors at the Convention. The election of the Board of Directors is one of the most important decisions facing the delegates. Those elected will serve as the governing body of the Society for the next four years and will be responsible for ensuring the Society's continued growth. The biographies of the eleven candidates seeking a Director's position are included elsewhere in this issue of the *National News*, along with the list of all delegates to the Convention. The Convention will also include some fun activities during Fraternal Night at the Liberty Aviation Museum, Fraternal Day Excursions, and the Convention Banquet. Our Member and Community Engagement Director, Bethany Bonnar, and Member and Community Engagement Associate, Jamie Belding, have done an outstanding job in planning the activities at the Convention and the Youth Funfest. I am looking forward to seeing all of our delegates, guests, and Youth Funfest participants at Sawmill Creek Resort! Safe travels to all!

National Golf Tournament

The 60th Annual NSS National Golf Tournament is scheduled for **July 17-19, 2026**, at Kennsington Golf Club in Canfield, Ohio. If you have not registered for the tournament, you still have time to enter. The deadline for entry in the tournament is June 26, 2026. The deadline for hotel reservations is June 17, 2026. The NSS has reserved a block of forty rooms for both Friday and Saturday nights. We are looking forward to another exciting weekend of golf, fraternalism, and fun at Kennsington Golf Club. The tournament is a handicap event, with golfers of all abilities competing in flights of similar ability. Please make plans to join us for a great weekend! Plans are being finalized for an activity for non-golfers during the weekend.

A reminder that hole sponsorships are available for Assemblies, Regions, and individuals with the money supporting the PVR Scholarship Fund. Please use the entry form in the *National News* to designate your hole sponsorship for the tournament. The NSS Golf Tournament is the largest PVR Scholarship fundraiser!

Assembly Activities

The month of June brings several activities of our local Assemblies. Assembly 039 will hold its Summer BBQ on June 7th, Assembly 377 will hold a Summer Picnic on June 7th, and Assembly 070 will hold a Summer Picnic on June 28th. Please plan to attend your assemblies' activities and programs.

News of Narodniars

Happy Birthday wishes to Honorary Officer Justine Wesnak, Honorary Director Mary Jo Holker, Chairman of the Board Bob Katricak, Director Michael Czarney, Home Office Staff Members Max Abusara, Rachel Geffrey, and Michael Weaver, to former Home Office Staff Member Jill Grover, Cal Zemelman, Logan Triebisch, David Jancisin, Beverly Arbore, Rich Somplatsky, Joe Palko, Blaze Farrell, Keith Chojnicki, and all others celebrating a birthday in June.

Happy Wedding Anniversary Wishes to Director Mike and Randi Czarney, Shannon and Edwin Woods, and all others celebrating anniversaries in June.

"As we gather for our Convention from June 14-18, I wish all our members a very successful and impactful event. May your conversations be fruitful, your ideas bold, and your time together truly rewarding."

Secretary/Treasurer's Page

John Payerchin, Secretary/Treasurer, CFO
Email: jpayerchin@nsslife.org



Fraternal Greetings

The 39th Quadrennial Convention of the National Slovak Society of the USA is almost here. If you're traveling to Sawmill Creek Resort in Huron, Ohio later this month, safe travels to you, your families, friends, fellow delegates, FunFest attendees, Directors, advisors, and guests. We look forward to seeing everyone who leads, supports, and serves the NSS. Bethany, Jamie, Joe, and I have been working to make this a memorable event for all. I cannot thank Bethany and Jamie enough! They have been instrumental in planning and preparing for the Convention. For not having the experience of even attending an NSS Convention previously, they never hesitate to jump right into a task and make sure every detail is accounted for and perfect. They are SUPERSTARS!

If you have questions or need assistance before traveling to Ohio, please call or email us and we'll do our best to help. Second delegate packets have been mailed and include remaining details on lodging, meetings, meals, schedules, Fraternal Day, and more. **PLEASE BRING ALL OF THESE DOCUMENTS WITH YOU.** We will provide a Convention binder for your materials. As in past Conventions, if you request additional copies from the Convention Office, we will require a \$5 donation to the PVR Scholarship Fund per request.

Check-in at Sawmill Creek Resort begins at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. **CHECK-IN BEFORE 4:00 P.M. IS NOT PERMITTED.** While this policy is set by the resort (not NSS), it allows staff time to prepare guest rooms and the common areas we will use throughout the week. Upon arrival, please stop at the Convention Welcome Desk located at the entrance to the dining and meeting rooms on the far-right side of the resort. Your registration materials and other items will be ready for you.

The Credentials Committee will have your Delegate Election form (completed when you were elected by your Region or

Assembly). Please sign it upon arrival so the Committee can confirm the total number of delegates present. Check-in will remain open until 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, with a temporary closure during dinner.

If you are flying into Cleveland, your ground transportation itinerary should already be arranged. If you have not done so, please contact the Home Office as soon as possible so we can confirm scheduling for you and your group.

You also received an Expense Reimbursement Form in the second packet. Each delegate should complete this form *after* the Convention. To reduce the risk of misplaced paperwork, we will not accept reimbursement forms on-site.

Other Important Notes

- Sawmill Creek Resort is a **CASHLESS** facility.
 - A Cash Exchange Machine is available on-site to turn your cash into a valid credit card that can be used on or off the property.
- Where **CASH** is being accepted.
 - Cash is accepted for 'tips' by resort employees and staff.
 - For the NSS Basket Raffle.
 - Fraternal Night, being held offsite at the Air Museum, will be accepting cash or cards for the Gift Shop and drinks.
 - Any Fraternal Day activities where the outside vendors accept cash.
- We are asking those attending Fraternal Night at the Air Museum to dress in an Aviation or Military theme outfit or costume.
- The Air Museum has a beautiful Gift Shop full of aviation, military, and other items for sale. Everything from shirts, hats, toys, and much more....
- A Free Photobooth will be on-site during the Convention at numerous events such as:
 - The Ice Cream Social
 - Fraternal Night
 - Convention Banquet
 - Photos will be available via text or email instead of prints.
- The Convention Office will be open throughout each day during the meeting time slots.
 - Should you need any assistance, please stop at the Convention Office just outside the Convention Hall heading towards the Exit Doors.
 - This will be the area for you to Check-In upon your arrival on Sunday.

As of this writing, we are finalizing our first-quarter financials. These results will be presented at the Convention, with a detailed summary to follow in the July issue. The July publication will also include a Con-

vention recap, ensuring that those unable to attend will still receive key highlights, important updates, and major decisions.

May has been an especially busy month beyond Convention preparations. In my role as President of the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance (PFA) for 2026, I have the privilege of collaborating with NSS Director Abigail Gross, Esq., who chairs the PFA Legislative Committee, and Theresa Kluchinski, President of the Ladies Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union (LPSCU) and PFA Secretary. Together, we organized a legislative dinner in Harrisburg. Working with Representative Timothy Brennan, Director Gross secured the participation of 14 Pennsylvania legislators. The event provided an opportunity to present the 2026 PFA Keystone Legislative Award, to Representative Brennan, make a charitable contribution to a charity of the recipient's choice, and share the story and impact of fraternal organizations across the Commonwealth.

The reception and dinner brought together nearly 20 legislators and 15 fraternal representatives. Notably, only two legislators were previously familiar with the fraternal system, its history, and its financial and community contributions to more than 500,000 members in Pennsylvania. The setting allowed for meaningful, extended conversations—something many legislators noted is rare, as such events are often associated with fundraising or financial requests. They appreciated the opportunity to simply learn about our mission and passion for the fraternal system.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Abigail Gross, Theresa Kluchinski, and Allison Koppel, President & CEO of the American Fraternal Alliance. Allison's leadership at both the national and international levels continue to strengthen the reach and impact of fraternalism. Abigail's exceptional effort in organizing this event was instrumental, and I am deeply grateful for her commitment to NSS and the broader fraternal community.

Earlier that day, I also met with Pennsylvania Insurance Commissioner Michael Humphreys and Deputy Commissioner Diana Sherman, joined by Allison Koppel and Theresa Kluchinski. During our discussion, we reviewed several key topics and concerns. The Department was responsive, providing helpful insights and expressing a commitment to maintaining more consistent communication with fraternal organizations. We look forward to continuing this dialogue, including Deputy Commissioner Sherman's participation at the Fraternal Societies of Greater Pittsburgh Annual Symposium later in May and the PFA Annual Meeting in October in State College.

May God bless all NSS Life members, their families, our Home Office staff, advisors, and everyone who supports our mission. Wishing you a safe and blessed June.

National Slovak Society XXXIX Convention Delegates

BY VIRTUE OF BY-LAWS

JOSEPH STEFKA, JR.	President, CEO
JOHN G. PAYERCHIN	Secretary/Treasurer, CFO
ROBERT F. KATRICAK	Chairman of the Board
MICHAEL J. CZARNEY	Director
LAUREN A. FOX	Director
ANDREA L. GARBON	Director
ABIGAIL A. GROSS, ESQ.	Director
KEITH A. KUCHERAWY	Director
SUSAN M. ONDREJCO	Director
ANDREW J. WESNAK	Director
THERESA M. ZEMELMAN	Director
DAVID G. BLAZEK	Honorary Officer
MARY JO HOLKER	Honorary Director
PAUL M. PAYERCHIN, JR.	Honorary Director
JUSTINE WESNAK	Honorary Officer

ASSEMBLY DELEGATES

Assembly Name

0039	Ficara, Lorrie
0039	Ficara, Tony
0039	Gera, Barbara
0039	Gera, Ted
0039	Hill, Todd
0039	Lako, Mara
0039	Lako, Victoria
0039	Leonard, Rita
0039	Mallick, Diane
0039	Mallick, Thomas
0039	McTeir, Heather
0039	Mulich, Barbara
0039	Mulich, Frances
0039	Mulich, Franklin
0039	Myers, Janet
0039	Schwer, Nancy
0070	Froelich, Matthew
0070	Karkosiak, John
0070	Karkosiak, Jr., John
L075	Collins, Dorothy
L075	Collins, Gary
L075	Edwards, Lehrae
L075	Gorgol, Patricia
L075	Gorgol, Richard
L075	Lazar, Adam
L075	Lazar, Allie
L075	Piccoletti, Lucy
L075	Piccoletti, Michael
L075	Piccoletti, Tom
L075	Sachetti, Lucille
L075	Wesnak, Bill
L075	Wesnak, Debbie
0100	Chojnicki, Keith
0100	Chojnicki, Melinda
0100	Chojnicki, Philip
L102	Althouse, Kylie
L102	Brinker, Brooke
L102	Brinker, Dakota
L102	Gross, Michael
L102	Shettig, Kay
L102	Wesnak, Carolyn
L102	Wesnak, Michael
L102	Wesnak, Paul
L102	Wesnak, Wanda
0108	Kralik, Daniel
0108	Kralik, Georgiann

0108	Strom, Linda
0108	Strom, Ryan
0108	Toth, Richard
0123	Bastaroli, Jerry
0123	Bastaroli, Tracey
0123	Buono, Linda
0123	Buono, Patrick
0123	Campbell, Tom
0123	Del Monaco, Bill
0123	Del Monaco, Valerie
0123	Grover, Jill
0123	Grover, Lyle
0123	Johnston Trax, Carol
0123	Knoll, Susan
0123	Knoll, William
0123	Krall, Deborah
0123	Nych, Kathleen
0123	Nych, Stanley
0160	Barnard, Steven
0160	Brunovsky, Rev. Michael
0160	Czarney, James
0160	Czarney, Margaret
0160	Katricak, Erin
0160	Katricak, John
0160	Katricak, Robert M.
0160	Kurta, Anne
L161	Allan, Theresa
L161	Boone, Charles
L161	Boone, Monica
L161	Boone, Ronald
L161	Burkhart, Joseph
L161	Collins, James
L161	Collins, Linda
L161	Collins, Patrick
L161	Kozlowski, Lawrence
L161	Lako, Carol
L161	Mann, Anna
L161	Mann, Justin
L161	Montalbano, Regina
L161	Ondrejco, Rudolf
L161	Rudisin, Susan
0377	Anden, Carol
0377	Bolbrich, Orville
0377	Bolbrich, Sonya
0377	Kascelek, Karen
0377	Matko, Robert
0377	Matko, Roseanne
0377	Moore, Kathleen
0377	Opice, Gina
0377	Skrypak, Suzanne
0381	Hanlon, Rosemary
0381	Merten, Jack
0381	Merten, Peter
0381	Merten, Rosemarie
0432	Pytel, Amanda
0432	Pytel, Dave
0432	Pytel, Marti
0432	Pytel, Shawn
0432	Walls, Marie
0434	Andrulonis, John
0434	Blazek, Frances
0434	Cooper, Terri
0434	Gahagen, Ruth
0434	Gahagen, Terry
0434	Kearney, Nicole
0434	Kearney, Tom
0434	Politowski, Mary
0434	Politowski, Robert
0434	Riepole, Eric

0434	Rudy, Beverly
0434	Sirakos, George
0434	Sirakos, Joy
0434	Wilson, Charles
0434	Wilson, James
0434	Wilson, Theresa
0441	Crowley Jr., Kevin
0441	Crowley, John
0441	Crowley, Kevin
0441	Crowley, Lorraine
0441	Devey, Edward
0554	Stricek, Jim
0554	Stricek, Ron
0568	Capps, Luba
0568	Dorusinec, Adelina
0568	Dorusinec, John
0568	Guizado, Victor
0568	Sabo, Dusan
0588	Bernardo, Ashley
0588	Bernardo, Brett
0588	Bernardo, Carson
0588	Kucherawy, Elaine
0588	Shingle, Darryl
0588	Stefka, Annette
0617	Buckley, Jim
0617	Buckley, Jo
0617	Gushka, Margaret
0617	Gushka, Robert
0617	Kurilla, John
0617	Kurilla, Stephanie
0731	Cessna Sr., James
0731	Cessna, Jessica
0731	Cessna, Kathleen
0731	Fox, Jr., Michael
0731	Fox, Sr., Michael
0731	Mason, Ashlynn
0731	Mason, Mark
0731	Mason, Matthew
0731	Mason, Peggy
0737	Bench, James
0737	Bench, Sandra
0737	Garbon, Andrew
0737	Garbon, Hilary
0737	Garbon, Martha
0737	Garbon, Steven
0737	Manns, Christine
0737	Myers, Bernard
0737	Myers, Eileen
0737	Palicka, Joy
0737	Palicka, Judith
0774	Cilia, Cathy
0774	Kapp, Robert
0774	Ladue, Carol
0774	Ladue, Nelson
0774	Orban, John
0774	Orban, Karen
0774	Orban, Stephanie
0774	Tenney, Donna
0774	Webb, Luke
0813	Farrell, Blaze
0813	Farrell, Daniel
0813	Farrell, Kerry

REGION DELEGATES

Region	Name
2	Petro-Wesnak, Marlin
5	Palko, Joseph
14	Wesnak, Sharon

ASHLEY M. BERNARDO



My name is Ashley Bernardo, and I respectfully submit my name for consideration as a candidate for the Board of Directors. It would be a tremendous honor and privilege to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Slovak Society. As a fourth-generation member since birth, the National Slovak Society has played a

significant role throughout my life. My great grandfather, Josef Stefka was instrumental in helping to establish Assembly #588. My grandfather, Joseph Stefka, Sr. was the President of the National Slovak Society from 1978-1993. One of my very first NSS memories was leading the Pledge of Allegiance at the 30th Quadrennial Convention from the dais in 1990. Visiting my grandfather at his Southside office was a favorite outing of mine. I attended many Region 5 meetings at the home office with my parents and grandparents. I would help set up the lunch with my grandma and mother. Attending the Pallan Plan meetings with my grandmother and parents is also a strong memory. I always participated in all of the contests and children's events such as the annual Region 5 Christmas party. I looked forward to attending the golf and bowling tournaments yearly growing up and helping my father, Joseph Stefka, Jr, as he was the Activities Director for many years. Watching my father fulfill his responsibilities as a member of the Board of Directors for 26 years and as President & CEO for the past 6 years has inspired me to want to follow in his leadership footsteps.

I was also honored to be a recipient of the PVR Scholarship. I graduated summa cum laude from Bethany College with Distinction earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education. During my high school and college years, I consistently held leadership roles, demonstrating initiative and responsibility in group settings, such as President of the National Honor Society and being selected as Senior Fellow of the Education Department at Bethany College. I was hired by Burgettstown School District the summer after I graduated for my first teaching position as a first-grade teacher. Because of my outstanding technology skills, I was nominated by the school district as a Keystone Technology Integrator for 2008. I held several leadership positions, including representative for our Annual Heartwood Character Education event and District Educational Advisory Committee member for several years as well as participating in the district leadership retreat. As an elementary teacher, I led a diverse environment of students that required constant decision-making, clear communication, and proactive problem-solving. I regularly collaborated with colleagues, families, and administrators, took initiative to implement new strategies, and remained accountable for measurable outcomes. These experiences have developed my leadership, organizational, and governance-focused skills.

Having a family of my own built on strong core values

was something I always dreamed about. My husband, Brett and I are proud parents of four children, Carson (16), Bella (14), Adalyn (11), and Caroline (7). The National Slovak Society has been a part of all of their lives since birth. It continues to be an important part of our family's life, and our entire family actively participates in the contests, assembly meetings, events, and National Conventions. As a mother of four, I have developed exceptional organizational, time management, and multitasking skills through coordinating busy schedules, activities, and commitments.

After Bella was born in 2011, I made the difficult decision to step away from teaching to raise our children. My strong drive for leadership and making a difference didn't stop while I was at home. I quickly became the co-chair of the Parent Steering Committee at my children's preschool, where I led the meetings and would oversee various committees. I participated on several committees where we planned events and fundraisers for the preschool. I continue to be highly involved in my children's elementary school and middle school. I serve as co-chair of both schools' Staff Appreciation Committees, where we plan and coordinate ongoing staff recognition efforts throughout the school year, as well as organize and implement a week-long celebration at both schools in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week. In addition, I co-chair the 5th grade committee leading 13 volunteers in planning and implementing events for the entire 5th grade class at our elementary school.

In addition, in November of 2015, I became an independent consultant for a national clothing company to help contribute to our family while being at home with our children. Through my business, I personally led all operational and strategic functions, including inventory management, sales, marketing, and financial oversight. I took initiative to grow the business by reinvesting profits and expanding reach through pop-up and in home events and team-building, ultimately creating a successful venture. Due to my success of my team, I was promoted to Trainer Level. Building and mentoring a business team further strengthened my leadership and collaboration skills, which I am eager to bring to a board of directors' role. Due to my business' success, my part-time venture quickly turned into a full-time, seven day a week job. While all of my hard work paid off, I ultimately decided to transition away from this role, as the time commitment no longer aligned with my priorities at that time for my family life. I'm forever grateful for all of the leadership, organizational, and financial management skills I gained from this endeavor.

My involvement in the National Slovak Society has continued into my adulthood. I currently serve as the President of Assembly #588. At the 37th and 38th Quadrennial Conventions, I organized, scheduled, provided activities and led the Youth Funfest providing fraternalism to the next generation of NSS leaders. For the 39th Quadrennial Convention, I assisted the NSS Member and Community Engagement Department in reviewing past Funfests and planning the structure for the upcoming event. I have volunteered in the past with for the annual Septemberfest.

I am deeply committed to the mission and future of the National Slovak Society. I would be honored to contribute my

National Slovak Society XXXIX Convention Director Candidates

experience, leadership, and dedication in service as a member of the Board of Directors and to help the NSS continue to be a leader among fraternal benefit societies. I would greatly appreciate your support.

Fraternally,
Ashley Bernardo

MICHAEL J. CZARNEY



My name is Michael J. Czarney, and I have proudly served as a Director of the National Slovak Society (NSS) since 2014. I am seeking re-election and would be honored to continue serving in this role. I believe my experience, leadership, and commitment to our mission position me to contribute meaningfully to

the continued success and growth of the NSS, and I respectfully ask for your support.

Over the past four years, the NSS has demonstrated strong growth and resilience, even in a challenging and competitive environment. Our assets have grown to nearly \$1.85 billion, placing us among the top fraternal organizations by assets. We have achieved a surplus exceeding \$90 million and expanded our membership to over 42,000. I am proud to have played a role in this success and am committed to building upon this momentum in the years ahead.

During my 12 years as a Director, I have actively contributed to the Board's work through committee service and professional development. I currently serve as Chair of the Compensation Committee and the Technology Committee, and I serve on the Fraternal Growth and Membership Committees. I have participated in numerous AQS Symposiums, as well as Board Institute and Master Class programs through the American Fraternal Alliance. These experiences have strengthened my understanding of both the business and fraternal aspects of our organization, enabling me to make informed decisions that support long-term success.

I am a lifelong member of the NSS and deeply rooted in its traditions. My wife, Randi, and our children, Cash and Sadie, are also proud members. My family's legacy within the NSS spans generations, with multiple relatives having served as officers of Assembly 160 in Lorain, Ohio. I am honored to continue that legacy as the current Elder of Assembly 160.

Beyond the NSS, I have been actively involved in fraternal and community leadership. I served as Vice President of the American Slovak Club in Lorain, Ohio, for 10 years before serving as President from 2020 to 2023. Additionally, I have represented the NSS in the Ohio Fraternal Alliance (OFA) for over 11 years, serving in leadership roles including President, Immediate Past President, First Vice President, Third Vice President, and Board Member. These experiences have reinforced the importance of collaboration, adaptability, and unified leadership—especially in navigating the challenges of recent years.

Professionally, I bring over 26 years of experience in the financial, insurance, and real estate industries. I have held positions with Charter One and other financial institutions, as well as with Progressive Corporation in the insurance sector. I earned a Bachelor's degree in Communications with an emphasis in Public Relations from Adrian College. I've held a life and health insurance license and currently have a real estate license in the State of Ohio. I have also completed the Legal Principles Claims Specialist course through the American Educational Institute.

In addition to my professional background, I am currently serving as a Building Substitute in my local school district while pursuing a Master's degree in Education, which I expect to complete within the next year. This experience has further strengthened my leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills.

Service to others is a core value in my life. I have been actively involved in charitable efforts, including more than 8 years with the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, where my team raised over \$80,000. My wife and I have also supported St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, raising over \$5,000. I am also an active father, coaching my children's basketball and soccer teams in the Amherst Youth Association.

I am confident that my combination of fraternal involvement, professional experience, and community service equips me to continue contributing to the NSS in a meaningful way. I remain committed to our mission and to ensuring that the NSS continues to grow and thrive for future generations.

Thank you for your past support, and I respectfully ask for your continued support in my re-election as Director.

Fraternally,
Michael Czarney

LAUREN A. FOX



My name is Lauren Fox, and I am honored to serve as a National Director since 2020. I feel confident that my experience and long standing involvement with NSS have prepared me to continue serving our membership effectively. As the first of twelve children, I learned early in life the importance of responsibility,

compassion, and working together. Those values continue to guide my commitment to NSS as I seek to continue serving our members and helping lead NSS into a strong and successful future.

I have been an NSS member since childhood enjoying the fun activities offered to youth members. As an adult, I became active in Assembly 731 in 1996 when I helped plan events and was elected Secretary. I became Assembly President in 1998, a role I still proudly hold. Keeping our assembly active and welcoming has always been a priority to me. I also

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work as a fraternal agent to bring new members into the Society. I served many years as Secretary for Region 7. Since 1998, I have represented Assembly 731 as a delegate at every Quadrennial Convention and have served on the Elections, Financial, and Fraternal Committees. In 2014, I was honored to receive the NSS Fraternalist of the Year Award.

I was selected by the Board of Directors in 2020 to fill a vacancy on board and elected by the delegates in 2022. During my term, I have served on the Compensation, Audit, Assembly Growth, Fraternal Outreach, and Heritage Museum committees. I attend all board meetings and complete weekly cybersecurity training to stay current with Board responsibilities to help protect our computer system, networks and data from digital attacks.

I attend the AQS Symposium each year to stay informed about the Society's investments and participate in American Fraternal Alliance programs that encourage collaboration among fraternal organizations. I also serve on the Ohio Fraternal Alliance Board of Directors, where I am currently 1st Vice President and chair their Scholarship Committee.

My professional background includes 35 years as Administrative Secretary to the Superintendent of Mahoning County Schools, working closely with the county school board, administrators, and eleven local school districts' superintendents, while also supervising the county office secretarial staff. My career strengthened my organizational skills and involved daily interaction with the public, always with a commitment to clear, helpful, and courteous service.

While working full time and raising three children, I stayed active in their youth organizations as a Girl Scout leader, Lake-to-River Service Unit Secretary and Chairperson, 4-H advisor, and advisor to the Mahoning County Junior Fair Board. I also coordinated high school band and cheerleading performances and school displays in Education Hall at the County Fair.

Since my retirement in 2009, I remain active in my hometown as President of the Poland Historical Society, Chair of Poland's America 250 Committee, and serve as a member of the Poland Township Park Advisory Board, and the Poland Leadership Alliance.

My husband, Michael, and I have been married since 1973. We raised our three children—Beth (Matt), Becky (Bill), and Mike Jr. (Anne)—in Poland, Ohio, where we grew up. We are blessed with six wonderful grandchildren: Ashlynn, Cameron, Logan, Ben, Jack, and Walter, all active NSS members and part of our Society's future.

I believe the strength of NSS has always come from its members—past, present, and future. Each generation contributes to the Society we know today, and our continued success depends on supporting one another and welcoming the next generation into leadership. NSS thrives when we work as a team: honoring the foundation built by those before us, strengthening our assemblies today, and preparing our young members to carry our mission forward. If re-elected, I will continue to focus on that teamwork to help keep our Society strong for decades to come.

Fraternally,
Lauren Fox

ANDREA L. GARBON



My name is Andrea Garbon, and I extend my sincere fraternal greetings and gratitude to the NSS Life Executive Officers, Directors, Honorary Members, Members, and Guests. It is truly an honor and privilege to have served as a Director for the past twelve years—and to be a lifelong member of NSS Life. I am filled with

pride as we celebrate our 39th Quadrennial Convention, a milestone few fraternal organizations ever achieve. With reverence and remembrance, we hold in our hearts those who are no longer with us and their families. It is always a joy to reconnect with old friends and form new bonds along the way.

Over the past twelve years, I have diligently prepared for, attended, and actively participated in all regular and special board meetings. My current committee service includes Audit Committee Chairperson, Membership Growth Chairperson, Enterprise Risk Management, and the NSS Heritage Museum. Throughout my tenure, I have also contributed to the Compensation, Assembly Growth, and Fraternal Growth committees.

Working as Audit Committee Chairperson and committee member has given me valuable experience interacting with H2R CPA accountants to ensure the integrity of NSS financial statements. I've also been actively involved with the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance and its Scholarship Committee. Additional training and participation through the American Fraternal Alliance, Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance, and AQS Asset Management have strengthened my understanding of governance and oversight. Among many beloved NSS activities, I've enjoyed participating in Region #5 picnics, the Pittsburgh Pirates outings, NSS Heritage Museum Septemberfest, NSS Heritage Museum Christmas Around the World, NSS National Golf Tournaments, and several local banquets and events.

I am grateful for this chance to introduce myself and share both my qualifications and my enthusiasm for continuing to serve on the Board. I graduated magna cum laude from Seton Hill University in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, earning a Bachelor of Science in Business and Marketing with an emphasis in accounting. My education has fueled both my analytical skills and my confidence in applying those lessons to real-world challenges.

Professionally, I've built a foundation rooted in diligence and service. My career includes more than 10 years at United Parcel Service, where attention to detail and efficiency were essential, and over six years as Tax Collector for Mount Pleasant Township, where I oversaw accounting procedures and fund distributions. I also spent 15 years at Latrobe Brewing Company, managing quality control operations until its sale. Alongside these roles, I've worked with Eat'n Park Hospitality Group and United Way, which deepened my ties to the community and broadened my skill set.

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My family's connection to NSS Life began with my late grandfather, whose legacy continues to inspire my involvement. Many of you have met my family over the years—my parents, brother, sister-in-law, and nephews—all proud life-long members.

This marks my seventh convention as a delegate, following many years attending alongside my family. I currently serve as Treasurer/Secretary for Assembly #737 and as the Secretary for Region #5 in McMurray, Pennsylvania. My brother and I were honored to be recipients of the NSS PVR Scholarship Fund, and we are deeply thankful for your ongoing support of a program that has helped so many members.

As a Director, I recognize that decision-making can be intense, difficult, and sometimes uncomfortable. I continue to stand by the principles I shared four years ago: *Honor the Past, Respect the Present, Prepare for the Future*. To guide those decisions, I use what I call the "A.R.M." framework:

- **A** – *Acknowledge the Situation*. Recognize that thoughtful, informed decision-making is needed.
- **R** – *Research*. Conduct due diligence to ensure decisions are based on facts and understanding, not impulse.
- **M** – *Mediate and Align with Consensus*. Combine research, discussion, and collaboration to arrive at balanced, well-considered outcomes.

This process provides a reliable, consistent way to approach the complex choices that come before our organization.

I embrace the rich diversity of ethnic cultures within the NSS Life community. My goal is to continue serving on the Board as part of a unified team dedicated to preserving our legacy, serving our members, and preparing for future generations. I am deeply thankful for your trust and support over the years—it has been my privilege to serve.

There is still much work ahead and many projects I hope to see through to completion. I respectfully ask for your vote and continued support for re-election to the NSS Life Board of Directors. My education, professional experience, and lifelong involvement in NSS Life have prepared me to continue serving with dedication and passion. Together, we can secure the future of NSS Life!

Thank you sincerely for your time and consideration.

Fraternally,
Andrea Garbon

ABIGAIL A. GROSS, ESQ.



Abigail Gross is a proud Slovak who values her heritage. She has been a lifelong member of the National Slovak Society and has been honored to serve as a National Director for three consecutive terms (2014 - 2026).

As a member of the Board, Abigail has been directly involved with the

governance of the NSS. Over the past twelve years, Abigail

has been educated on actuarial principles and investment strategy. She has also been involved with the creation and implementation of strategic plans. By serving as a National Director, Abigail has gained the knowledge and experience necessary to lead our society through the next phase of growth.

In addition to serving on the Board, Abigail is an active member of Assembly L102 (Allentown, PA). Beyond activities in her local assembly, Abigail makes an effort to participate in regional and national events.

Abigail's commitment to fraternalism extends beyond the NSS. For the past several years, she has served as the Legislative Chair of the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance, focusing on initiatives that protect our status as a 501(c)(8) organization.

Abigail has a strong educational background. She graduated from Shippensburg University with a bachelor's degree in journalism. Notably, she was the first person in her family to graduate from college. While working a full-time position in the public relations field, she earned a second bachelor's degree in psychology from Cedar Crest College. Thereafter, she received her law degree from The Pennsylvania State University, Dickinson School of Law.

Abigail began her legal career by working for a large Philadelphia-based insurance defense firm. In 2013, with experience under her belt, Abigail bravely decided to open her own law office utilizing her experience in the workers' compensation arena. For the past 13 years, Abigail has owned and managed a successful law practice where she represents those who have been injured at work. Abigail finds satisfaction from her work, knowing that she can use her skills and experience to help clients who find themselves in a time of need. As a practicing attorney, Abigail has a strong analytical ability. As a business owner, Abigail understands financial management and the importance of maintaining client relationships.

Abigail is certified as a specialist in the practice of workers' compensation law as authorized by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. She frequently appears before judges throughout Pennsylvania and has argued cases before the Appeal Board and the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court. She is an active member of the Executive Council for the Pennsylvania Bar Association and has been privileged to receive awards including "Top Lawyer," "40 Under 40" and "Woman of Influence."

Beyond her professional career, Abigail's biggest source of pride is her family. Abigail is happily married to Michael, who works at a local school as a guidance counselor. Abby and Mike have been blessed with four handsome boys (Elliot (12); Oliver (10); and Spencer (8) and Hudson (7)) – all members of the NSS!

In their "spare" time, Abby and Mike take pride in working on their farm. Little Red Wagon Farm has been a labor of love. For the past 7 years, they have been planting Christmas trees with the goal of opening to the public before the next Convention! The resident farm animals, orchard and honeybees certainly require hard work – but just like serving as a Board member – hard work is worth it when you believe in the mission you serve.

Fraternally,
Abigail Gross

TODD K. HILL



Todd brings more than 25 years of proven leadership, strategic sales, and relationship-management experience to his candidacy for the Board of Directors. A United States Army veteran and former officer, Todd has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to service, integrity, and accountability—values that closely align

with the mission and principles of a fraternal life insurance organization.

Todd has a B.S. in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Biology; Minor in Chemistry from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Having served in Operation Desert Storm in 1991, and working through various roles in the Army, Todd left his military service behind in 2000 as a Tactical Intelligence Officer, having been promoted to 1st Lieutenant.

Professionally, Todd has built a distinguished career as a senior sales and business development leader across highly regulated industries, including healthcare, diagnostics, pharmaceuticals, and risk management. These include companies such as GlaxoSmithKline, Novo Nordisk, Cleveland Heart Lab, and currently with CareDX as a Transplant Specialist & Account Manager. Throughout his career, he has been repeatedly recognized at the national level for performance excellence, earning multiple President's Club and Circle of Excellence honors while responsibly managing complex, multi-state territories and long-term client relationships.

In addition to sales leadership, Todd has held executive-level roles overseeing business development, franchise growth, compliance-driven risk solutions, and operational strategy. His experience as a Certified Risk Management Consultant has strengthened his understanding of financial protection, risk mitigation, and ethical stewardship—key responsibilities entrusted to a board member serving policyholders and beneficiaries.

Todd is known for his disciplined approach to decision-making, collaborative leadership style, and ability to translate complex information into clear, practical strategies. These skills have allowed him to consistently balance growth objectives with long-term sustainability—an essential perspective for guiding a fraternal life insurance organization in today's evolving financial environment.

A resident of North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, Todd is deeply committed to community, family, and service. His combination of military leadership, business acumen, and value-based decision-making positions him well to serve as a thoughtful, engaged, and responsible member of the Board of Directors, always acting in the best interest of the organization and its members.

Todd is the father of two daughters, Paige and Bailey Hill. Paige is in her second year at Cleveland College of Chiropractic in Missouri, pursuing her doctoral studies in

chiropractic. Bailey will graduate from Penn State this spring as a junior with a degree in kinesiology and sports medicine; she will begin her physical therapy studies at the University of Pittsburgh in the upcoming fall semester.

Todd believes the effectiveness of a fraternal life insurance group depends on the dedication and involvement of its members. As a board member, he is committed to ensuring decisions remain centered on member value, long-term financial stability, and transparent governance.

He supports initiatives that enhance member education, financial literacy, and clear communication, empowering members and their families to make informed decisions about their financial protection.

Although Todd is new to the fraternal world, the core values of fraternalism—service, integrity, and community—are principles he has embodied throughout his life and career. He recognizes that transitioning into the life insurance business will present new challenges and opportunities, and he is eager to learn and grow through collaboration with fellow board members, executives, and valued partners. This openness and willingness to engage will help ensure thoughtful, member-focused decisions as he embraces his role within the organization.

Todd will advocate for responsible growth strategies that preserve fraternal values, maintain competitive and sustainable benefits, and reinforce the organization's promise to serve current and future generations of members.

Fraternally,
Todd Hill

ROBERT F. KATRICAK



My name is Robert Katricak and I am currently a National Director. I am running for my ninth term as a member of the Board of Directors. I believe that I have the background and skills for this job and ask you for your support. During my years on the Board, our Society has grown from \$50 million in assets to over \$1.8 billion

and has seen membership grow from about 12,000 members to over 42,000 members. I would be honored to continue to be part of the Board that keeps our Society growing not only its assets, but also in members.

I have taken an active leadership role in our Society. I have served on various committees as well as being an Executive Officer. Beyond solely serving, I have taken leadership roles on those committees. I was Chairman of both the Audit Committee and the Compensation Committee. As Chairman of the Audit Committee, I worked closely with our External Auditors (our Certified Public Accountants), to ensure that our Society is following correct accounting procedures. As part of my duties as Chairman of the Audit Committee, I have also performed Internal Audits of the NSS.

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In November 2020, I was elected Chairman of the Board by my fellow Directors. I have used my banking and accounting skills as Chairman. As the NSS has begun to invest in mortgages, my knowledge of the underwriting of mortgages has helped me recognize mortgages that are safe and viable to purchase. I make at least monthly visits to the NSS office and attend virtual meetings. I am available by phone and email on a daily basis. I have helped set Board meeting agendas and run the Board Executive sessions. I have represented the Society at National, Regional and Assembly events and Slovak cultural programs. I keep my fellow Directors informed of items happening through emails and phone calls. Throughout my term, I have successfully collaborated with President Stefka and Secretary/Treasurer Payerchin.

I was an Internal Auditor and a member of the Executive Management team at First Federal Savings in Lorain, Ohio. I retired from the bank in December of 2022, after 29 years as Internal Auditor. I have dealt with federal regulations concerning the banking industry. I understand the importance of complying with government regulations. This experience helps me to comprehend the multitude of regulations we face as a Fraternal Insurance Organization. Retiring from the bank has allowed me to spend more time fulfilling my duties as Chairman of the Board of the NSS.

I received both a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in Business Administration from Cleveland State University. I have been licensed as a Certified Public Accountant by the State of Ohio since 1980. I am also licensed as an Insurance Agent by the State of Ohio. I obtained my Fraternal Insurance Counselor (FIC) and Fraternal Insurance Counselor Fellow (FICF) certifications.

I am a lifelong member of Assembly 160 in Lorain, Ohio. I am currently the Financial Secretary/Treasurer of this Assembly, following in the footsteps of my grandfather and uncle who also served as Officers. This experience, along with my attendance at American Fraternal Alliance meetings, and Ohio and Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance meetings, has helped me to understand the fraternal side of our Society. I am a Past President of the Ohio Fraternal Alliance, representing the National Slovak Society. In 2009 I was named the Ohio Fraternal Alliance Fraternalist of the Year. I have attended AQS Insurance Symposiums, American Fraternal Alliance Executive Summits and Spring Symposiums. I volunteered at the NSS Heritage museum Septemberfest and Christmas Around the World events over the past four years.

My wife Chris, our four children, daughter-in-laws, son-in-laws, grandchildren, as well as other members of my extended family are all members of the National Slovak Society. I understand the importance of my role in helping to keep the National Slovak Society strong and growing so that not only my children and grandchildren, but many generations to come can enjoy and benefit from fraternalism.

I believe I have the fraternal and business credentials to continue to help keep our Society growing. I thank the members of our Society for your past support and ask for your continued support.

Fraternally,
Robert Katricak

SUSAN M. ONDREJCO



For more than four decades, I have remained actively involved in a variety of cultural and fraternal organizations, including many years of dedicated service to the National Slovak Society (NSS). Since my initial election as a National Officer in August 2002, I have been deeply honored by the continued trust placed in me

through re-election at each subsequent Quadrennial Convention.

Throughout my tenure, I have contributed across nearly all Board committees, most recently serving on the Governance and Audit Committees, while also chairing the Fraternal Committee. A central focus of my service has been strengthening member engagement—an ongoing priority as we explore new and innovative ways to encourage participation in NSS programs and activities. In addition, my work with the NSS Heritage Museum has been especially meaningful, providing an opportunity to preserve and share the rich artistry, craftsmanship, history, and educational traditions of our culture.

Beyond my national responsibilities, I serve as Treasurer for Region 5 (Pittsburgh Region) and have held the role of Secretary/Treasurer for Assembly L-161 since 2005, along with various other fraternal leadership positions.

To remain current with industry trends and best practices, I have participated in numerous conferences and seminars through organizations such as the American Fraternal Alliance, Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance, AQS Asset Management, ENDePersis, and the Fraternal Societies of Greater Pittsburgh. I have further strengthened my governance expertise by completing both the Board Institute and Board Master Class through the American Fraternal Alliance, and I maintain a Fraternal Insurance License in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

My service has been recognized with several honors, including two Medals of Honor awarded by the Ambassador of Slovakia for distinguished leadership within the Slovak community. In 2023, I was honored with the John Jordan Upchurch Award, and in 2025, I was named "Fraternalist of the Year" by the Fraternal Societies of Greater Pittsburgh.

From 2022 to 2024, I served as Secretary of the Fraternal Societies of Greater Pittsburgh. Since 2013, I have represented NSS as a Board member of the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance, where I have contributed on multiple committees and had the privilege of serving as President in 2025.

I earned my Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Duquesne University and began my career at Magee Women's Hospital, later working as a private duty nurse. After raising our family, my husband Rudy and I founded Rudy's Auto Service, Inc. in 1994. As co-owner and Secretary/Treasurer, I oversee office operations, financial management, payroll, and record keeping.

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It is a privilege to serve as your representative on the Board of Directors. I respectfully ask for your continued trust and support, and I remain committed to acting in the best interests of our members and the Society.

Fraternally,
Susan Ondrejco

KAREN LYNNE ORBAN



My name is Karen Lynne Orban and I respectfully submit my name and bio for consideration as a candidate for National Director.

Having worked within the Fraternal Benefit System for more than 30 years with three Fraternal Societies, I possess experience and knowledge in many

areas pertaining to the daily operation, fraternal programs, in addition to the general structure and promotion of the Society. All in support of the vision and mission statement set forth for growth and in the best interest of the NSS. With over 16 years of experience in the NSS Home Office, along with my work within two additional fraternal societies, I have developed a strong understanding and appreciation for organizational structure, governance, and the daily operations essential to the continued growth and success of our Society. Although I have worked in each department through the early years, the majority of the years working within the Fraternal Societies, comprised of duties performed holding the titles of an Executive Assistant to the National Officers, primarily to the National President of two Fraternal Societies and being the National Fraternal Director of the NSS. I worked closely with the Board to prepare reports, maintain meeting minutes, update By-Laws, and support ongoing organizational needs. I served as the Region 5 Fraternal Director and a Board Member & Officer of the Fraternal Section of the American Fraternal Alliance. Through attending Fraternal Section meetings as a representative, I gained valuable new perspectives and the opportunity to connect with and learn from the ideas and visions of fellow fraternal leaders across organizations of all sizes. It was both rewarding and highly educational to gain an appreciation for the methods that proved successful, as well as those that fell short, in fraternal programs and procedures. Networking with others who share similar ideals is an essential tool in strengthening and enhancing fraternal operations.

Most recently, I had the opportunity to serve on the Board of NSS. It was an extremely rewarding experience to work with my fellow Board members, as together we achieved sustained business growth by leveraging strategic concepts, implementing effective operational and financial tools, and continuously refining processes to improve efficiency, profitability, and customer satisfaction.

During my time on the Board, I had the opportunity to serve on three key committees—Audit, Fraternal Growth,

and Technology—each contributing to the Society's operations and development. On the Audit Committee, we helped oversee financial accountability by working with the CPA firm, reviewing reports, and presenting recommendations to the Board for decision-making. As part of the Fraternal Growth Committee, we addressed challenges from the pandemic by promoting a "back to basics" approach, encouraging member engagement through new and existing programs. On the Technology Committee, we supported efforts to strengthen data security, ensure regulatory compliance, and implement systems that protect sensitive information while enabling future growth. This is where I felt I could contribute most, drawing on my prior experience working in the Home Office. As a former employee, I benefited from the systems in place and developed a strong understanding of both the advantages and the daily challenges staff face. Providing our committed employees with the tools and resources they need to effectively serve members in all aspects of their membership is essential to maintaining a smooth and successful operation.

Although I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Board, I remorsefully chose not to run for another term. Although it was my belief that I possessed the qualifications, knowledge, and experience to contribute to the continued success of the NSS, the membership deserves full commitment. The delegates vote for the best candidate to represent the Society on a whole and I was unable to meet the expectations that delegates put forth for such a position. The membership expects and deserves a Board member to be available, active, and present not only in assembly activities and meetings, but also attending events, fraternal activities, and to promote and represent our society on every level. Unfortunately, living in Florida and owning a company there limited my ability to fully commit to the responsibilities and it became challenging to be entirely present and therefore, made what I felt was the best decision for the membership on a whole.

For the past 16 years, I have been a 51% franchise owner, where I oversee all aspects of daily operations. Including managing appointments, estimates, billing, payments, and customer records, as well as maintaining accurate financial documentation and ensuring compliance with all local, state, and federal tax requirements, including monthly, quarterly, and annual filings with the IRS. I develop and implement business budgets, create advertising and marketing initiatives, and manage the ordering and purchasing of supplies. Additionally, I assess prospective customers' needs, provide effective solutions, and deliver services tailored to resolve their specific situations.

Owning and operating a franchise has provided me with a comprehensive understanding of business management, from financial oversight to strategic decision-making. This experience has strengthened my ability to make informed decisions that support growth, stability, and long-term success while maintaining a strong and reputable standing within the industry.

My husband and I have been truly blessed to raise two wonderful daughters who have grown into successful women in careers they are passionate about. We are also proud grandparents to our grandson, who has completely captured

my heart as his 'Kay Kay.' The NSS Life motto, 'Family Matters,' is something we do not just say in our family but truly live each and every day.

John and I will officially retire in July and will no longer carry the obligations of business ownership and will allow me to travel whenever necessary. This coincides with my belief that a strong presence is a vital part of representing our society in all aspects. Therefore, I am eager to return to a high presence and active leadership role for the betterment of the NSS. The honor of being a Board Member and representing the Society and all members is a responsibility I hold in the highest regard.

I would appreciate your support and be honored for the opportunity to serve once again as a National Director for the National Slovak Society.

Fraternally,
Karen Lynne Orban

ANDREW 'DREW' WESNAK



Greetings Delegates, My name is Andrew Wesnak, but most of you know me as Drew.

It has been a true honor and privilege to serve the members of the National Slovak Society as Director for the past 20 years. Over that time, I have remained committed to strengthening our organization, supporting

our members, and helping guide NSS through both growth and challenges. The past four years, in particular, have tested us in new ways, but they have also reinforced the importance of steady, experienced leadership.

As we look ahead, there is still important work to be done. For that reason, I am once again seeking re-election to the Board of Directors at the upcoming 39th Quadrennial Convention, and I respectfully ask for your continued support and confidence.

During my tenure, NSS has experienced remarkable growth—from \$100 million to \$1.85 billion in assets—and now serves over 42,500 members across 25 states, with continued expansion ahead. This success did not happen by chance. It is the result of strong leadership, sound decision-making, and a shared commitment to our mission. I am proud to have played a role in that progress as a member of the Board of Directors, working with Executive Officers, Asset Managers, Accountants, Actuaries, Agents, Sales Executives, and our Home Office staff, who are second to none.

My commitment to the fraternal system is deeply rooted in family tradition, spanning six generations. That legacy continues to guide my service today. At the local and regional levels, I have served as President of Region 14 and Assembly L102 in Whitehall, PA, while also contributing at the national level as a Board member. Through teamwork and dedication, Assembly L102 has consistently earned Diamond

and Titanium Level Extra Effort Awards, reflecting our strong commitment to community involvement.

I have faithfully attended Board meetings, served on committees as appointed, and worked collaboratively with fellow Directors and Officers to make informed, forward-thinking decisions. During my years as a Board member, I have served as a delegate to the PA Fraternal Alliance Annual Meetings and have attended the NJ/NY Fraternal Alliance Annual Meetings in various roles, including delegate, Board Director, and, in 2017, President.

I firmly believe that strong governance requires continuous learning. I have consistently pursued educational opportunities through NSS, the American Fraternal Alliance, and AQS Asset Management Conferences to stay informed on evolving issues impacting our industry and our members. This commitment ensures that I bring both experience and current knowledge to every decision made at the Board level.

Advocating for our members has always been my top priority. I strongly support providing resources to our assemblies and regions so they can continue their vital work in their communities—helping those in need and strengthening the NSS presence at the grassroots level. This mission remains at the heart of my service.

At 68 years old, I continue to bring energy, dedication, and perspective to this role. My wife, Sharon, and I have been married for 36 years, and together we are proud of our family—five children, 12 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren—all part of the NSS legacy. This personal connection reinforces my commitment to ensuring NSS remains strong for future generations.

After completing my education at Temple University, where I also played football on a nationally ranked team, my professional career provided me with diverse experience in leadership, project management, and labor relations. I have served in roles including Job Foreman, Estimator, and Project Manager, and have held leadership positions within IBEW Local 1522's Board of Directors and Construction Labor Union 1174, where I served as Job Steward, Auditor, and Sergeant-at-Arms. I now serve on the Board of Retirees. Over the past five years, I have also returned to coaching youth football, where I serve on the Board of Directors for Hokey AA. These experiences have strengthened my ability to lead, collaborate, and make sound decisions.

In closing, I am not just asking for your vote—I am asking for your trust to continue the work we have built together. My goal is to ensure that the National Slovak Society remains financially strong, forward-thinking, and deeply committed to its members and communities. With your support, I will continue to provide experienced, steady leadership to guide NSS into the future.

Thank you for your consideration and continued confidence.

Fraternally,
Drew Wesnak

Theresa M. Zemelman



My name is Theresa Zemelman, and I've been privileged to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the last four years. At this Convention, I ask that you support me as I seek a second term as a National Director.

I am a lifelong member of the National Slovak Society, as are my four children,

my three sisters, and my parents. My husband Cal and I have been married for 19 years, and we enjoy participating in many NSS fraternal events, including the coloring contest, art contest, photo contest, and Septemberfest.

I graduated from Carnegie Mellon University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Since 2006, I have worked for Raul V. Bravo and Associates and am currently a Principal Engineer. I also served as National Fraternal Activities Director for the First Catholic Slovak Union (FCSU) from 2003 until 2007 where I was the youngest National Officer elected in the history of the FCSU. In addition to NSS and FCSU, I am also a member of Slovak Catholic Sokol, Ladies Pennsylvania Slovak Catholic Union, and the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association. Professionally, I am a licensed Professional Engineer in Virginia, Maryland, and Florida. My education and work experience provides me with a rigorous, analytical perspective that I bring to every Board deliberation. My professional, fraternal, and organizational leadership gives me a broad perspective on both the business and fraternal aspects of fraternal organizations.

Serving as a National Director has been a valuable and gratifying learning experience. The last four years have been a period of rapid change for our society, and I hope that my contributions to our discussions have been beneficial. One of the most rewarding experiences I've had over the last four years has been working on the PVR Scholarship committee, where I've served as President of the PVR Board of Directors for the last two years. Having been a recipient of a PVR scholarship myself, I know firsthand how much that support means to a student starting out. I've made it my mission to grow the PVR fund, and I am proud to share that by reaching out to our assemblies and vendors, and making it easier to donate online, we have increased the fund balance by over \$200,000 over the last 18 months. I've also been updating our members on our fund's progress toward our \$2 million goal every month via a new PVR page in the *National News*. I hope to continue my work with the PVR Fund beyond our \$2 million goal!

I have attended training sessions and symposiums to stay current on the needs of our Society and also served on the technology and membership and marketing committees. I was particularly excited to participate in our 2023 strategic planning retreat, where we worked as a Board to clearly specify our overall goals, and broke those goals down into

tasks. By assigning those tasks and monitoring our progress, we are staying accountable to each other and you, our members.

I would be deeply honored to continue serving you as a National Director. I promise to keep bringing my technical expertise, my Slovak heritage, and my dedication to our members to every meeting. I humbly ask for your vote so that, together, we can keep the National Slovak Society strong and vibrant for the generations to come.

Fraternally,
Theresa Zemelman



The National Slovak Society of the United States of America
39th Quadrennial Convention

June 14-18, 2026 | Sawmill Creek Resort, Huron, OH

The NSS Life Mission Statement

"To provide our fraternal family with a sustainable measure of financial security via life and annuity products; while offering charitable, cultural, social and educational opportunities that benefit our members and their communities."

Sawmill Creek Resort Information

- **Address:** 400 Sawmill Creek Drive, Huron, OH 44839.
- **ALL reservations (lodging, events, transportation, excursions) will be done through the Home Office. Delegates ARE NOT to call the Sawmill Creek Resort to make any kind of reservations.**
- Unmatched natural beauty awaits when you explore the newly renovated golf resort, Sawmill Creek by Cedar Point Resorts. Take a peaceful walk as you explore our 200-acres of lush woodlands, birdwatch in Sheldon Marsh Nature Preserve, test your golf skills at our world-class course designed by Tom Fazio or dock at our Lake Erie marina.
- Enjoy sumptuous meals and drinks at one of our new restaurants or bars. And at day's end, get a good night's sleep in one of our Ohio resort's 239 newly renovated guest rooms or suites.
- With more than 35,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, Sawmill Creek Convention Center is ideally equipped to host any group event from intimate gatherings to large conferences. Our dedicated event staff will help you dream, plan, and execute your perfect event.

Current Interest Rates

★ Effective February 1, 2026 ★

Optimum 3 - 4.00%

New Preferred 5 - 6.00%* (For First Year Only)

New Preferred 8 - 7.00%* (For First Year Only)

Existing Preferred 5 - 3.75% • **Existing Preferred 8 - 4.00%**
(Preferred 7 and Flex earning 4.00%, 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.



NSS Life
Family Matters...

Class of
2026
CONGRATULATIONS
GRADUATES
★★★★★

HERE IS SOME FUTURE FINANCIAL PLANNING ADVICE TO HELP YOU!

1. Create a **FINANCIAL PLAN** and a **BUDGET**.
2. Follow the **50/30/20 RULE FOR SUCCESS**. This method divides your funds into three categories. **50%** for **BILLS**, **30%** for **DISCRETIONARY SPENDING** and **20%** for **SAVINGS**. Follow this rule and you will always have money.
3. Pay bills **ON TIME** and **PROTECT** your **CREDIT**.
4. Build an **EMERGENCY FUND**.
5. Buy **LIFE INSURANCE** because **NOBODY KNOWS** the **FUTURE**.

From the Sales Department...

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



Company Life Insurance

Owning life insurance is an important part of anyone's financial plan. We encourage people to review their coverage and add to them whenever it is necessary. One of the reasons why people do not have more life insurance is the cost. They say it is too expensive? But it really is not. In fact, for those in the workplace one thing I would suggest is to check with your HR dept. about your benefits. Many companies use ADP, Empower, and other national firms that make life insurance available to the working masses on a very inexpensive basis. One or the other allows a worker to buy one times their earnings in life insurance for \$5 per month or two times for \$10. That is ridiculously inexpensive, but I would encourage each of you to explore that possibility and take advantage of it. This is great coverage while you are working. But now that this coverage will end someday at retirement or severance of service. However, the low cost outweighs the drawbacks. At the same time, it should not be the only life insurance you have. While a personal plan of insurance is always recommended there is nothing wrong with having some low cost term protection.

Obviously, a permanent plan of insurance from NSS is the way to go. While these plans cost more, they also provide the following benefits: lifetime insurance protection, level payments, increasing cash/loan values, dividends, and more. Call us for an illustration to see how a plan might work for you and your family.

RMD's on Traditional IRA's

Everyone likes taking the tax deduction on an IRA if they are eligible. Keep in mind these tax-deferred accounts turn into tax bombs at age 73 or later. At that age, a person must start taking money out of their IRA. This required minimum distribution (RMD) is when the government can collect some tax money on your account. RMDs apply to traditional IRAs, SEP IRAs, SIMPLE IRAs, 401k's, 403b's, 457 plans and some other profit sharing, pension, retirement, or inherited accounts. For those born in 1959 or earlier, your RMDs begin at age 73. For those born on or after 1/1/60 the RMD age is seventy-five. There are some other rules that apply so be sure to do your research regarding these plans. Proper planning can help you save money on your taxes. Some of the items to consider before your RMD age include: Roth conversions, charitable donation, and systematic withdrawal of the IRA prior to age 73. Make sure to follow the rules as there are penalties for non-compliance. A few years ago the penalty for not taking an RMD was 50%, one of the most onerous. Now it is 25% of the under reported amount but could be as little as 10% if corrected within two years.

Saver's Credit

This program is available to people interested in saving money for retirement who meet certain income guidelines. Single people with incomes less than \$40,000 per year or married couples with less than \$80,500 would be eligible. The beautiful part of this program is that in addition to claiming an IRA deduction for contributions, a person(s) would also receive a credit of as much as 50%. The maximum amount is \$1,000 per person or \$2,000 for a couple. Check the rules for this program or see your tax advisor for the specifics. While it is not for everyone, those that do qualify, can make out significantly with a little extra government support.

A promotional graphic for June National Annuity Awareness Month. The top features the text "JUNE National ANNUITY AWARENESS MONTH" in a mix of blue and green fonts, with decorative leaf motifs. Below this, a dark blue curved banner contains the question "Why buy an annuity?" in a cursive font. To the left of this banner is a list of seven benefits, each with a circular icon: Competitive interest rate (bar chart), Tax-deferred or tax-free earnings (piggy bank), Strong guarantees (shield), Safety of principal (lock), Probate free (document), Guaranteed lifetime income (wheelchair), and Flexibility (crosshair). The background of the graphic shows a serene sunset over a lake with two blue Adirondack chairs on a wooden deck. In the bottom right corner, there is a circular logo for "NSS Life Family Matters... PLAN TODAY. Enjoy Tomorrow." with a small green leaf icon.

Thought For The Month:

We look but we don't see; we hear but we don't listen.

Slovak proverb

The Community Corner PVR Scholarships

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

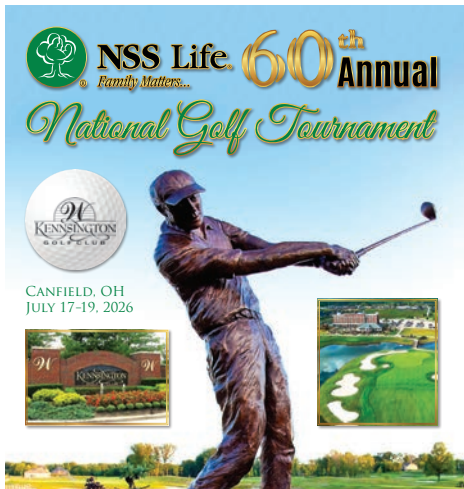


I cannot wait to share with you our 2026-2027 First Year PVR Scholarship recipients! Each year I am more and more impressed by our NSS Members and the paths that they are embarking upon in the educational journey. Our fraternal future is in great hands! I am also thrilled to announce that thanks to generous donations from Assembly 0774 and 0554 we have added three additional perpetual scholarships beginning this year! Keep an eye out in an upcoming edition for the first year scholarship students to be revealed! All current scholarship recipients must submit a copy of their most recent transcript to renew their scholarship for the upcoming school year. The transcripts do not have to be official copies – unofficial is perfectly fine! Mail a hard copy to our office at 1301 Ashwood Drive, Canonsburg, PA 15317 or email a digital copy to bbonnar@nsslife.org by July 15th. Reminder that if your PVR Scholar is transferring to a different school, or changing institutions for a graduate degree, to include proof of acceptance to the new institution! That way we can make sure their check is made out correctly! Reach out to the home office with any questions you may have regarding PVR Scholarships.

At NSS Life, Family Matters! That's why we have a fun summer activity for everyone in the family! Read on to see what the summer will bring!

Region 5 Pirates Night

Tickets are still available for the 2026 Region 5 Pirates Game at PNC Park! Join your fellow NSS Members on Friday, August 7th vs the Mets at PNC Park at 6:40 PM. Each ticket also includes a \$10.00 loaded value that can be used toward food and drinks at the stadium! Don't forget to stay in your seats after the game for a spectacular fireworks show! To reserve your tickets (\$25.00 each), call Member and Community Engagement Associate Jamie Belding at 412-770-2153 or email at jbelding@nsslife.org. A limited number of tickets are available and will be reserved on a "first come first served basis."



2026 NSS National Golf Tournament

Grab your clubs and dust off your golf shoes for the 2026 NSS National Golf Tournament! Join us at the Kennsington golf Club in Canfield, OH on July 17-19th for a fun-filled weekend! There is still time to sign up to compete in the golf competition – so make sure you sign up to shoot your shot for the grand prize! For our non-golfers, join us on a tour of two incredible Youngstown Museums! Admire art in a variety of styles at the Butler Art Institute! Then enjoy a guided tour of a 1905 Mansion at the Arms Family Museum! See later on in this edition for a sign-up form to reserve your spot! Any questions regarding golf or the non-golfer activity can be directed to Jamie Belding at jbelding@nsslife.org.

Kennywood Slovak Day

Summertime means Kennywood time (at least it does if you're from the 'burgh)! Join our NSS Life family at Slovak Day at Kennywood on Thursday, July 16th! In addition to all your Kennywood favorites like Potato Patch Fries, the Steel Curtain, and the Phantom's Revenge, we'll be serving up traditional Slovak food and having music and dance performances! Tickets to the Park for Slovak Day only are \$33.00 each! Flex tickets that can be used any day of the 2026 season are available for purchase at \$40.00. Don't forget that Region 5 is graciously offering to cover the cost of tickets for all Region 5 children. To request free tickets, you must provide the name of the children, and our home office staff will make sure they qualify! Call Jamie Belding at 412-770-2153 to request tickets or for more information!



Social Media

Want to have early access to the winners of the May Art Contest? Here's a hint: you can find them on our social media accounts! Give us a follow-on Instagram (@NationalSlovakSociety), Facebook (@NSS Life) and LinkedIn (@NSS Life) to see if your artistic creation was a winner!

2026 National Golf Tournament - Non-Golfer Activity

For those planning on attending the 2026 Golf Tournament (who plan on leaving their clubs at home!), join us for an artistic afternoon! Join us for a personal tour of the **Butler Art Institute**, which features multiple exhibits and a variety of artistic styles! Afterwards, we will travel back in time via a tour of a 1905 mansion at the Arms Family Museum!

Saturday, July 18th - 11:30am

Limited spots are available! Registration will be on a first come, first serve basis. Registration forms must be accompanied by payment. Lunch will be provided

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

*Reservations are **\$15.00 per person**. Please make checks payable to: NSS Life*

Please complete and return this registration form to Bethany Bonnar at the NSS Home Office at: 1301 Ashwood Drive, Canonsburg, PA 15317

Annual NSS National Golf Tournament Scramble Rules

Sunday's play at the National Golf Tournament will be a Scramble using the following rules:

1. Each team will consist of four players selected by the tournament director. Selection will be made based on handicap. All divisions will be merged for the scramble.
2. The number of teams will be equal to one fourth of the number of golfers. If the number of golfers is uneven, there will be some adjustment to allow everyone to play.
3. The method of selection will be as follows:
 - a. Beginning with the lowest handicap, Captains will be selected for each team.
 - b. The number two player for each team will be placed on team in reverse order. (Lowest handicap will be on the last team selected in the first round.)
 - c. The number three player for each team will be selected in the same order as the Captains.
 - d. The number four player will be placed in the same order as the number two players.
 - e. The order of play within a team will be determined by the Captain.
4. On every par three hole, everyone will play his/her own ball and the total of the best two (2) scores will be entered on the card.
5. Prize money will be paid to one place for each four teams entered. (16 teams = 4 places paid, etc.) Total prize money will be \$10.00 per player plus NSS matching funds for each golfer entered

Annual NSS National Golf Tournament

Men's and Women's Official Rules and Regulations

1. The tournament is open to all members and one time guests of the National Slovak Society and its Youth Circles. There must be at least four Youth golfers officially entered to have a youth class. To protect the amateur standing of these youth, no prize money will be collected from nor paid to them.
2. United States Golf Association (U.S.G.A.) and host golf course rules will govern play, except the following:
 - Jungle Golf, improve lie within 12" except in hazards.
 - Lost Ball; play from area where ball was last seen and take 1 stroke penalty.
 - Out of Bounds; play from where ball goes out and take 1 stroke penalty.
 - Ball in Water Hazard; drop where ball went in and take 1 stroke penalty.
3. Handicaps will be determined as follows:
 - A. All male regular division golfers will play in three flights as determined by handicap. The golfer's first handicap will be determined after he/she has completed 54 holes of tournament play in the NSS National Golf Tournament unless golfer has a U.S.G.A. index from their home course. The golfer's handicap will be recalculated every year based on the golfer's best 54 holes in tournament play within the last five years. The handicap will be calculated on a 90% basis. The maximum handicap will be 40 strokes for 18 holes.
 - B. Any male golfer who has not completed 54 holes of tournament play in the NSS National Golf Tournament will be entered in the Callaway division using the NSS version of the Callaway scoring system, unless they have a U.S.G.A. index.
 - C. Senior Men's Division (65 and over) will also play using handicaps as determined above. There will be only one flight in the Senior Division unless the number of participants warrants 2 divisions. Forward tees will be used.
 - D. All female member golfers will compete with the handicap determined as above. The maximum handicap will be 40 strokes for 18 holes.
 - E. Any female golfer who has not completed 54 holes of play in the NSS National Golf tournament will be placed in the Callaway division.
 - F. Junior Golfers will use the NSS version of the Callaway Scoring System. Forward tees will be used.
4. Classifications:

A medal play champion will be determined for 18 holes in each of the following Divisions:*

1. Men's A flight	3. Men's C flight	5. Women's B flight	7. Callaway Flight
2. Men's B flight	4. Women's A flight	6. Senior flight (age 65 and above)	

*Flights will be determined by number of entries and their handicaps. Champion's for each flight will receive an NSS Jacket, and Prize money. Prize money will depend on the number of participants in each flight.
5. In case of a tie for first place in any flight, a match of cards will be used starting with the number 1 handicap hole and proceeding with number 2, 3, 4, etc. until the tie is broken.
6. All other ties will split the applicable prize money. (e.g., two people tied for second will split second and third prize money. Three people tied for second would split second, third and fourth place prize money.)
7. The prize list will be determined by the tournament manager using the money contributed by the contestants and matching money contributed by the NSS for all golfers. As nearly as possible, there will be one prize for each four entries.
8. The tournament manager will schedule tee times and pairings.
9. The Joseph Stefka, Sr. Memorial plaque will be awarded to the men's low net winner of the 18 hole tournament. In case of a tie, the lower handicap will be the winner.
10. Golfers with long distances to travel will be given some preferential treatment for Sunday tee times, providing that the scheduling will not disrupt the efficiency of the tournament.
11. ENTRIES WILL CLOSE – **JUNE 26, 2026**

Please return the entry form on the following page to Bethany Bonnar in the Fraternal Department at the Home Office.

National Slovak Society

60th Annual Golf Tournament

July 17-19, 2026

Hospitality Night: Friday 6:00-9:00 pm
 Kennsington Golf Simulator Lounge

Kennsington Golf Club
 4171 Westford Place
 Canfield, OH 44406
 330-533-8733

Friday Practice Tee times Available at 12:00 pm.
 You must call the pro shop and schedule yourself.
 Practice rounds not included in tournament fees.

Courtyard by Marriott Youngstown Canfield
 4173 Westford Place
 Canfield, OH 4406
 330-533-6880

Mention "NSS Life Golf Outing" to receive the discounted rate

Room Rates: \$159.00 + tax per night
Deadline for Hotel Reservations is June 17, 2026

Name	Address	Phone	Email	Assembly	Saturday Golf	Sunday Golf	Skins	Par 3	Friday Hospitality	Saturday Banquet

NSS Golfers

___ Saturday Only - \$50.00
 ___ Saturday & Sunday Scramble \$100.00
 ___ Skins (Saturday Only) - \$5.00
 ___ Par 3 Challenge - \$10.00
 ___ Senior Flight Men 65+

Guest Golfers

___ Saturday Only - \$60.00
 ___ Saturday & Sunday (Scramble) \$120.00
 ___ Skins (Saturday Only) - \$5.00
 ___ Par 3 Challenge - \$10.00
 ___ Senior Flight Men 65+

Non-Golfer Guests

Please choose ALL that apply and indicate the number Attending
Name(s): _____

- ___ Adult Friday Hospitality Night Attendees
- ___ Youth Friday Hospitality Night Attendees
- ___ Adult Saturday Banquet Attendees
- ___ Youth Saturday Banquet Attendees

\$ _____ TOTAL INCLUDED WITH THIS FORM

Please make checks payable to: **NSS Life**

Attn: Bethany Bonnar - 1301 Ashwood Drive, Canonsburg, PA 15317

___ Hole Sponsor @ \$100.00 per hole

Name for Sign: _____

Due June 26, 2026

2026 Youth Achievement Award Winner Addison Draa



Addison Draa is a senior at Poland Seminary High School in Poland, Ohio. She has been involved in the NSS Assembly 731 since she was a small child. She has participated in many events throughout the years including the annual Christmas and Halloween events. Addison has submitted work for all NSS contests throughout the years. She won first place in the poetry writing contest and first place in the art contest multiple times.

Academically, Addison has excelled in her studies throughout her secondary academic career. She has taken AP, College credit and honors courses since her freshman year, and thus far has an adjusted 3.85 GPA. This past winter she was awarded the school's academic STEP award. In middle school, she was recognized as a presidential scholar. She was tapped into both the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society in her junior year. This past fall, she was elected president of the Spanish National Honor Society. She has also played a leadership role in her high school Spanish club, which she has been a member of for the past 5 years.

Addison has always had a passion for reading and writing, completing reading matters programs and this past year Addison was asked by multiple peers to help read over their college essays and give them tips on their writing to make them stand out.

Aside from her academic accolades Addison has been involved with numerous other school activities. She was a member of the school's art club, outdoor club and most notably her senior year she was the school mascot where she spent her time at different school activities, sports dressed in the bulldog helping bring the school spirit to life.

Addison has a volunteer's heart. For several years she volunteered with Angels for Animals, a local charity that supports shelter animals. She has also helped with a local coat drive called Victoria's Vision for the past three years. Since turning 16, she has been working as a volunteer at Bon Secours Mercy Health at the local hospital at least one day a week. She also has volunteered at Youngstown State University sports events for the past 5 years and at the Bulldog Pantry, a community outreach that provides food for children within the school district and their families.

No stranger to hard work, she has been employed for the past two years at Panera Bread. During the summer months, she worked as a receptionist in the law offices of Attorney Matthew Gianini.

A scholar athlete, Addison has earned the Academic Athlete Award each year of high school. She has played on the varsity softball team since her freshman year, lettering each year. She has also played on a traveling softball team during the summer for the past 8 years, serving primarily as pitcher and first base positions. She has participated in the youth softball clinic, a community service provided to the community softball youth.

In her spare time, Addison also enjoys baking and sewing. She has entered numerous sewing projects and baking items in the Youth division at the annual Mahoning County Fair since she was 9 years old, usually winning first place, with the occasional second place ribbon for her entries.

Addison is the daughter of Rach and Aaron Draa. Her grandparents, Linda and Randy Estes, are long-time members of Assembly 731.

2026 Fraternalist of the Year Kathy Cessna



It is with great pride and deep admiration that Assembly 731 nominates Kathleen "Kathy" Cessna for the NSS Fraternalist of the Year Award. Kathy embodies the very heart of fraternalism—steadfast service, compassion in action, and a lifelong commitment to lifting others up.

For twenty years as a Navy wife, Kathy moved her family sixteen times, creating a warm and stable home for her four sons no matter where duty called. Whether in Florida, New Jersey, Virginia, Texas, or Ohio, she immediately became part of each school community—volunteering in classrooms, supporting teachers, and ensuring her boys thrived academically, socially, and emotionally. Her devotion to her family and her resilience as a military spouse were recognized in 2007 when she received the Yellow Rose of Texas, a tribute to her unwavering support and sacrifice.

Kathy's generosity extends far beyond her own family. She is the person friends and neighbors call when they need a ride to the doctor, someone to sit with them during surgery, help with meals, or a steady hand during recovery. She has served as a Comfort Keeper, cared for an elderly couple, and volunteered countless hours at the Chestnut Ridge Church of God, serving Thanksgiving dinners and assisting with their annual shoe giveaway for local children.

Within Assembly 731, Kathy is nothing short of indispensable. As a long-serving Eldress, she is the quiet force who ensures every youth activity, holiday celebration, and community project is thoughtfully planned, beautifully decorated, and smoothly executed. She is always the first to arrive and the last to leave. Santa himself considers her his "special elf," relying on her to shop for and wrap the gifts that bring joy to our children each Christmas.

Kathy's fraternal spirit shines through her work with Join Hands Day, food collections for local pantries, and her outreach to the Beatitude House and Sojourner House, where she helps coordinate support for families in need. She has embraced new responsibilities as one of the assembly leaders trained to manage the NSS fraternal portal, ensuring members can fully participate in assembly and regional events.

Her dedication extends to Region 5, where she serves as an auditor and organizes children's games at region picnics. Nationally, Kathy has contributed to NSS Youth Con-

ventions in Williamsburg and Sawmill Creek, and she has participated enthusiastically in NSS tournaments, contests, and family events.

She has baked, packaged, and served at NSS Septemberfest; provided creative youth activities such as flower headband crafting; and volunteered during Christmas Around the World on multiple occasions. This year, she has also volunteered to assist at the NSS Convention by managing the details for the Basket Raffle, which will benefit both the PVR Scholarship Fund and the Heritage Museum.

Kathy Cessna represents the very best of who we are as a fraternal organization. Her life is a testament to service without spotlight, kindness without condition, and leadership without ego. She gives fully, quietly, and consistently—strengthening families, supporting communities, and enriching the work of NSS at every level.

Above all, Kathy is a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She and her husband, Jim, raised four sons who have built successful lives grounded in the values she modeled. She cherishes time with her grandchildren—Valerie, Jimmy, and Evie—and eagerly awaits the arrival of a new grandchild this October.

Slovaks of Western PA to Celebrate 103rd Anniversary in Kennywood Park

At the beginning of the last century, many immigrants left their beloved homeland in search of better opportunities in a new land across the ocean. Many Slovaks built that new life in the coal mines, mills and railroads of Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania. Despite the dangerous working conditions and long working hours, once a year they came together in a public place to reminisce and share their experiences. “Kenny’s Grove” as it was known back then provided the perfect opportunity.

Slovaks from the Tri-State area and beyond will once again present our rich Slovak heritage with a day long celebration in Kennywood Park on **Thursday, July 16th**. Slovak music will be heard, Slovak dishes will be offered, and souvenirs will be sold.

The Slovak kitchen will begin serving favorite homemade traditional food at 12:30 p.m. There will be games and prizes for the children as well! Musical entertainment will be provided by the “Gypsy Strings” throughout the afternoon. Following a short program in the afternoon, Clergy from the Pittsburgh and Greensburg Dioceses’ will join to celebrate Mass at 4:00 p.m. in the Main Pavilion. Songs and dances representing our rich cultural heritage will round out the day with a program by the “Pittsburgh Slovaksians.”

Join the celebration on July 16th as our heritage is showcased at the 103rd Slovak Day in Kennywood. For more information or for discount tickets please contact **Jamie Belding** at the home office at **(412) 770-2153**.

Region 5 Youth members under age 16 are eligible for free tickets, please include their names along with the below ticket order form. Membership will be verified.

Take control of your financial future with life insurance.

It's time to get **back to basics**. Life insurance is an affordable way to provide financial stability for your loved ones if something happens to you.

Reach out and let us help you get the coverage you need today.

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Life Happens.

Information Ticket Order Form

Make all checks payable to:

Western PA. Slovak Day Association

Number of **Slovak Day** Tickets

(Good on July 16th ONLY)

of Slovak Day tickets at \$33.00 each: _____

Number of **FLEX Date** Tickets

(Good for ALL Summer)

of FLEX Date tickets at \$40.00 each: _____

Number of **Region 5 Youth Member (Under 16)** Tickets

Slovak Day: _____ FLEX Date: _____

Total Payment: _____

Name(s): _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please mail form along with payment to: Attn: Jamie Belding
1301 Ashwood Drive
Canonsburg, PA 15317

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!**

Region 5

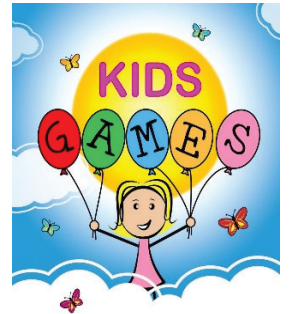
Sunday, August 23, 2026



Cedar Creek Park, Pavilion # 1

1 — 5 p.m.

- FREE!
- FOOD
- AUCTION BASKETS



Call or email Bethany Bonnar with # of Adults & Children attending:

Phone: 1-800-488-1890 or email: bbonnar@NSSLife.org

Deadline for registration August 7, 2026



14th Annual Septemberfest
Saturday, September 26, 2026
11 AM — 4 PM

Presented by the National Slovak Society Heritage Museum

351 Valley Brook Rd. McMurray, PA 15317

Once again we are inviting our Assemblies and Regions to be involved in helping to make this year's event another successful experience.

Become a Sponsor:

Gold... \$ 250.00 **5 Tracking Pts.**
Silver...\$ 100.00 **2 Tracking Pts.**
Bronze..\$ 50.00 **1 Tracking Pt.**

By participating as a sponsor your assembly will earn fraternal tracking points.

Checks should be made payable and mailed to:
NSSHM 234 ILION St. Pgh., PA 15207

Other ways you can help:

Donate a basket for the raffle to benefit the PVR Fund (Matching Funds Project)
Donate homemade baked goods
Publicize the event at your meetings &/or local papers

HOMEMADE ETHNIC FOOD & BAKED GOODS
ENTERTAINMENT
FREE ADMISSION!
VENDORS

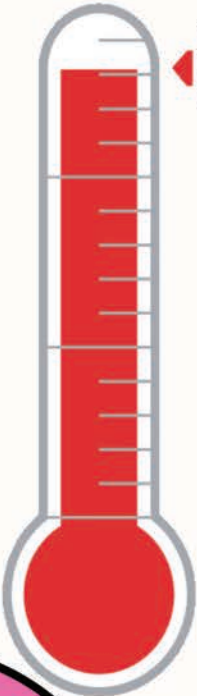
PVR News



TIME IS UP!

Convention 2026 is upon us! The PVR Fund Board of Directors would like to thank all of our sponsors and donors. Since June 2023, we have increased the PVR Fund Balance by **\$446,079**. Even though we are still \$130,370 away from our \$2 million goal, we are proud of the progress we've made. We look forward to seeing our delegates, members, and guests at Sawmill Creek!

**PVR BALANCE AS OF
APRIL 30, 2026**



Raised
\$1,869,629

ONLINE

Scan the following QR code, or visit <https://secure.ggiv.com/for/nsslife/> to donate today!

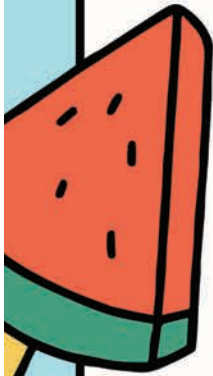


TREE OF LIFE

Dedicate a leaf (\$250), acorn (\$1,000), or stone (\$10,000) on our tree of life!

Mail your donation along with your name, email address, and message for engraving to:

Tree of Life
1301 Ashwood Drive
Canonsburg, PA 15317



ASSEMBLY 0039 Uniontown, PA

DATE OF JUNE BAR-B-Q CHANGED!

Because of the XXXIX NSS Convention, we had to change the date of our Second Quarter June Meeting to the **FIRST SUNDAY in June, the 7th**. This meeting is our Annual Summer BBQ, starting at 1:00 p.m.

As usual, we will be meeting at the Columbia Association picnic pavilion. The highlight of this meeting is remembering “*Old Glory*,” our national flag. All attendees will receive an American flag to take home.

ATTENTION ASSEMBLY CONVENTION DELEGATES:

There will also be a pre-convention meeting of all the delegates going to the upcoming convention at the Bar-B-Q. Our deepest sympathies go out to these assembly members who have recently died and are now in the loving arms of Jesus Christ: Donald Chaney, Sr., Darlene Daniels, Joseph Hackney, Gary Landis, Carl Wayne Lewis, John Lynch, Vernon Pierce, Paul Sebesky, and Joan Smith.

If your child or grandchild is currently receiving an NSS Scholarship, the deadline for renewal is July 15th.

PITTSBURG PIRATE NIGHT:

Region 5, in which our assembly is located, will celebrate “Region 5 Night At PNC Park” on Friday, **August 7th**. Tickets are discounted to \$25.00 each. This is a fireworks night! Please contact the home office about your ticket.

Registration information for the NSS National Golf Outing is in this issue. The event is in Canfield, OH, on **July 17-19**. Sign up today.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Annual Christmas Party, SATURDAY, **December 5th** at the Columbia Association Social Hall starting at 2:00 pm.

I plan to see you at the Summer Bar-B-Q on Sunday, **June 7th**, starting at 1:00 p.m. Bring along another family member or friend.

Paul Payerchin
Secretary

ASSEMBLY RO59 Bethlehem, PA

Our thanks to Paula and John Lahutsky for hosting our April 26, 2026, meeting and to Alexandra Keysock and Michele Guydan for providing finger foods and dessert. Our meeting opened with the prayer, “Christ is Risen.” We

hope that everyone had a blessed Pascha (Easter).

We received several very appreciative thank-you notes from recipients of our recent donations. Paula and John Lahutsky presented information about a fundraiser for San Andres Orthodox Christian Seminary in Guatemala, in conjunction with Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Reading, PA, to assist the seminary in its efforts to drill a much-needed well and provide pumping equipment to supply water into the seminary facility in Talmiche, a small village on a mountain that is 7,000 feet high and overlooks the city of Huehuetenango. Our assembly voted to make an initial donation to this project and will hold a matching funds coffee hour on July 26th at St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem, PA, to raise additional funds for the San Andres well project.

We will also hold our Assembly meeting at St. Nicholas following the matching funds coffee hour on **July 26th**.

Michele Guydan
Secretary

ASSEMBLY 0070 Brooklyn, OH

Please note that we will be having our assembly 70 picnic on **June 28, 2026** starting at 11:30 am. The picnic and meeting will be held at Dr Martin Luther Church @ 4470 Ridge Rd, Brooklyn, Ohio 44144. All are welcome. Fried chicken will be served as the main course. Donations of sides and deserts are welcomed. Please RSVP to John Karkosiak @ 216-741-6990 by June 21 to inform if you will be attending.

John Karkosiak
Secretary/Treasurer

ASSEMBLY L075 Duryea, PA

Our assembly members will attend the Region 2 Meeting on **August 15, 2026** at Grottos in Wilkes-Barre (WB).

Any L075 High School Graduate member wishing to apply for the \$500 Margaret Pilosi Scholarship is asked to contact Lehrae Edwards at 570-569-2181. All required materials must be

received by July 1 for consideration for the August presentation.

August 2, 2026 - Fraternal Summer Picnic at Mercateli-Segilia Park, Birney Avenue, Moosic, at 1:00 p.m. We will be celebrating several members who will be turning 70. Members are asked to bring a covered dish and a basket for the raffle.

October 10, 2026 - A meeting at Grandes Restaurant at 1:00 p.m. for the nomination and election of officers.

October 24, 2026 - Join Hands Day at the CEO Weinberg Food Bank, 185 Research Drive, Pittston, PA, starting at 9:00 a.m.

We will conduct matching funds, present a check, and then help package Thanksgiving boxes.

Lehrae Edwards
Secretary/Treasurer

ASSEMBLY L102 Schnecksville, PA

May 23rd - Annual Iron Pigs baseball outing at 6:30 p.m.

June 15th - Matching funds for the Fellowship Manor golf outing.

Sharon Wesnak
Secretary

ASSEMBLY 0123 Coraopolis, PA

Thanks to our Assembly members and guests, we reached our matching fund limit at the May 2 *Murder Mystery* event. Well done!

Several members will participate in the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Walk on **June 27th** to raise funds and awareness for this lung disease. There will also be a national “**virtual walk**” on **September 26th**. We’re making this a matching funds event. Please join our team, the “*Airway Avengers*,” for the June walk in Pittsburgh and/or sign up for the September virtual event. For information and sign-ups, contact **nss123@email.com** or call 412-638-2754 or 412-638-7060.

Our next meeting is at Settlers Cabin Park, Algonquin Shelter, 608 Ridge Rd, Pittsburgh, PA on **July 26th**, 1:00–5:00 p.m. Don’t worry—it’s not a four-hour meeting. We’re also having a picnic! Assembly 123 will provide

meats and soft drinks; please bring your favorite dish to share.

After the meeting and lunch, you can enjoy picnic games, or the Assembly will subsidize your admission to the Wave Pool or the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden. A raffle to benefit the PVR Scholarship will be another matching funds event. Bring your children and grandchildren. Please RSVP and let us know who you're bringing so we can plan games and prizes. Contact nss123@email.com or call 412-638-2754 or 412-638-7060.

Mark the following dates on your calendar:

June 14–18th – NSS Convention at Sawmill Creek Resort by Cedar Point

June 27th – Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Walk

July 15th – Deadline to submit transcripts to renew PVR Scholarship Grants

July 16th – NSS Slovak Day at Kennywood. Members 16 and under are free. Other members can get subsidized tickets. Watch for details.

July 26 - Meeting/Picnic/Swimming at Settlers Cabin Park, Algonquin Shelter, 608 Ridge Road, Pittsburgh, PA 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

August 7th – Baseball at PNC Park. Tickets subsidized by Region 5 and Assembly 123.

September 26th – Septemberfest at the NSS Heritage Museum, McMurray (the old home office)

September 26th – Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation “virtual walk”

November 28th – Christmas Around the World at the NSS Heritage Museum

Please also start thinking of ideas for the end of the year: Christmas party, assembly elections, etc.

Lyle Grover
President

ASSEMBLY 0377 Bentleyville, PA

Mark your calendars for our meetings in 2026.

June 7 - Picnic/meeting at Richardsons Park, Bentleyville, PA at 3:00 p.m. We will have our Slovak food and please bring a donation of a canned good for the local food pantry.

September 13 - Meeting at Sesame Gourmet, 2975 Washington Road, McMurray, PA at 3:00 p.m.

December 6 - Annual Christmas party at Hugo's Restaurant, National Pike, Brownsville, PA at 3:00 p.m. Please bring a dozen cookies for our cookie table and there will be a another surprise.

As always, please RSVP to me at 724-207-3171 a week ahead so I can confirm attendance. The pirates baseball game for Region 5 is in August and the newsletter will give more details. Until we meet again, stay safe!

Suzanne Skrypak
President

ASSEMBLY 0432 Fairview Park, OH

Mark your calendars for the meetings schedule and upcoming activities.

432 Meetings Schedule:

October 20, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

Pytel Residence, North Olmsted

December 8, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

Arturo's Restaurant, North Olmsted

Upcoming Activities:

October 4, 2026 – 1:00 p.m.

Red Wagon outing – lots of fun for the kids at Red Wagon Farm

December 8, 2026 – 7:30 p.m.

Holiday Party at Arturo's Restaurant

(Immediately following the 7:00 p.m. meeting.)

RSVP is required at least one (1) week in advance so we can plan accordingly.

Please contact one of the following:

Dave Pytel – 440-759-4558

Terri Hudak – 440-714-8902

Bill Shuttleworth – 440-465-6024

Chris Pytel

Publicist and Social Media

ASSEMBLY 0588 Avella, PA

The following meetings will be held at the Stefka residence, 5007 Old Orchard Lane, Gibsonia, Pennsylvania on the following dates and times:

September 14, 2026 - Monday - 5:00 p.m.

November 9, 2026 - Monday - 5:00 p.m.

Please plan to attend the meetings and become active Assembly 588 members. Please contact Annette at 724-407-3591 if you are planning on attending a meeting.

Annette Stefka
Recording Secretary

ASSEMBLY 0617 Ashley, PA

Assembly 617 is planning an active spring and summer. Upcoming projects include a Back Mountain Trail litter pickup, a Matching Funds project for Father John Ostrowski's El Salvador Mission, volunteering at the St. Vincent de Paul Kitchen, participation in Wreaths Across America, a visit to the Father Jozef Murgas Room, Fraternal Day, and other programs.

Assembly 617 will next meet on **July 15, 2026**, at King's College, Wilkes-Barre, in the Rev. Jozef Murgas Room, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Fraternal Day will be held on **August 13, 2026**, at Knoebels Park, beginning at 12:30 p.m. Any member of the assembly planning to attend Fraternal Day is asked to contact John Kurilla at 239-5936 or 570-287-4163, or by email at jjkurilla@aol.com.

John Kurilla
President

ASSEMBLY 0731 Lowellville, OH

Assembly members are looking forward to another year filled with opportunities to gather, participate, and share in fraternal fellowship.

Upcoming Events

June 14-18 - Nine delegates and their families will travel to Huron, Ohio, for the 39th Quadrennial Convention.

July 17-19 - Golf teams are forming for the National Golf Tournament at Kensington Golf Course in Canfield.

July 31 - Members are invited to enjoy a Mahoning Valley Scrappers game and picnic at Eastwood Field in Niles.

August - A summer picnic with an outdoor movie night is being planned for a warm August evening.

September 2-7 - Members can join in a fun Scavenger Hunt at the Canfield Fair.

October 11 - Our annual Halloween Hayride will take place at Countryside Farm.

November - A business meeting will include a craft session to create Christmas ornaments for the NSS contest.

December 13 - Our Christmas Party will be held in the Beard Cabin at Boardman Park.

Members are encouraged to follow our assembly Facebook page, NSS Family and Friends, for updates on contests, events, and activities. Don't forget to follow the registration instructions provided for each event.

Please participate in the NSS contests announced in the monthly News Magazine—they're a great way to stay involved, showcase your talents, and even have an opportunity to win some cash.

Lauren Fox
President

ASSEMBLY 0800 Bonita Springs, FL

All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church
Pirohy Pierogi, or Pirohi Matching Funds
10291 Bayshore Road
North Fort Myers, FL

Open:

- Every last Friday of the month:
4:00–7:00 PM
- Every last Saturday of the month:
11:00 AM–1:00 PM

This is a matching funds project to support All Saints Byzantine Catholic Church. Members and friends of the parish lovingly prepare delicious homemade pirohy (pierogi), along with other traditional Slavic foods, for sale to the local community. Come out, enjoy some wonderful food, and support this important fundraiser for our local church.

Thank you in advance for helping make this a worthwhile and successful endeavor!

Gary Cepko
President

REGION 2 Hazleton, PA

On **August 15, 2026**, Region 2 will host ****Concert for Paws 3****, a Matching Funds event for the SPCA of Luzerne, Whiskers World, and Hobo's Homeless Kittens.

Join us at the Lighthouse Inn, Wyoming, PA, starting at 4:30 p.m. for live music, a 50/50 drawing, and a basket raffle. Admission is free and family-friendly.

Music by Riptide, Bad Acoustics, and KDogg.

Marlin Petro Wesnak
Region 2 President



History of Father's Day in the US

The idea of celebrating Father's Day started in the early 1900s. In 1908, Grace Golden Clayton held a church service in Fairmont, West Virginia, to honor fathers who died in the 1907 mining disaster in Monongah, West Virginia.

A year later, Sonora Smart Dodd, a young woman from Spokane, Washington, proposed a national Father's Day. Inspired by a Mother's Day sermon, she wanted to honor her father, William Jackson Smart, a Civil War veteran and widower who raised his six children alone.

Sonora approached the Spokane Ministerial Alliance for support. Although she suggested June 5, her father's birthday, the alliance opted for the third Sunday in June to give pastors more time to prepare their sermons.

With help from local churches, community groups, and the Spokane Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the first Father's Day celebration was held on June 19, 1910.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson visited Spokane and spoke at a Father's Day service, showing early presidential support. The idea gained momentum over time.

By the 1930s, advertisers and retailers began promoting Father's Day as a commercial holiday, encouraging people to buy gifts and cards. The National Council for the Promotion of Father's Day helped push the holiday into wider public acceptance through marketing campaigns.

In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued a presidential proclamation recognizing Father's Day. In 1972, President Richard Nixon signed it into law as an official national observance.

A Day to Say Thank You

Father's Day is a meaningful day widely observed across the United States. It is a time to thank fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers, guardians, and other male role models for their love, guidance, and support.

Whether it's a quiet meal or a big celebration, this day is all about showing appreciation for the important role fathers play in our lives.

*"My Mother gave me my drive,
but my father gave me my dreams."*

Assembly L102 Matching Fund Events

Our Assembly recently hosted a Mystery Dinner Theater for Fellowship Manor. Below we are pictured with the cast.

We also held a purse bingo fundraiser for Hokey AA and a basket social fundraiser for the Nova Ambulance Center. In addition, we sponsored a matching funds project for Hokey AA. Director Drew Wesnak and L102 Secretary Kylie Althouse had the honor of presenting them with their check.



Region 2 Matching Fund

Region 2 participated in two Night at the Races events with matching funds in January 2026. One event supported Divine Mercy Church and the other supported the Moosic Red Wings. NSS Region 2 members had a great time placing bets and winning.



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**

DEPARTED MEMBERS APRIL 2026

Name	City and State	Date of Death	Assembly
Baldigowski, John J	Mc Donald, PA	04/10/2026	0588
Balog, Rudolph Jr	Melvindale, MI	04/03/2026	0381
Barnett, Marlyn	Erie, PA	02/22/2026	R019
Baumer, Diane M	St Mary's, PA	04/02/2026	0554
Bicego, James E	Indiana, PA	04/06/2026	0267
Blaszczyk, Carolyn	Erie, PA	03/21/2026	0731
Bowers, Ruth	West Mifflin, PA	04/04/2026	0108
Britko, Linda G	Washington, PA	03/31/2026	0434
Bullock, Olive	Jeanette, PA	03/31/2026	0737
Burcin, John S	Ellsworth, PA	03/07/2026	0377
Buzalka, Bettie	Monongahela, PA	03/05/2026	0377
Cannon, Raymond	Transfer, PA	04/17/2026	0731
Carper, Mildred	Elkview, WV	03/01/2026	0774
Carter, Joel	Warren, PA	03/14/2026	0774
Cikoski, Thomas	Elverson, PA	04/15/2026	L102
Cole, Glenn	Pittsburgh, PA	03/24/2026	0774
Collins, Betty Jean	Canvas, WV	02/19/2026	0774
Corob, Michael	Granville, WV	08/11/2025	0039
Cosgrove, Marilyn Ann	Yatesboro, PA	03/24/2026	0554
Craft, Carolyn	Princeton, WV	04/02/2026	0774
Curry, James A	Greensburg, PA	01/15/2026	0737
Curry, Vicky L	Greensburg, PA	01/15/2026	0737
Danielli, Mary	Johnstown, PA	03/13/2026	0774
Datesman, Shirley M	Bethlehem, PA	02/21/2026	R059
Deriso, Lena R	North Royalton, OH	01/27/2026	L105
Dingle, David E	Mill Village, PA	04/23/2026	0554
Duffy, Joan	Doylestown, PA	04/01/2026	R059
Dunkoe, Michael	Vanceboro, NC	02/04/2026	0737
Dunmire, William	Punxsutawney, PA	11/04/2025	0267
Dunn, David	Douglasville, PA	03/29/2026	L102
Elliott, Mary	Hurricane, WV	03/06/2026	0774
Ernst, Phylis	Mohrsville, PA	04/08/2026	L102
Fabery, Robert F	Nemacolin, PA	04/02/2026	0039
Faley, Francis	Pittsburgh, PA	03/29/2026	0123
Farley, Virginia	Chicopee, MA	03/09/2026	0774
Field, Virginia Ann	Mc Kees Rocks, PA	03/27/2026	0123
Fitch, Hobert C	Enon, PA	04/03/2026	0595
Garbers, Mary M	Fairmont, MN	04/12/2026	0774
Geissler, Candace P	Reading, PA	02/11/2026	L102
George, Donna K	Butler, PA	03/30/2026	L161
Gibson, John S	Marianna, PA	02/16/2026	0377
Girting, Kathleen	Midland, PA	03/23/2026	0774
Gohl, Sue E	Wausau, WI	01/15/2026	0774
Golofski, Jane	Greensburg, PA	04/15/2026	0774
Hacharian, Bernadette	West Mifflin, PA	03/05/2026	0108
Hall, Donna	Sarver, PA	12/22/2025	L105
Hall, John	Hummelstown, PA	03/17/2026	L102
Ham, Donnie R	Monroe, NC	12/14/2025	0774
Harris, Darin R	Dallas, TX	01/07/2026	0774
Harris, Ruby P	Indian Trail, NC	03/21/2026	0774
Heffelfinger, Ruth C	Penn, PA	03/28/2026	0737
Hester, Gilda Spake	Rutherfordton, NC	02/26/2026	0774
Howard, Richard E	Beaver Falls, PA	03/20/2026	0731
Hower, Charles J	Nazareth, PA	08/26/2024	L102
Isenberg, Steven P	Clark Mills, PA	04/09/2026	0774
Jansoki, Mary Lou	Erie, PA	04/07/2026	0731
Jenkins, Barbara D	Coraopolis, PA	04/11/2026	0123
Johnson, Michael	Home, PA	04/01/2026	0554
Joyce, Helen H	Blairsville, PA	03/10/2026	L105
Kaiser, Loretta M	Marshfield, WI	02/22/2026	0774
Kallner, David	Jackson, OH	03/22/2026	0595
Karn, Phyllis	Columbia, IL	01/26/2026	0705
Keiser, Steven	Mohnton, PA	04/12/2026	L102
Kinney, H Lee	Wintersville, OH	01/15/2026	0774
Koons, Teresa B	Marietta, OH	03/03/2026	0595
Kriebel, Ruby J	Renfrew, PA	03/26/2026	0123
Kulakowski, Loretta	Canonsburg, PA	04/05/2025	0434
Laure, George Sr	Rochester, PA	04/06/2026	0123
Lawson, Alfred	Charlestown, PA	12/10/2025	0774
Levan, Shirley	Columbus, OH	03/31/2026	0595

DEPARTED MEMBERS APRIL 2026

(Continued from page 30)

Name	City and State	Date of Death	Assembly
Lewis, Carl Wayne Sr	Masontown, PA	03/19/2026	0039
Lipps, Dale S	Meadville, PA	04/07/2026	0731
Lockard, Virginia	Portage, PA	04/14/2026	0774
Lockard, Virginia	Portage, PA	04/14/2026	0774
Loeper, Rosalie	Reading, PA	09/25/2025	L102
Lovette, Claude A	High Point, NC	09/09/2025	0774
Marish, Deborah	Smock, PA	03/22/2026	0039
Martelli, Richard Sr	Uniontown, PA	04/14/2026	0039
McManus, Judith	Venetia, PA	03/27/2026	0434
Miller, Maynard J	Marion Center, PA	03/29/2026	0554
Mohn, Patricia A	Reinholds, PA	03/30/2026	L102
Monahan, Kenneth	Connellsville, PA	04/16/2026	0039
Moore, Martha	Corry, PA	04/21/2026	0731
Mueller, Arlene L	Catawba, WI	01/09/2026	0774
Murray, James C	McKeesport, PA	04/23/2026	0737
Nagy, Donald G	Butler, PA	12/30/2025	0731
Nealon, Margaret	Hanover Twp, PA	04/13/2026	0617
Nelmes, Sharon G	Saltsburg, PA	12/15/2025	0737
O Rell, David W	West Farmington, OH	03/10/2026	0731
Ogle, Robert	Muskegon, WI	03/10/2026	0381
Olney, Doris Elaine	Youngsville, PA	04/16/2026	0774
Orvec, Paul Sr	Parma, OH	12/07/2025	0004
Osche, Patricia	Butler, PA	12/29/2025	0731
Oyler, James R	Pittsburgh, PA	09/28/2025	0100
Palmer, Mary	Powell, OH	02/15/2026	0731
Palumbo, Mary R	Pittsburgh, PA	02/19/2026	L105
Patton, Ronald	Altoona, PA	04/21/2026	0267
Pedercine, Ronald	Corry, PA	04/08/2026	0774
Racko, Michael R	Canonsburg, PA	05/08/2024	0434
Reid, Gordon	Mc Murray, PA	01/23/2026	0434
Rittenhouse, Roger C	Smock, PA	09/21/2025	0039
Roberts, James C	Midland, MI	03/16/2026	0381
Rosenecker, Charles M	Morgantown, WV	03/01/2026	0774
Rudolph, Josephine A	Harmony, PA	04/15/2026	0731
Rugh, Bronwyn	Volant, PA	04/08/2026	0731
Scarpill, Dolores	Jamison, PA	04/11/2026	R059
Scherm, David	Pittsburgh, PA	03/25/2026	0123
Sechrist, Sondra	McKeesport, PA	04/13/2026	0108
Shekerko, Robert	Burgettstown, PA	04/10/2026	0588
Shrum, Mildred	New Market, MD	03/27/2026	0774
Signore, Luella	Baden, PA	03/18/2026	0123
Sokac, Mary Catherine	Pittsburgh, PA	02/22/2026	0434
Solero, Ramon E	Conway, PA	02/04/2026	0123
Spackman, Gloria	Uniontown, PA	04/11/2026	0039
Spanier, Dolores M	Warrington, PA	03/30/2026	R059
Sponsler, Susan H	Huntingdon, PA	08/22/2025	0267
Swaney, Blanch G	Warren, PA	04/14/2026	L040
Taylor, Margaret E	Homer City, PA	04/14/2026	0774
Thieman, James E	McMurray, PA	12/28/2025	0434
Thompson, Joy	Washington, PA	03/14/2026	0588
Thompson, Nellie	Bowden, WV	03/22/2026	0774
Thompson, Ronald	New Alexandria, PA	04/08/2026	0737
Triggs, Lola Joyce	Martinsburg, WV	02/15/2026	0774
Troyanovich, Rosalie	New Athens, OH	11/12/2024	0595
Tunney, Joan M	Stokesdale, NC	04/08/2026	0377
Verduzco, Connie	Naples, FL	01/19/2026	0586
Verga, Loretta S	Meadville, PA	04/03/2026	0731
Vukela, Vincent	Bethel Park, PA	01/28/2026	0434
Waggett, Betty Mae	Carmichaels, PA	03/24/2026	0039
Waggoner, Emily M	Pittsburgh, PA	04/10/2026	L105
Wagner, William E	Natrona Heights, PA	10/29/2025	L105
Waite, Burton W	Peru, IL	02/28/2026	0586
Walsh, Edward Paul	Aliquippa, PA	04/17/2026	0123
Wassilchalk, Mike	Noth Belle Vernon, PA	03/20/2026	0377
Whaley, Donald J	Erie, PA	03/21/2026	0731
Wiersteiner, Laura Ann	Charleston, WV	02/17/2026	0774
Wills, Edna M	Pittsburgh, PA	01/20/2026	L105
Wingard, Doyle	Emlenton, PA	03/01/2026	0731
Yeager, Marion A	Hamburg, PA	03/28/2026	L102
Yardie, Norma Rae	Pittsburgh, PA	03/27/2026	L161
Yoder, Donna	Pittsburgh, PA	03/23/2026	L105



DONATE TO THE PVR SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Every penny donated goes directly into the PVR Scholarship Fund.

1. Your contribution will help our young members achieve their academic goals.
2. Your donation may benefit your own son, daughter, niece or nephew.
3. Every year requests for grants increase, making more demands on the PVR Scholarship Fund.

PVR Scholarship Fund Donations April 2026

In Memory of **John P Smolka:**

From his Family 200.00

In Memory of deceased members of A-70, **Shirley Kososka and Joanne**

B. Landerhill:

From Assembly 70 40.00

In Memory of **Shaun Logan Crowley:**

From Kevin, Lori, Kevin Jr.,
& John Crowley 20.00

Donations:

Region 81000.00

Region 8 Matching Funds500.00

Assembly 70..... 100.00

Assembly 70 Matching Funds.100.00

Joseph Weinkle100.00

Michael Chiodo100.00

Theresa Miedel25.00

Bill Wesnak20.00

Total 2,205.00



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June officially kicks off summer with longer days, blooming roses, and warm sunshine. From Father's Day and graduations to weddings and summer-solstice folklore, it's a month rich with love, joy, beauty, and tradition—whatever the celebration.

Father's Day

On the third Sunday in June, we celebrate Father's Day, the person who is the head of the family. We wish all fathers on this day the most beautiful day and much joy in the circle of their family.



PODPOĽANIE / Očová

*God took the strength of the mountain;
the majesty of the tree;
the warmth of the summer sun;
the peace of the quiet sea;
the generous soul of nature;
the comforting arm of the night;
the wisdom of all ages;
the power of the eagle's flight; the joy of a spring morning;
the faith of a mustard seed;
the patience of eternity;
the depth of a family in need;
then God combined these qualities,
when there was nothing more to add;
He knew that His masterpiece was complete,
so He called it... FATHER.*

Convention: This month we will be gathering for the 39th Convention of the National Slovak Society in Huron, Ohio from June 14th to 18th. We wish everyone safe travel and a great convention.

St. John's Day June 24th

Svätojánske ohne (St. John's Fires) is a significant, midsummer folk tradition. Rooted in pagan rituals for the summer solstice, the day combines honoring St.



John the Baptist with lively evening festivities involving large bonfires, dancing, and rituals to ensure health.

Large bonfires are built. A key custom is jumping over the fire, which is believed to purify individuals, leave behind past burdens, and provide strength and health. It is believed that herbs gathered on St. John's Day possess special healing and protective properties.

Families traditionally collect flowers like St. John's wort, chamomile, and lavender to hang in their homes.



Wedding Customs and Traditions

The *redovy* (often linked to or performed alongside *čepčenie*) is a traditional Slovak wedding money dance and ritual performed at midnight, symbolizing a bride's transition from maidenhood to a married woman. Historically, guests danced with the bride and contributed money to help the newlywed couple, often poor peasants, establish their new life.

Rooted in ancient folk tradition, it acted as a rite of passage, transforming the bride into a housewife who would from this day forward wear a bonnet (*čepiec*).

Today, the *redovy/čepčenie* remains a popular, sentimental highlight of many Slovak weddings, maintaining a connection to rural ancestral traditions.

Rooted in ancient folk tradition, it acted as a rite of passage, transforming the bride into

Redovy
Bridal Dance

Allegro

1. Jak - še Pán Boh ra - du - je, Jak - še Pán Boh ra - du - je,
2. Ne - tak by - še ra - do - val, ne - tak by - še ra - do - val,

1. keď sta-ro-sta tan - cu - je, keď sta-ros-ta tan - cu - je,
2. ke-by mla-dý tan - co - val, ke-by mla-dý tan - co - val.



Jún oficiálne začína leto dlhšími dňami, kvitnúcimi ružami a teplým slnečným žiarením. Od Dňa otcov a promócií až po svadby a folklór letného slnovratu je to mesiac bohatý na lásku, radosť, krásu a tradície - nech už oslavujete čokoľvek.

Deň Otcov

V tretiu nedeľu v Júni slávime deň otcov, osoba ktorá je hlavou rodiny. Všetkým otcom ku vášmu dňu želáme čo najkrajší deň a veľa radosti v kruhu svojej rodiny.

*Boh vzal silu vrchu;
majestátnosť stromu;
teplo letného slnka;
pokoj tichého mora;
štedrá duša prírody;
utešujúce rameno noci;
múdrosť všetkých vekov;
sila letu orla; radosť z jarného rána;
viera horčičného semena;
trpezlivosť večnosti;
hĺbka rodiny v nůdzi;
potom Boh spojil tieto vlastnosti,
keď už nebolo čo pridať;
Vedel, že Jeho majstrovské dielo je úplné,
a tak ho nazval... OTEC.*



PODPOĽANIE / Očová

Konvencia: V tomto mesiaci sa zijdeme na 39 Konvenciu Narodneho Slovensko Spolku v meste Huron, Ohio od 14-teho do 18-teho Juna. Prajeme všetkým šťastnú cestu a hlavné skvelú konvenciu.

Deň svätého Jána 24. júna

Svätojánske ohne sú významnou ľudovou tradíciou letného slnovratu. Tento deň, ktorý má korene v pohanských rituáloch letného slnovratu, spája uctievanie svätého Jána Krstiteľa so živými večernými slávnosťami, ktoré zahŕňajú veľké ohne, tanec a rituály na zabezpečenie zdravia.



Zakladajú sa veľké ohne. Kľúčovým zvykom je skákanie cez oheň, o ktorom sa verí, že očisťuje jednotlivcov, zanecháva za sebou minulé bremená a dodáva silu a zdravie.

Verí sa, že bylinky nazbierané na deň svätého Jána majú špeciálne liečivé a ochranné vlastnosti. Rodiny tradične zbierajú kvety ako ľubovník bodkovaný, harmanček a levanduľa, aby si ich zavesili do svojich domovov.



Svadobné zvyky a tradície

Redovy (často spojené s čepčením alebo vykonávané spolu s ním) sú tradičným slovenským svadobným tancom a rituálom za peniaze, ktorý sa vykonáva o polnoci a symbolizuje prechod nevesty z panenského stavu do vydatého stavu. Historicky hostia tancovali s nevestou a prispievali peniazmi, aby pomohli novomanželom, často chudobným roľníkom, založiť si nový život.

Zakorenené v starodávnej ľudovej tradícii, fungovali ako iniciačný obrad, ktorý premieňal nevestu na gazdinku, ktorá od tohto dňa nosila čepec (čepiec).

Dnes zostávajú redovy/čepčenie obľúbeným a sentimentálnym vrcholom mnohých slovenských svadiieb a udržiavajú spojenie s vidieckymi tradíciami predkov.

Redovy
Bridal Dance

Allegro

1. Jak - še Pán Boh ra - du - je, Jak - še Pán Boh ra - du - je,
2. Ne - tak by - še ra - do - val, ne - tak by - še ra - do - val.

L keď sta - ro - sta tan - cu - je, keď sta - ros - ta tan - cu - je.
2. ke - by mla - dý tan - co - val, ke - by mla - dy tan - co - val.



Youth Circle Page

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

Congratulations to Peter J Merten



Please join us in congratulating Peter J. Merten of Assembly 0381 on his recent graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point on May 23, 2026 with his proud parents, Rosemarie and Tom, and his brother Jack in attendance. Peter graduated on May 23, 2026 with his proud parents, Rosemarie and Tom, and his brother Jack in attendance. Peter earned a Bachelor of Science in Engineering and received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the

United States Army.

This July, Peter will report to Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) in Missouri for six months, after which he will be assigned to Fort Hood, Texas.

During his outstanding cadet career at West Point, Peter distinguished himself through leadership, academic excellence, and personal achievement.


His honors include:

- Serving as Cadet Captain and Company Commander of his C4 Cowboys Company
- Lead his company onto the field at the Army–Navy Game
- Successfully completing Airborne School at Fort Benning, GA and earned his wings. He also earned his air assault wings and then earned his gold badge upon completion of his 4th Norwegian March.

Peter's family is immensely proud of his accomplishments and looks forward to attending the upcoming convention as delegates, along with Starka Rosemary Hanlon. They extend their sincere thanks to the PVR Scholarship Committee for four years of generous scholarship support. Peter is deeply grateful for this assistance and is eager to meet and personally thank the committee members at the convention.

The NSS congratulates you on this amazing news! This is an incredible milestone and you deserve the spotlight to celebrate the moment."





FATHER'S DAY RIDDLES

The person with the most correct answers wins!

What did the dad buffalo say to his son when he dropped him off at school? Bison!

Why did the dad wear two pairs of pants to play golf? In case he got a hole in one!

Why don't dads ever tell jokes about pizza? Because they're too cheesy!

What's a dad's favorite kind of music? "Pop" music, of course!

Why did the dad open a bakery? Because he kneaded the dough!

When does a joke become a dad joke? When it becomes apparent.

Why did the dad scarecrow win an award? Because he was outstanding in his field!

How does a daddy penguin build its house? Igloos it together.

When does Father's Day come before St. Patrick's Day? In the dictionary!

Why don't dad skeletons fight each other? They don't have the guts!

What do you call a daddy fish with no eyes? Fsh

What do you call a papa bear with no teeth? A gummy bear!

What do you call a dad joke told by someone other than dad? A faux pal!

Why do father bees have sticky hair? Because they use a honeycomb.

Why are daddy pigs so bad at sports? Because they always hog the ball.

Can a dad kangaroos jump higher than a house? Of course, houses can't jump.

Why do dad seagulls fly over the sea? If they flew over the bay, they'd be bagels.

What did the baby corn say to the mama corn? Where's popcorn?

What did the dad plumber say to the opera singer? Nice pipes.

Dear Daddy

I **LOVE** you more than _____ !

You are **AMAZING** because _____ !

My **FAVORITE** thing to do
with you is _____ !

You make me **LAUGH**
when you _____ !

I know you **LOVE** me
because _____ !

I will **ALWAYS LOVE** you
because _____ !

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Love, _____

AGE: _____ YEAR: _____

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