

# Fraternally Yours®



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First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association

MAY 2024



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**MEMORIAL DAY**  
REMEMBER AND HONOR

ŽENSKÁ JEDNOTA

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# It's the struggle in life that makes us strong

**A** man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole.

Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no further.

So the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon.

The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time.

Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly.

What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

## Dear Friends,

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives. If God allowed us to go through our lives without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. We could never fly!

- I asked for Strength... and God gave me Difficulties to make me strong.
- I asked for Wisdom... and God gave me Problems to solve.
- I asked for Prosperity... and God gave me Brains and the ability to work.
- I asked for Courage... and God gave me Danger to overcome.
- I asked for Love... and God gave me Troubled people to help.
- I asked for Favors... and God gave me Opportunities.

I received nothing I wanted ... I received everything I needed!

May God Bless You.

May God Bless you with unspeakable joy, not only in the world to come, but in this world also.

May your path be bright and full of light everywhere you go.

May God tell darkness that it must flee at your command.

And, I pray your feet will never stumble out of God's plan.

May the desires of your heart come true, And may you experience Peace in everything you do.

May Goodness, Kindness, and Mercy come your way.

And may you gain Wisdom and grow in the Lord everyday.

Until next month,  
**Warmly, Carolyn**



# REFLECTIONS ON .... SPRING .... THE EASTER SEASON ... ORDINARY TIME ... PART I

Reverend Monsignor Peter M. Polando, D. Min., J.C.L., National Chaplain

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We are now in the midst of Spring which like the other three seasons, brings back memories of my childhood with my parents and two older brothers. My father, Paul, was a welder at United States Steel and my mother, Mary, was a homemaker. My brother, Paul, is nine years older than me and brother, John, was four years ahead of me. We lived in the city on about a quarter acre of land in a Cape Cod style home, built basically by dad and his friends with mom doing the interior painting and the varnishing of the maple wood floors. I remember vividly the addition to our home of a formal dining room, the building of a two-car garage with an attached patio and an annual huge garden in the backyard with all kinds of plants, herbs, and fruits. Mom and dad would plant seeds in our “hot box” that included several different types of tomatoes and peppers. In the mornings, they would uncover the hot box that had glass toppings to nurture growth by the sun and the glass doors lifted up to provide natural air to come in and not overheat the small plants. At nightfall, they would cover the hotbox with old used blankets and canvas tarps to retain the heat of the day and the blankets dry while keeping the cold nights, sometimes with frost, at a distance, so to say.

Towards the end of April and the beginning of May, my dad would dig up the garden by hand and slice the earth as fine as he was able and after several days of drying out, it was mom’s duty to further make the soil finer by raking it. Then came the several early evenings after supper when the sowing of other seeds, the transferal of the various tomato and pepper plants and other plants brought up by seed in the box were placed in their summer home in the garden. In addition, there were rows upon rows of carrots, onions, garlic, kohlrabi, radishes (both red and black), lettuces, various herbs, etc. all placed in their various designated spaces. The tomato and pepper plants all received a nightly cup of water if it did not rain that night or day. Stakes were gradually placed next to each tomato plant. Pumpkin and various gourd seeds were intermingled among the corn seeds. What an ordeal but what treasures we possessed as the garden was taken

over by the seeds and their plants! What a wonderfully, delicious end of summer and the beginning of autumn!

As you are well aware, the celebrations of Lent and Easter were celebrated earlier this year. *Easter occurs on the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox. If the full moon falls on a Sunday, then Easter is the next Sunday.* Accordingly, the Season of Lent 2024 began on Ash Wednesday, 14 February (which is usually the feast of the Patron Saints of the Slavs, Saints Cyril and Methodius, and formerly the celebration of *Saint Valentine*). The Season of Lent ended at beginning of the Sacred Triduum (28-31 March 2024) commencing on Holy Thursday with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper; Good Friday, continuing with the celebration of the Lord’s Passion and Death; and Holy Saturday, the Vigil of Easter; and, Easter Sunday. The Easter celebration continues for the next fifty days to the celebration of Pentecost on 19 May 2024.

Each and every year, you and I grow up more spiritually during these holy seasons: Lent, the Triduum- especially Easter Sunday; and, the Easter Season. The three months of Lent and Easter are both “hot boxes” for our understanding of sin, saving grace, the strength of Jesus in our lives, culminated by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. What a wonderful way to continue the liturgical year than placing ourselves before the Lord, in a spirit of repentance during the Lenten Season. We acknowledged that we have sinned and we are deeply in need to seek the reconciliation through the seed of the forgiveness of our sins especially noted by our extra acts of charity, almsgiving to the less fortunate, and obtaining a better relationship with our God, our family and those with whom we have committed the sinfulness of hatred and distaste. The seeds of forgiveness hopefully are continuing to grow now in this Easter Season of the Resurrection of Jesus. It was through His Passion and Death that we empower ourselves to be people of His Resurrection and continue to be His Light in our words, actions, and thoughts. But the Seasons of Lent and Easter lead us to the rest of the year that we call “Ordinary Time.” This article will continue with “Ordinary Time” in a Part 2 in the upcoming July 2024 issue.

# Message from our National President

## CYNTHIA M. MALESKI



**Dear fellow members,**

As I pen this article for our May issue, it is good to celebrate and remember our mothers, godmothers and those who have served as mothers for us in our life journeys. In the United States, we celebrate Mother's Day on May 12, 2024. The special day is observed in over 40 countries. Whether our mother is still living or has passed

away, we all have ways to honor her on her special day, as well as doing so during the entire year.

We all have special moments or memories that we cherish of our dear mother. As time goes on, however, we tend to realize more and more what she gave up for us so we could move forward in our life journey. We also realize that a mother's love for each of us is as pure as love will get in this earthly life.

We trust our mothers and fathers from the beginning of our lives. This trust is the foundation of our bond, our relationship with each other, intertwined with love and selflessness on the part of our parents. It is the core of our family bond, in good times and in bad times. We can be honest with each other, listen to each other, and support each other. Our mother is the primary figure who in so many instances holds the family together, the "glue" for all of us.

Trust is built and fortified with repetitive positive behavior. Our mothers play a key role, if not **THE KEY ROLE**, in planning and encouraging rituals in our lives from our beginnings as a family, such as

family gatherings at Christmas, to Easter and birthdays. These annual events, often spanning several generations, build trust, love, stability, joy in the present, hope for the future and remembrances of the past for all of us. They are a key to healthy relationships not only in our family, but as we encounter others in other facets of our lives, including the workplace.

As members of First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association, many of us learned about our Society from our grandmothers, mothers and aunts. As we continue to modernize and update our model, our essential values of love, hard work, integrity, dedication to God and Country, compassion, benevolence and respect for life, imbedded in our Association since 1892, remain as our foundation. This is why we are a society which **YOU CAN TRUST**.

These values in action have helped us "stay the course" at FCSLA, achieving a balance of sustained managed growth, balancing that growth with the proper tools of risk review and compliance and balancing innovation and control in an uncertain volatile environment. As we move forward with our new leadership model, ever increased sophistication is needed to deal with the natural tension between these two forces without falling back on oversimplification that does not fully take into account growth or risk.

Let us also mark Memorial Day as we commemorate those who have died while serving our nation. Let us all participate at local gatherings in our neighborhoods and communities this Memorial Day to honor those who lost their lives for our country.

**Cynthia M. Maleski,**  
**National President**



## Annual Reports coming in June

The managing officers annual reports for 2023 along with the report of the National Chaplain, will appear in the June issue of *Fraternally Yours*, a month later than usual. A postponement of the quarterly board meeting where these reports are presented for approval made meeting the May publication deadline impossible. Thank you!

## 2024 Slovakia Heritage Tour

Sept. 6-15, 2024

**Celebrate the fall harvest and the beautiful culture, history and countryside of Slovakia, up close and personal, on the 2024 Slovakia Heritage ten-day, small group tour.** From September 6-15, we'll explore age-old cities, medieval towns and historic sites as well as folk-life museums, the Tatry mountains and picturesque villages. We'll join in a few of the festivals that bring alive Slovakia's long music and craft traditions. Optional genealogical research, and ancestral village and family visits available. **For more information:** Visit [www.slovakiaheritage.com](http://www.slovakiaheritage.com) or contact Judith Northup-Bennett, Slovakia Heritage Tours, 978-544-5144(text 978-894-6622), or [slovakiaheritagetours@gmail.com](mailto:slovakiaheritagetours@gmail.com)

# Happy Mother's Day

**"M - O - T - H - E - R"**

**"M"** is for the million things she gave me,  
**"O"** means only that she's growing old,  
**"T"** is for the tears she shed to save me,  
**"H"** is for her heart of purest gold,  
**"E"** is for her eyes, with love-light shining,  
**"R"** means right, and right she'll always be,

Put them all together, they spell **"MOTHER,"**  
A word that means the world to me.

— Howard Johnson

## PLEASE NOTE

FCSLA Life is a trade name and service mark of First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association of the United States of America. Our association has not changed its legal name which remains First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association of the United States of America.

We have adopted and may use FCSLA Life as a trade name for our organization and as a mark for services that we render.

# Memorial Day

On this Memorial Day let us all express our gratitude and pride  
For those who have gone to war, fought for us, and died

Mothers and fathers who have left their children behind  
To go to unfamiliar places to protect the rights of mankind

Bravely going into combat, putting their lives in harms way  
Fighting so that each of us can enjoy another free day

Men and women fighting for the security, for you and me  
Marching to war, proudly, to keep our land the home of the free

For each soldier that has served their country with dedication  
Sacrificing their lives for our freedom without hesitation



## Anna Hurban Scholarship Fund

### First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association

24950 Chagrin Boulevard  
Beachwood, OH 44122  
800-464-4642 • [www.fcsla.org](http://www.fcsla.org)

**Get Involved. Make a Donation.**

**You** can make a difference in helping to make education affordable for a deserving student. Your generous gift to the Anna Hurban Scholarship Fund gives our young members the opportunity to build an even stronger foundation as they begin their life journey and affirms them at a crucial time in their lives.

Sincerely,

**Cynthia M. Maleski**  
National President and CEO

First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association of the United States of America is a Fraternal Benefit Society organized under 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your contributions to our scholarship fund are tax deductible.

#### **Your Contribution Information**

Donor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

All donations, large and small, matter and are greatly appreciated. All donors and gifts will be proudly acknowledged in *Fraternally Yours* magazine unless you request that your name be withheld.

**Method of payment:** Please write your check or money order payable to FCSLA Anna Hurban Scholarship Fund.

**Send your donations to:** National President, FCSLA,  
24950 Chagrin Boulevard, Beachwood, OH 44122.

## 2024 Missouri State Council Youth of the Year Award



Sir Knight Gary Beussink, Chair of “Family Recognition” for the Missouri State Council of the Knights of Columbus, proudly proclaimed Samuel Miklovic (S101) as the chosen recipient of the 2024 Missouri State Council Youth of the Year award.

Sam, distinguished as an Eagle Scout, currently excels academically as a summa cum laude sophomore at St. Mary’s South Side Catholic High School, situated in south city St. Louis.

In all these ‘named’ organizations, each is imbued with a profound sense of duty to our nation and our local communities. As Eagle Scouts, they commit themselves to upholding the tenets of the Scout Oath and Law, to dedicating themselves to serving others and honoring the principles of our country. Likewise, the Knights of Columbus exemplify the values of charity, unity, patriotism and fraternity, underpinned by a profound love for our nation and a steadfast commitment to upholding its ideals. Similarly, within the Marianist traditions, the students at St. Mary’s Embody their Faith, Empower their pursuits, find strength in their community, and are Enlightened through acts of service to others.

In acknowledgment of his outstanding achievement, Sam will be feted at the forthcoming Knights of Columbus Convention, hosted by the Missouri State Council later this year.

# 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary Celebration

Jim and Darlene (Buresh) Blazek of Lincoln, NE will celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary on Saturday, April 20, 2024 with an Open House from 6-9 p.m. at the Valparaiso American Legion. They were married on April 18, 1964 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Valparaiso, NE. The couple has 3 children, 9 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. All are members of the Valparaiso Branch W187.



## Happy Birthday!

Phil Dzialowy, (S287, Chicago, IL) submitted these photos of his Aunt Aurelia Kimec who celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 29<sup>th</sup> and his grandson Jonathon Vera Jr. (J370, Chicago, IL) who turned 1 on March 28<sup>th</sup>. God Bless them both!



## Blue & White Gala

Two FCSLA Life Board members pictured, Barbara Sekerak and Mary Andreano, attended the Cleveland Benedictine High School Blue & White Gala on Saturday, March 16, 2024, at the Intercontinental Hotel, in Cleveland, Ohio. This year's theme was Honoring the Men of Benedictine Before, Between and BEYOND! This annual event gathers over 500 people from the Benedictine community for an evening of celebration. The goal is to ensure that the Home of Champions remains a pillar in the Cleveland neighborhood.



## 2024 State of Iowa High School Mock Trial Grand Champions

Davis Robe (Branch W137, Cedar Rapids, IA) poses with 1st place trophy after his team, Robins Mock Trial—Team Sunday, won the championship round of the Iowa High School Mock Trial State Competition. Their team will advance to compete in the National Mock Trial Competition held in Wilmington, Delaware, May 2-4, 2024. Davis is the grandson of W137 Secretary, Denise Upah and the son of W137 Vice President, Holly Robe.



# W137 Family Bowling and Pizza Afternoon

On Sunday, March 10th, FCSLA Life W137 hosted a Family Bowling and Pizza afternoon at Cedar Rapids Bowling Center. Originally scheduled for January, it was postponed to March due to inclement weather. Members enjoyed bowling, pizza and snacks. Everyone went home with a treat bag.



*Bowlers took time off to watch others bowl and to eat some pizza.*



*Jesse, Holly, Jeff and Denise enjoy their slices of pizza.*



*Barb and Jeff eat pizza, too.*

# Branch W056 Annual Appreciation Dinner

Branch W056 (Lonsdale, MN) had a good turnout of about 100 members for their annual appreciation dinner. Everyone enjoyed the chicken dinner very much. The event was held on February 25, 2024, at the Crusader Civic Center in Lonsdale Minnesota. Milton Trnka gave a nice presentation about the benefits of FCSLA life membership. Bingo was played after words and there were drawings for cash prizes.





# S141 & J014 MEET AND GREET



It was a time to bring back an old tradition—and it worked.

On February 10, 2024, members of Sr. Br. 141 and Jr. Br. 014 renewed old acquaintances and made some new friends at a Meet and Greet gathering at the Seven Hills, Ohio Recreation Center. The event marked the branch's 120th anniversary and was reminiscent of the old tradition that saw branch members gather each month to pay their "dues," catch up on neighborhood and family news, and learn what their branch is planning.



No "dues" were collected but many old memories were revived.

Almost 50 members and their families attended, including National President/CEO Cynthia Maleski, National Secretary/COO Kim Graham along with Okres Anna Hurban District 1 Vice President JoAnn Youngblood, Auditor Sue Talpas, and National Sales Manager Paul Smithers. National Auditor and Board of Directors member Barbara Sekerak, president of Sr. Br. 141, hosted the event.



Invitations to the event were sent to branch members still residing in Ohio.

Members enjoyed a light lunch, including tasty Slovak kolačky and nutroll while a slideshow of past and present branch events played on the big screen.



St. Mary's Branch 141 was founded at Cleveland's Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, May 19, 1903, and Jr. Branch 014 was founded there September 1, 1905.

Founders included Mary Jurcak, Mary Spisak, Katherine Pigot, Mary Russo and Helen Podsedly. This was not the first time the branch has celebrated an anniversary. In fact, more than 200 gathered in June 1953 to celebrate 50 years.



In 2003 more than 100 members gathered to celebrate Sr. Br 141's 100th anniversary. Branch officers at that time were Elizabeth Spisak, branch president, M. Joan Thesling, treasurer, Helen Chulak, financial secretary, and Barbara Sekerak, auditor.

Current Sr. Br. 141 officers are Barbara Sekerak, president, succeeding Mike Phillips; Sandra Kraft, vice president, succeeding Pat Philips; Jeanne Sabol, financial secretary; and Terese Joyce, treasurer, succeeding M. Joan Thesling.



# The Cleveland Plain Dealer—June 8, 1953

## Jubilee of Slovak Lodge Draws 200

Two hundred persons gathered in Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church yesterday to honor the 50-year jubilee of St. Mary's Lodge, Branch 141, of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Union.

The ceremony started with a mass led by Rev. V. A. Chaloupka and was followed by a breakfast in the church's parish hall, 9614 Aetna Road S. E., at which five charter members were given gold

rosaries and statues of the Madonna.

Leading the procession to the breakfast was the group's junior branch, 30 youngsters attired in brown and gold capes and hats.

Father Chaloupka praised the organization for its contributions to both the church and the community. He said a chalice donated by the group 41 years ago was still in use.

A special tribute to the charter members was made by supreme officers of the group, Mrs. Susan Matuseak, Mrs. Anna Yasso and Mrs. Frances Mizenko.

The five charter members honored were Mrs. Mary Jurcak,

Mrs. Mary Mary Spisak, Mrs. Katherine Pigo, Mrs. Mary Russo and Mrs. Helen Podsedley.

Gold rosaries were also presented to two others who had been active more than 50 years, having transferred from other branches. They were Mrs. Helen Putka and Mrs. Anna Hudak.

The event was under the direction of Mrs. Anna Bednar and Mrs. Tillie Bacik. President of the group is Mrs. Theresa Chovancik.



# S114 Christmas Meeting and Party

On Sunday December 17th, 2023, members of St. Ann's S114, Lorain, Ohio held their annual Christmas Meeting and Party at American Slovak Club. Members were welcomed by Pres. Bernie Danevich followed by a prayer and meeting. The year's report of Sr and Jr branches was given including activities and events, FCSLA Convention we participated in and the Matching Funds that were held by out member Sr. Helen Scasny, SC. The year's deceased members were named and members were reminded to pray for them, the home bound, ill and in nursing homes.

Election of officers followed with the current officers agreeing to serve for the next year. They are Bernadette Danevich, Pres., Margaret Kurta, V. Pres., Cynthia Sams, Recording Sec., Joanne Mrosko, Sr. Br. Treas., Margaret Thomas, Financial Sec, Auditor, Carol Bainbridge and new Auditor, Ellen Butorec. Betty Boone, Jr 198 Secretary-Treasurer is stepping down after 15 years of service with a new Jr Secretary-Treasurer to be forth coming.

Members were reminded of the year's coming events and meetings held on the 3rd Sunday of the month; July-scholarship luncheon, Oct-Bingo and Dec-annual mtg and Christmas Party. Also that FCSLA Scholarship forms are available on their website or by calling the main office. Members are welcome at all regular meetings. The meeting ended with Christmas gift basket door prizes, poinsettias and monetary raffle. As the meal was being served, Margaret Thomas read an entertaining reading about Christmas. A special thank you to Sr. Helen Scasny, SC who donated lap afghans, one given to all attending members.

A Christmas Blessing was read by Pres. Bernie Danevich and all were wished a Happy, healthy and Blessed New Year from all the officers.



# Spring is Gift Giving Season!



**Paul Smithers, CLU, ChFC, ChSNC, National Sales Manager**

Spring offers us many opportunities to leave a legacy for our younger generations. Giving the gift of FCSLA Life membership is much more than a simple monetary gift.

Spring brings us first communions and graduations as well as the year-round gift giving opportunities of birthdays, confirmations and just because I love you gifts!

Membership in FCSLA Life can give your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, God-children and any other young person you care about a gift for a lifetime. Membership provides the opportunity to participate in the FCSLA Life scholarship program\* that provides competitive scholarships from early elementary ages through graduate school and vocational schools as well. It also offers opportunities for leadership in Junior branches, community with like-minded peers, and opportunities for supporting our communities.

It also offers the beginning of a lifetime of financial security. Consider gifting an FCSLA Life annuity to a young person. Even just a \$250 initial deposit into an FCSLA Life annuity can get them started. Let the rest of the family – aunts, uncles, cousins and even family friends know that they can deposit money into this annuity as gifts for birthdays, Christmas, or any other reason. Over time the annuity could grow to be a good supplement to the child's retirement plan.

A Single Premium Whole Life policy is another gift that can provide a legacy to benefit a child. As they grow older and begin to take on adult responsibilities, they can take over ownership of the policy and change beneficiaries as needed.

If you are interested in finding out more information about these lifetime gifting opportunities, please contact your local FCSLA Life agent or recommender or a member of the FCSLA Life sales team.

You can find contact information for our regional sales managers at: [FCSLA.com/about/rsm/](https://www.fcsla.com/about/rsm/)

For more information about FCSLA Life products go to: [FCSLA.com/products/](https://www.fcsla.com/products/)

Or scan this QR code:



Or scan this QR code:



*\*FCSLA Life scholarships are competitive. Not all entrants will win a scholarship*

# MATCHING FUNDS ACTIVITIES

## BRANCH W016

### Brainard, NE Branch Bake Sale

Members of Branch W16 in Brainard, Nebraska collaborated on a matching grant project to benefit the Holy Trinity Parish Council of Catholic Women (PCCW). Their dedicated efforts culminated in a successful bake sale on March 10, 2024, at the Parish Klein Center. The joint efforts of branch W016 and the PCCW March Circle not only met but exceeded the set goal for the event, with additional contributions from parish members further enhancing the success of the fundraising initiative.



*Pictured preparing for the bake sale are W016 Vice president Joyce Rezac, March Circle member Dianne Pleskac and W16 member Margaret Bruner.*



*Diane Pleskac, Margaret Bruner and W016 President Mary Lou Meister are pictured with Sharon Bruner purchasing rossettes from the sale.*

## Please keep in mind the following when submitting information and photos for publication in *Fraternally Yours* ....

### Background

Photographing a person in a public place, including children, DOES NOT require a model release or expressed consent. When it comes to PUBLIC places or being in PUBLIC VIEW (even if you are standing on private property), consent or a model release is NOT required unless the photograph will be used in advertising (think billboard for Verizon or some other company) AND the person is recognizable.



When a photographer takes a photo, no matter who their subject is, copyright belongs to THE PHOTOGRAPHER. It's called "intellectual copyright" and believe it or not, it is perfectly within their legal rights to not only take the photos, but they have the right to display them, and even sell them as long as they aren't doing so commercially (as indicated above).

Considering that background information please be sure that you inform members attending your events that photographs will be taken and may be published in *Fraternally Yours*. Share that if someone does not want to be photographed or included in a write-up, to please make that known to the organizer and/or designated photographer.

### Current Practice

When someone, be it a member, branch officer, district officer or home office staff submits information to be included in a future issue of the magazine, the editor sets it for publication. It is done with the understanding that the information contained has been cleared to be published with those involved. It would be impossible to verify every submission with every person pictured or included in each submission.



Memorials are only published when submitted by a family member or branch officer with the understanding that a family member asked for it to be published. Memorials may contain a head shot and approximately 250 words of text. Family members are encouraged to edit the original memorial or it will be done at the discretion of the editor. They are published when space allows.

Please use common sense and be sure to inform members that they may appear in a future issue of the magazine and respect the wishes of anyone who declines to be included in any photographs or other content submitted for publication.

# Is it Time for a Change?

**Have you updated your policy beneficiary?** Your FCSLA Life life or annuity policy was an important purchase. Keeping your beneficiary information current should be one of your top priorities. As your life changes, it is important to make sure you update the beneficiary information on all your accounts. Life events like marriage, divorce, birth of a child, and passing of a loved one are just some of the significant life events that may have an impact on your beneficiary information.

- It eliminates any doubt as to what you wish to be done with your hard-earned money or insurance proceeds.
- It saves time—if beneficiaries cannot be located or they are deceased, state regulations mandate how those funds are to be paid. It causes delays and possible legal expense. Unfortunately when we cannot locate beneficiaries, funds may become payable to the state as unclaimed property.
- It helps ensure the financial wellness of your loved ones. You most likely purchased a life insurance or annuity policy to help cover funeral expenses or replace income.

## It's not difficult, here's how...

Go to our website **FCSLA.com** home page and click on the orange **Change of Beneficiary Form** button located under "Announcements". Print the page, complete the form, and mail it to the FCSLA Home Office for processing. You can also request that a form be sent to you by calling 1-800-464-4642 ext 1027 or email us at [lifeclaims@fcsla.com](mailto:lifeclaims@fcsla.com).

You or someone you love worked hard to purchase this policy. Make sure you take the extra step **NOW** and do the right thing for yourself and your loved ones – **keep your beneficiaries current**.



## ATTENTION!

If you would like to receive *Fraternally Yours* by email instead of through the mail please return this form to the attention of Member Services at the Home Office.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

You will begin to receive *Fraternally Yours* by email as soon as the changes can be made.



# IN MEMORIAM

## Rosemarie Yuhas, S156



Rosemarie Yuhas, 92, passed away on January 24, 2024. Rosemarie was born January 7, 1932 in Hubbard, Ohio, a daughter of Carl and Dorothy Brown Wittenauer. Raised in Hubbard, Rosemarie graduated from Hubbard High School, Class of 1950, and attended Youngstown State University. On August 8, 1953, Rosemarie married Eugene Yuhas

and they made their home in Struthers. When her youngest child began kindergarten Rosemarie re-entered the workforce as school secretary for Holy Trinity School until its closing 18 years later. She then worked as a secretary for Struthers City Schools, retiring in 1996 after 25 years of service. Rosemarie was an active member of Holy Trinity Church where she served as a reader, pirohy maker, treasurer for both the Altar and Rosary Society and Infant Jesus of Prague Guild. She also served as auditor for FCSLA Life Branch S156. She was a wonderful wife, mother, and grandmother whose legacy of love will live on in her family. Rosemarie leaves her husband of over 70 years, Gene Yuhas of Struthers; two daughters, Elizabeth (Steven) Budd of Dayton, Ohio and Roberta "Bobbi Jo" (Tim) McCoy of New Middletown, Ohio; one son, Kevin (Antoinette) Yuhas of London, Ohio; daughter-in-law, (Maureen) Yuhas of Kettering, Ohio; one sister, Joan Clark of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Contributions may be made to Christ Our Savior Parish at Holy Trinity Church, 250 Bridge Street, Struthers, Ohio 44471 or to the Eugene S. and Rosemarie Yuhas Endowed Scholarship at the University of Dayton, Office of the Dean School of Law, 300 College Park, Dayton, Ohio 45469-2772.

## Berniece M Rybarski, Z031



Berniece M Rybarski, passed away on January 22, 2024. A lifetime resident of Calumet City, Illinois until her move to North Carolina 2 years ago. Berniece was a graduate of Thornton Township High School class of 1949. Following her graduation, she then worked as a secretary for Thornton Township and then the district 215 Title I program. Berniece

became a Polish Women's member back when monthly payments were made with a little pass book. She and her husband's family were all members. They so believed in the organization that today their 2 children, 4 grandchildren and 6 of 7 great grandchildren have policies purchased by them. Three of her grandchildren were proud recipients of scholarships through this organization. Berniece was an avid card

sender, remembering her family on holidays and birthdays, or simply when she was thinking of someone. She loved to read books of no particular genre. She was a big fan of Lawrence Welk, watching reruns and talking about the grand costumes and the real-life tidbits of the singers and dancers she had read about in autobiographies. She cherished the little details and routines of life, and always made sure to take time to savor a cup of coffee. Her smile, dry sense of humor and wit, her cards and phone calls, and her love and kindness will be missed by her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews, but never forgotten.

## Mary Ann Castick, S156



Mary Ann Castick, 93, passed away Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024 in Lima, Ohio. Mary Ann was born to parents Joseph Javorsky and Mary Tatarka Javorsky, on May 9, 1930, and was a high school graduate. She married her husband, Frank Castick, and together they raised their children, until her husband's death in 1987. Mary Ann was very

active throughout her life at Holy Trinity Church, where she volunteered much of her time making pierogies, being a member of the Mother's Club, teaching Sunday school; she was also a Eucharistic minister, as well as an avid reader. In her later years, she was also a member of Christ our Savior, St. Nicholas Church in Struthers, Ohio. Mary Ann leaves to cherish her memory, her son, Frank Castick of Youngstown; a sister, Lucille Hlas of Hubbard; and many extended family members and friends.

## Nathaniel Aaron Ekoniak, S161



Nathaniel Aaron Ekoniak, born in Youngstown, OH August 8, 1984 to Michael Ekoniak Jr. and Loretta Hanuschak Ekoniak, passed away October 14, 2023, in Sacramento, California while job-hunting. He lived in Beaver Township, graduating from Canfield High in 2002. Active in many area theaters, he graduated 2006 from Ohio University's Honors Col-

lege in Computer Science, minoring in Math and Japanese. He taught English in Shibushi, Japan then moved to Seattle working for Symontek, designing software for airlines then Amazon and Washington University, going to Germany with Seattle Men's Choir's Holocaust Remembrance tour. After 10 years he returned to Youngstown. Treasuring his Slovak heritage, belonging to American Slovak Cultural Association, FCSLA Branch S161 and FCSU Branch 731, studying Slovak at the University of Pittsburgh's Language Institute, visiting Slovakia twice, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Italy. He is

survived by his parents and his brother Dr. Michael III, his Aunt Marie (Ekoniak) Haring and cousin Chris, his Uncle Del and Aunt Jeanne Hanuschak, cousins Jennifer and Allison. His cousins Michele (Begala) and Dennis Minotti, Jennifer (Minotti) and Justin Viau, JJ and Ani, Dr. Dennis and Brooke Minotti, Sierra and Sydney. His "Uncle" Jimmy and "Aunt" Marni Micholtzick, Scott and Lori Mickholtzick and Aubrey, Drs Jason and Sandy (Mickholtzick) Glagola (Nathaniel's dear friend) and Robert and Beth, and his Japanese "sister" Yoriko. He was preceded by his 4 grandparents, Mike and Marge (Baker) Hanuschak, Michael and Agnes (Novotny) Ekoniak and his Aunt Eleanore (Ekoniak) Janosko waiting to lovingly welcome him.

**Marie Louise Baloga Peters, S172**

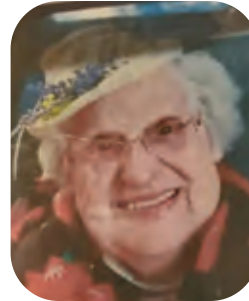


Marie Louise Peters (1925-2024) was born to Stephen and Scholastica (Kozak) Baloga of Wilkes-Barre, PA. Her happiest childhood years were spent in the cemetery, specifically City Cemetery, where her father was superintendent. Her education included a nursing diploma, bachelor's degree, certification in orthopedics (from Oswestry, England) and Master's degrees in Nursing and Public Health. A private audience with Pope Pius XII highlighted a 1955 tour of Europe. She lived and worked on Indian reservations in Wyoming and Arizona; her position in Alaska required visits to remote villages, often by bush plane and once by dog sled. She served on the island of Saipan in Micronesia, and advised the governments of Trinidad & Tobago, British Guiana, Surinam, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. While visiting Nicaragua in 1967, she was held hostage when her hotel became the center of a rebellion against the ruling dictator. Later working in Dallas, TX, she met and married Dr. Leo J. Peters in 1983. After retirement, she wrote family history and several chapters of

her autobiography. She moved to San Diego, California, in 2000. Easygoing, generous, and unpretentious, a model of adaptability and grace, she loved Nat King Cole, animals, history, geography, languages, and her Catholic faith. She never stopped learning. She is survived by two stepchildren, many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and nephews, and cousins. Interment was in Schulenberg, TX.

her autobiography. She moved to San Diego, California, in 2000. Easygoing, generous, and unpretentious, a model of adaptability and grace, she loved Nat King Cole, animals, history, geography, languages, and her Catholic faith. She never stopped learning. She is survived by two stepchildren, many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and nephews, and cousins. Interment was in Schulenberg, TX.

**Josephine "Feeney" Ondrick, S172**



Josephine M. "Feeney" Ondrick, 96, entered into eternal life while in Windham, CT., on Sept. 19, 2023. She was born in and a lifelong resident of Wilkes-Barre, PA, daughter of John and Anna Kandrak Pavlik. She recently resided in CT near family, and was a member of The Cathedral of St. Patrick. Josephine was a graduate of James M. Coughlin High School, Wilkes-Barre, PA. She was a devoted mother, grandmother and great grandmother who belonged to the once Sacred Heart/ St. John's/St. Andre Bessette Church and Altar and Rosary Society, FCSLA, Branch 172 and Slovak Heritage Society. In addition to being a homemaker and wonderful Slovak cook, and a retail sales clerk, showing much compassion and love as a caregiver to her brother and sister, Carl and Anna Pavlik. She is remembered as teaching others the value of faith, family, education, work, saving and being content. She was a well loved and cared for resident at St. Joseph's. where she enjoyed visits, and shared Slovak memories and songs with the residents and Nursing staff. Surviving are her daughter, Barbara A. Skopek, Norwich, Conn.; grandson, John Skopek and his wife, Mary Clare, Uncasville; grandchildren, Kyle, Jacob and Madelyn; nieces, Dr. Maureen Zelinka; Joanne Kutney, Florida; Deborah Milewski, Southington, Conn.; and other nieces and nephews.

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**We Want to Hear From You!**

- Did your children, grandchildren receive special awards or achievements in school?
- Baptisms? Confirmations? New Members?
- Participated in Volunteer & Community Projects?

If they are members of the FCSLA Life please email us a photo and short article about their special achievements!

**E-mail: [zjbazik@comcast.net](mailto:zjbazik@comcast.net)**



**AWARDED BEST OF CENTER AT STATE CONTEST**



On March 23, 2024, Davis Robe (W137, Cedar Rapids, IA) performed a vocal solo at the 3A State Solo and Ensemble music contest. He received a perfect score and the judge named him "Best of Center." He will perform in the Outstanding Performers Showcase in May. Davis is the grandson of W137 Secretary, Denise Upah and the son of W137 Vice President, Holly Robe.



# JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT FCSLA LIFE

From time to time, FCSLA Life either has vacancies for current positions or looks to expand its staff to meet our growing needs. These positions are located in our Home Office in Beachwood, Ohio. If you are interested in learning more about these opportunities please contact our HR manager at 800-464-4642 X1076 for more information or email a current resume to [hr@fcscla.com](mailto:hr@fcscla.com).

## FCSLA Annuity Rates

Rates for our deferred Elite Annuities:

SILVER ELITE (5 YEAR)

**3.75% APY\***

GOLD ELITE (7 YEAR)

**3.85% APY\***

PLATINUM ELITE (10 YEAR)

**4.00% APY\***

\*These rates are effective 7/1/2023

The credited rate is reviewed at least quarterly by the Board of Directors and will never go below the minimum guaranteed contract rate.

The Guaranteed minimum rates for the three products listed above issued on January 1, 2023, or later will be 3.00%.

## 46<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS APPEAL UPDATE

The Saints Cyril and Methodius Appeal is in its 46th year raising money to assist the Pontifical Slovak College of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Rome with its day-to-day operations. The Appeal relies upon the generosity of individual donors in addition to collections taken up in personal parishes of Slovak ancestry. A direct mailing asking for donations was sent in February to local district and branch leaders from the four Catholic Slovak Fraternal Organizations, members of the Slovak Catholic Federation, clergy with Slovak ancestry, and previous donors.

**As of April 9, the 2024 Appeal has received \$17,379.54 from 136 donors.** Among the 33 donations received from Catholic Slovak Fraternal Branches and Districts, Branches S10 & J386, Branch 107, Branches S301 & J143, Branches S414 & J272, Branch S475, Branch S615, the Magdalen I. Iskra District, and the Home Office of the FCSLA have donated a combined total of \$1,700. Donations to date have also been received from 3 churches, 21 clergy and religious, and 79 individuals. On behalf of the Pontifical College, thank you for your continued generosity and support.

All wishing to contribute to the 2024 Appeal are asked to fill out the information in the box at the bottom of this article and mailing it along with your check payable to the Slovak Catholic Federation to the address provided. Donations in any amount are deeply appreciated and are acknowledged. **Gifts received after November 30, 2024 will be credited toward the 2025 Appeal.** Thank you again for your goodness and generosity.

*The Slovak Catholic Federation was founded in 1911 by Rev. Joseph Murgas, founding Pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Slovak Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA. The Federation brings together under one banner both individuals of Slovak heritage as well as Catholic Slovak Fraternal Organizations for cultural, religious and educational needs. Serving as Moderator is the Right Reverend Gary Hoover, O.S.B., Abbot of St. Andrew Svorad Abbey, Cleveland, OH. National President is Reverend Andrew S. HvozdoVIC, V.F., Supreme Chaplain of the Slovak Catholic Sokol and Pastor of Our Lady of Victory Parish, Harveys Lake, PA and Gate of Heaven Parish, Dallas, PA. Reverend Thomas A. Nasta, National Chaplain of the First Catholic Slovak Union and Parochial Vicar with Senior Priest status at Our Lady of Grace Church, Penn del, PA, serves as First Vice President of the Federation and is the Appeal Coordinator.*



### 46th Annual Saints Cyril and Methodius Appeal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to  
**Slovak Catholic Federation and mail to:**

Rev. Thomas A. Nasta, National First Vice President  
Slovak Catholic Federation  
Our Lady of Grace Church  
225 Bellevue Avenue  
Penn del, PA 19047-4052



# Weekend Recipes

## CREAMY CHICKEN ALFREDO LASAGNA

12 uncooked lasagna noodles (from 1 [16-oz.] pkg.)  
 5 tablespoons unsalted butter  
 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
 4 medium-size garlic cloves, finely chopped (about 4 teaspoon)  
 4 cups (1 quart) half-and-half  
 1/8 cup ground nutmeg  
 1 3/4 teaspoons kosher salt, divided  
 1 cup pre-grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (from 1 [4-oz.] container)  
 3 cups shredded rotisserie chicken  
 1 (10-oz.) pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry  
 1 1/2 cups whole-milk ricotta cheese (from 1 [15-oz.] container)  
 1 large egg, lightly beaten  
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
 12 oz. low-moisture, part-skim mozzarella cheese, shredded (about 3 cups), divided  
 Chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Cook lasagna noodles in generously salted water according to package directions for 1 minute less than al dente, about 10 minutes. Coat 2 large baking sheets with cooking spray. Drain noodles, and place in an even layer on greased baking sheets. If overlapping noodles, coat noodles lightly with cooking spray before overlapping. Set aside.

Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium. Add flour, and whisk constantly for 1 minute.

Add garlic, and whisk constantly until garlic is fragrant and flour has started to toast slightly, about 1 minute.

Gradually whisk in half-and-half. Add nutmeg and 1 teaspoon of the salt. Bring to a simmer, whisking occasionally, over medium heat, whisking occasionally, until thickened for about 2 minutes.

Remove from heat, and gradually whisk in Parmigiano-Reggiano until smooth. Add chicken and spinach, and stir to combine; set aside.

Stir together ricotta, egg, pepper, and remaining 3/4 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl; set aside.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees with rack in center position (about 8 inches from

heat source). Coat a 2 1/4-inch deep, 9 x 13-inch (4-quart) baking dish with cooking spray. Spread 1 cup chicken mixture evenly in prepared baking dish. Lay 3 cooked lasagna noodles over chicken mixture to cover in an even layer.

Spread 1 cup chicken mixture evenly over noodles.

Dollop with 1/2 cup ricotta mixture, and spread evenly over chicken mixture.

Sprinkle 3/4 cup of the mozzarella evenly over ricotta mixture.

Repeat layers 2 more times, beginning with 3 cooked lasagna noodles. Top with remaining 3 noodles, remaining 2 cups chicken mixture, and remaining 3/4 cup mozzarella. Cover dish with aluminum foil.

Bake in preheated oven until hot and cheese has melted, about 30 minutes.

Remove foil, and bake until edges are golden brown, about 15 minutes. Without removing dish from oven, increase oven temperature to broil. Broil until cheese begins to turn golden brown, about 5 minutes. Remove from oven, and let cool 15-20 minutes before serving.

## FLATBREAD WITH GOAT CHEESE, FIGS AND PROSCIUTTO

3 medium white onions  
 1 tbsp unsalted butter  
 1/4 cup brown sugar  
 3 tbsp balsamic vinegar  
 1 8oz tube thin crust pizza dough  
 olive oil  
 1 tsp garlic powder  
 2 cups mozzarella cheese shredded  
 2-3 small fresh figs sliced  
 8 oz goat cheese crumbled  
 4 oz prosciutto  
 6 basil leaves torn  
 1 cup arugula  
 2 tbsp balsamic glaze

Slice the onions and put them in a large sauté pan over medium low heat with the butter. Cook for 35-40 minutes until caramel brown.

Add in sugar and vinegar and cook an additional 3-5 minutes until thick and sticky. Remove from the pan.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees  
 Drizzle a sheet pan with olive oil.  
 Open the can of dough and roll out onto the sheet pan. Drizzle with more olive oil and press the dough out to the edges of the pan. Sprinkle with garlic powder.

Top with 1 1/2 cups of mozzarella and then spread the caramelized onions all over.

Place your sliced figs all over and top with the remaining shredded cheese, and 6 oz of the goat cheese.

Tear the prosciutto and basil and scatter them both on top. Drizzle with olive oil.

Bake for 15-17 minutes until golden brown.

Top with arugula, remaining goat cheese, and drizzle with olive oil and balsamic glaze. Serve immediately.

## MOUNDS POKE CAKE

1 box of chocolate cake mix (and the ingredients called for on the box)  
 1 (14 oz) can of sweetened condensed milk  
 1 (15 oz) can of coconut cream  
 1 (7 oz) package of shredded sweetened coconut  
 1 (12 oz) container of chocolate frosting  
 Preheat oven and prepare the chocolate cake mix according to package directions.

Pour the batter into a greased 9x13 inch casserole dish.

Bake the cake for the time specified on the box, usually between 25-35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

While the cake is still warm, poke holes throughout the cake using the handle of a wooden spoon or a similar instrument.

In a medium bowl, mix together the sweetened condensed milk and coconut cream. Pour this mixture over the cake, aiming to fill the holes.

Allow the cake to cool completely, which will enable it to absorb the milk mixture thoroughly.

Once cooled, spread the shredded sweetened coconut evenly over the top of the cake.

Heat the chocolate frosting in the microwave for about 20-30 seconds, or until it reaches a pourable consistency. Pour the frosting evenly over the coconut layer.

If desired, garnish with additional shredded coconut or almond slivers for added texture and flavor.

Chill the cake in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour to set before serving. This will make cutting the cake into pieces easier and allow the flavors to meld.



5/24

## **The FCSLA Life Mission Statement**

We provide financial security to our members while embracing our Catholic values and Slavic traditions.



## **The FCSLA Life Vision is to:**

Be a Premier Fraternal Benefit Society that offers quality financial products and benefits.