

JUNE 2020

# GCU

MAGAZINE

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George N. Juba  
President  
CEO

# "Exercising Our Rights"

**O**ur great country, the United States of America, will be celebrating its 244<sup>th</sup> anniversary on July 4<sup>th</sup>, a day commemorating the Declaration of Independence and the birth of the United States of America as an independent nation. We as citizens, should be most grateful and proud to live in a country with so many freedoms granted to us by the Constitution of the United States.

The Constitution is our country's bylaws, the supreme law of the land we must all abide by as citizens. There are twenty-seven amendments to the Constitution as the first ten are known as the Bill of Rights, considered to be the most important in guaranteeing our essential rights and civil liberties.

The First Amendment reads as follows:

- Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

We recently celebrated Memorial Day, a day that honors the men and women who have given their lives while serving in the

military to maintain our democracy and freedoms, upholding our Constitution, keeping our country's founders' vision from faltering. These men & women and our current active forces are the true "heroes," we as a nation should be truly thankful to!

The GCU as a "financial services and community outreach company (fraternal benefit society), also has its Bylaws that addresses many of the governance components of our organization. In fact, this document was initially titled the GCU's Constitution and Bylaws. We invite you to view the Bylaws that are published on the GCU's website – [www.GCUusa.com](http://www.GCUusa.com) – .

A part of the GCU's governance process is the election, every four years, of the Spiritual Advisor and Board of Directors. This year, 2020, is an election year. For the first time in the history of the GCU all adult benefit (insured members) members will have the privilege to vote for candidates that will lead our Society over the next four years. The GCU Bylaws were amended via a referendum conducted in 2018 that allowed for this change.

Prior to this amendment, past protocol called for holding a convention every four years. Representatives were elected by their local lodges and would convene to conduct & review various business matters and to elect directors to serve between conventions. The amendment, proposed by the Board was overwhelmingly passed by the adult members. It established the Board of Directors as the supreme governing body of the GCU, as permitted by the Fraternal Benefit Society Code of Pennsylvania. As such, the Board of Directors has the authority to amend the bylaws as needed, provide for the direct election of Directors and Spiritual Advisor, and implement the governance requirements of the insurance departments of the states where the GCU conducts business. This amendment also allows for the Board, to seek the most qualified candidates from its entire membership, and not just from the delegates authorized to attend the Supreme Convention.



CONTINUED

The Board of Directors are to be commended for their foresight in modernizing our Society's governance practices and developing sound business practices and procedures to mitigate threats to our business model and investment portfolio so that the hopes and dreams of our founders will live on and never be forgotten. Each member of the GCU is a stakeholder in our mission of **"Protecting Families, Promoting Faith and Fraternalism, Strengthening Communities!"**

Please be advised that the GCU has contracted with Broadridge Financial Services, a well-recognized leader in providing voting related services to corporate and financial institutions. Broadridge will be handling the entire voting process that will include tabulating the votes and preparing a final report of the results. The resumes of each of the candidates may be viewed on the GCU's website—[www.GCUusa.com](http://www.GCUusa.com)— under the 2020 Board Election tab.

It seems like the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a back seat to the current protests being held throughout our cities being headlined within the news. We must continue to be cognizant of this virus and take the necessary precautions in mitigating its spread.

You were informed in previous notifications of our transition to our Business Continuity Plan with several staff members working remotely while continuing to service our members' and agents' needs. We are pleased to inform you that on June 1<sup>st</sup> our staff has returned to the office. Beaver County, where the GCU Home Office is located within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is currently in a yellow status as this status will be changed to green over the next week. We have reviewed our entire office workspace and have established proper office protocol measures to continue to assure our staffs' and visitors' safety under mandates by our governor's office and guidelines established by the CDC (Center for Disease Control). So, we continue to operate as **"business as usual"** from within our office environment. Once again, my sincere thank you to our most dedicated Executive Staff, Department Directors and our **"awesome support staff"** for their contribution in our plan's development and for their most conscientious efforts in the plans successful implementation and results.

Despite the many challenges faced with the pandemic, as agents have been restricted in meeting with clients and pro-

spective clients, the GCU business has continued to flourish. Assets and surplus have increased in addition to recording a slight net profit for the first quarter of 2020. I invite you to view a full report of the GCU's first quarter results presented on page 4 by our CFO, Tim Demetres.

Our fraternal programming on a national and lodge level is on a temporary hold under the current COVID-19 environment. Many events for 2020 have been canceled or postponed. The 2021 dates have already been announced for the National Bowling Tournament and the two Byzantine Family Days canceled this year. See page 26 of this issue for information on the new dates. We will be in constant contact with our lodge and district officers informing them of when they are able to return to conducting their various activities.

Our congratulations to all the scholarship awardees that are present in this issue. We wish you all continued scholastic success in pursuing your degrees.

In closing, our sincere thank you to our members and agents for your patience, understanding and support of the GCU during these most trying times. This is certainly a once in a lifetime experience (hopefully). So, as we celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, we are thankful for all the liberties and freedoms we have. In a way, the COVID-19 virus has temporarily taken away many of our freedoms, which certainly is a way of life that would be most challenging and dreadful. We should be most confident that a treatment and vaccine will also be developed in combating this latest virus in the very near future that will allow us to once again return to a way of life which we have become accustomed. My sincere wishes to you and you family for a fun and **safe** summer full of memories to last a lifetime!

As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns!

***Please remember to exercise your right as a GCU member to vote for the GCU Spiritual Advisor and Board of Directors!***

GOODNESS IS GREAT!





## Sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great

### An Important Announcement about the Annual Pilgrimage

Spring 2020

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

My dear Friends,

As we put up our 2020 calendars, I'm sure we did so hoping to fill each page with many plans, hopes, goals, and aspirations. We had it all figured out...

Needless to say, having passed through one fourth of this year, the picture looks entirely different. We all find ourselves in situations that we never expected or imagined stretching our faith and trust. We need to dig deep into our spiritual treasure chest for encouragement. One phrase I like to remember is: "The only way to stay above the water is to trust the One who walked on the waves."

When we make plans, I imagine the Lord looks down upon us, shaking his head and smiling as He looks at what is actually on the horizon. So what do we do? We trust, we pray, we hold our plans with open hands. We surrender them to Him.

Such has been our need as Sisters of St. Basil. We met, we discussed, we came up with ideas and plans to celebrate our 100th anniversary – a Century of Ministry to the Byzantine Catholic Church. Then COVID-19 arrived on the scene, and everything changed. We, too, need to remember that just because what's going on now doesn't feel good, it doesn't mean God's not working. Worrying does not empty tomorrow of its troubles, it empties today of its strength. We, too, strive to give up control and allow the Spirit of God to lead our lives.

One of the most difficult changes that we need to accept is the decision to cancel the Pilgrimage gathering in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. In the interest of safety and well-being of all, we will follow the lead of so many others and adhere to the guidelines provided. It is our intent, however, to work on providing a series of internet services which pilgrims can watch from their own homes. So, this year we will be making a pilgrimage of the "heart" rather than a pilgrimage of the "feet."

We know that all of you are likewise going through your own life changes and adjustments. Together, we Sisters and friends are like a quilt with lots of different shapes, sizes, colors, and patterns. Together, through our prayers for each other, we find warmth and comfort in a support system that makes our lives richer and fuller. Together, we discover God's plan for us.

With our loving prayers and support,

Sister Ruth Plante, OSBM  
Provincial



# First Quarter 2020 Financials



**Tim Demetres**  
Chief Financial Officer  
CFO

From the time our 2019 annual financial report was issued, most of us were under strict stay-at-home orders to slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). GCU invoked certain risk management practices to enable employees to work remotely and continue servicing members needs during these uncertain times. Our economy and a significant portion of the workforce were hard hit but there is light ahead as states begin to reopen. Certain business sectors were hit the hardest particularly the energy, retail, travel, and leisure industries. GCU saw, like many insurance companies, a large number of corporate bonds downgraded by the rating agencies to non-investment grade status. We believe this will be temporary and bond ratings will recover along with the economy.

Highlights of the first quarter 2020 results are as follows: Income before net capital gains (losses) totaled \$4.9 million in the first quarter and fell slightly short of the \$5.8 million reported in 2019. Net realized capital losses were \$4.0 million in 2020 compared to \$65 thousand in 2019. We impaired an energy company's bond that filed for bankruptcy protection due to low demand and low energy prices exacerbated by COVID-19. As a result, net income after net realized losses was \$1 million in 2020 compared to \$5.8 million in 2019. Notwithstanding the adverse impact on net income, surplus was relatively unaffected by a release of the asset valuation reserve (AVR). Our goal is to insure GCU maintains its financial strength to meet member obligations well into the future!

Total Assets increased \$37.1 million to \$2.1 billion at March 31st from year-end 2019. The increase in assets is primarily attributed to investing excess cash flows in investment grade bonds, preferred and common stocks. We strategically allo-

cated \$10 million toward public equities. This modest allocation allows GCU to participate in the upside market potential while reducing overall risk through asset diversification.

Liabilities grew commensurate with sales volume and totaled \$1.926 billion at March 31 compared to \$1.890 billion at year-end 2019. The \$36.1 million increase in total liabilities is due primarily to a \$34.5 million increase in life and annuity reserves and a \$1.3 million increase in the interest maintenance reserve (IMR) from net gains on bond sales. The decrease in AVR of \$6.6 million offset the increase in pending investment trades of \$6.6 million.

Total Income for the first quarter 2020 was \$91 million compared to \$88 million in 2019. The \$3 million increase reflects the growth in life and annuity premiums and investment income. Life sales have more than doubled in 2020 benefitting from new agent relationships and favorable repricing.

Operating expenses, before increase in reserves, totaled \$51.8 million in 2020 versus \$43.5 million in 2019 representing an increase of \$8.3 million or 19.0%. In support of our members during this health crisis, GCU paid out \$7.2 million more in annuity benefits (death claims, full and partial withdrawals), and certain members exchanged their current annuity contract into new contracts totaling \$1.3 million. General insurance and other expenses had a net decrease of \$0.2 million.

The increase in reserves in the first quarter totaled \$34.2 million compared to \$38.7 million in 2019. Reserve changes are primarily a function of premiums received, death and annuity benefits paid out, and interest accumulation.

Surplus grew to \$163.7 million at the end of the first quarter compared to \$162.7 million at year-end. The \$1 million increase in surplus is attributable to net income of \$1 million. Other offsetting changes in surplus include: (\$5.6 million) change in unrealized gains/losses from lower equity and

## Summary of Financial Statistics

| <i>(000's omitted)</i>            | <u>3/31/20</u> | <u>3/31/19</u>  | <u>Change</u> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Total Income                      | \$91,010       | \$88,017        | \$2,993       |
| Total Expenses                    | 85,998         | 82,115          | 3,883         |
| Net Income (Loss)                 | 967            | 5,771           | (4,804)       |
|                                   | <u>3/31/20</u> | <u>12/31/19</u> | <u>Change</u> |
| Assets                            | \$2,089,452    | \$2,052,334     | \$37,118      |
| Asset Valuation Reserve           | 12,152         | 18,747          | (6,595)       |
| Interest Maintenance Reserve      | 22,844         | 21,539          | 1,305         |
| Surplus (Net Worth)               | 163,739        | 162,742         | 997           |
| Total Adjusted Capital (TAC)      | 176,041        | 181,639         | (5,598)       |
| Solv. Ratio by Total Adj. Capital | 109.2%         | 109.7%          | -0.51%        |

## Reconciliation of Change in Surplus

| <i>(000's omitted)</i>             | <u>3/31/20</u>   |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Beginning Surplus                  | \$162,742        |
| Net Income/(loss)                  | 967              |
| Change in Unrealized Gain/(Loss)   | (5,621)          |
| GCU Holding Company & Other        | (346)            |
| Changes in Non-Admitted Assets     | (598)            |
| Changes in Asset Valuation Reserve | 6,595            |
| Net Change in Surplus              | 997              |
| <b>Ending Surplus</b>              | <b>\$163,739</b> |

bonds valuations; (\$0.6 million) charge for an increase in non-admitted assets from software development costs; (\$0.4 million) reduction for GCU Holding Company's net loss; offset by the \$6.6 million positive change in AVR discussed above.

Total Adjusted Capital (TAC) at March 31, 2019 is \$176 million. TAC starts with surplus of \$163.7 million and adds back the asset valuation reserve of \$12.2 million and one-half the dividend

liability of \$150,000. TAC is used as a financial strength measure by rating agencies. The solvency ratios based on TAC at March 31, 2020 and 2019 are 109.2% and 109.7%, respectively. These ratios reflect the continued financial strength of GCU.

Please remain safe and stay healthy during this difficult time.

Tim

## GCU INCOME STATEMENT

### Three Months 2020 vs. 2019

| INCOME (000's omitted)              | 3/31/2020       | 3/31/2019        | Change            |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Life Premium                        | \$ 1,421        | \$ 676           | \$ 745            |
| Annuity Premium                     | 57,897          | 57,724           | 173               |
| Annuity Exchanges                   | 5,613           | 4,302            | 1,311             |
| Accident & Health                   | 164             | 184              | (20)              |
| Sub Total                           | 65,095          | 62,886           | 2,209             |
| Net Investment Income               | 24,703          | 23,565           | 1,138             |
| Amort. of Int. Maint. Resrv.        | 564             | 717              | (153)             |
| Commission/Reinsurance              | 515             | 670              | (155)             |
| Other                               | 133             | 179              | (46)              |
| <b>Total Income</b>                 | <b>\$91,010</b> | <b>\$88,017</b>  | <b>\$2,993</b>    |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                     |                 |                  |                   |
| Death Benefits                      | \$ 783          | \$ 565           | \$ 218            |
| Annuity Benefits Paid               | 40,543          | 33,364           | 7,179             |
| Annuity Exchanges                   | 5,613           | 4,302            | 1,311             |
| Surrender Benefits                  | 150             | 249              | (99)              |
| Accident & Health Bene. Pd.         | 157             | 180              | (23)              |
| Commissions                         | 2,320           | 2,613            | (293)             |
| General Insurance Exp               | 1,963           | 2,017            | (54)              |
| Ins., Taxes, Licenses and Fees      | 181             | 147              | 34                |
| Pension Expense                     | 39              | 3                | 36                |
| Int. on Contract & Dep. Accts.      | 56              | 19               | 37                |
| Sub-Total                           | \$ 51,805       | \$43,459         | \$ 8,346          |
| Increase in Reserves                | 34,193          | 38,656           | (4,463)           |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>               | <b>\$85,998</b> | <b>\$ 82,115</b> | <b>\$ 3,883</b>   |
| <b>Net Gain/Loss Before Refunds</b> | <b>5,012</b>    | <b>5,902</b>     | <b>(890)</b>      |
| <b>Refunds to Members</b>           | <b>75</b>       | <b>66</b>        | <b>9</b>          |
| <b>Net Gain/Loss After Refunds</b>  | <b>4,937</b>    | <b>5,836</b>     | <b>(899)</b>      |
| <b>Net Capital Gains (Losses)</b>   | <b>(3,970)</b>  | <b>(65)</b>      | <b>(3,905)</b>    |
| <b>Net Income/Loss</b>              | <b>\$ 967</b>   | <b>\$ 5,771</b>  | <b>\$ (4,804)</b> |

## BALANCE SHEETS

### March 31, 2020 vs. December 31, 2019

| ASSETS (000's omitted)      | 3/31/2020          | 12/31/2019         | Change           |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Bonds                       | \$ 1,948,208       | \$1,922,664        | \$25,544         |
| Preferred Stocks            | 40,580             | 40,625             | (45)             |
| Common Stocks               | 22,613             | 16,093             | 6,520            |
| Alternative Investments     | 27,052             | 20,776             | 6,276            |
| Cash/Short Term Investments | 18,349             | 17,624             | 725              |
| Mortgages                   | 4,386              | 4,129              | 257              |
| Certificate Loans           | 577                | 573                | 4                |
| Real Estate - Home Office   | 453                | 480                | (27)             |
| Inv. Income Due & Accrued   | 26,719             | 25,359             | 1,360            |
| Other                       | 515                | 4,011              | (3,496)          |
| <b>Total Assets</b>         | <b>\$2,089,452</b> | <b>\$2,052,334</b> | <b>\$ 37,118</b> |

Percentage Total Change Year to Year—1.8%

### LIABILITIES

|  |                     |                    |                  |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Life Reserves                          | \$ 72,935           | \$ 71,515          | \$ 1,420         |
| Annuity Reserves                       | 1,800,026           | 1,766,905          | 33,121           |
| Accident & Health Reserves             | 233                 | 191                | 42               |
| Employee Pension Liability             | 6,932               | 6,839              | 93               |
| Convention Reserve                     | 279                 | 279                | —                |
| Adv. Prem. & Fut. Ref. Resrvs.         | 367                 | 373                | (6)              |
| Pending Investment Trades              | 6,550               | —                  | 6,550            |
| Accounts Payable                       | 958                 | 996                | (38)             |
| Refund Accumulations                   | 2,439               | 2,209              | 230              |
| Asset Valuation Resrv.-AVR             | 12,152              | 18,747             | (6,595)          |
| Interest Maint. Reserve-IMR            | 22,844              | 21,539             | 1,305            |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>               | <b>\$ 1,925,713</b> | <b>\$1,889,592</b> | <b>\$36,121</b>  |
| <b>Surplus Fund</b>                    | <b>163,739</b>      | <b>162,742</b>     | <b>997</b>       |
| <b>Total Liabilities &amp; Surplus</b> | <b>\$2,089,452</b>  | <b>\$2,052,334</b> | <b>\$ 37,118</b> |
| <b>Solvency Ratio*</b>                 | <b>109.2%</b>       | <b>109.7%</b>      |                  |

\*Adds AVR + 1/2 of dividend liability to surplus.

Financial information is unaudited and presented on the statutory basis of accounting.

Totals may vary slightly due to rounding.



Very Rev.  
Richard I. Lambert  
GCU Spiritual Advisor

# Making History

**T**hroughout my youth I never really developed an interest in History. Everything about the past was information from my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. I was still too young to be concerned with the past.

At home I did learn to speak bilingually, the language of my maternal grandparents, my mother, her siblings, the priests who served our parishes, as well as the sisters who staffed the school. I also regularly travelled to a neighboring town to visit my paternal grandparents who spoke a different language, Italian, mixed with enough English to understand what was being said, and gathered with cousins who went to other catholic schools and other catholic churches. Through my school, I learned that I belonged to a church that was different than the other churches in the neighborhood. We memorized our prayers in classes that were made up of children who were taken from our neighborhoods to travel by buses across town to a building that was located away from our five Byzantine Churches. We prayed mostly in Church Slavonic and many of the boys in our classes served as altar servers. However, after eight years of elementary school I did not fully know the history of my ancestors. After my ninth grade graduation from BCC School, I completed my high school education in the local public school where the students were all from the same neighborhood, from families who spoke different languages, had different customs & beliefs and went to many different churches. There I did learn about the history of our country and a bit about the world.

After high school I was accepted into our Byzantine Catholic Seminary where I lived with a group of young men who had gone to the same kind of church, had grandparents who spoke like mine and who came from homes located all over the United States. From the Seminary we attended Duquesne University in Pittsburgh—allow me to share one early incident that occurred there. One morning in September after morning prayers and breakfast, my freshman class along with the sophomores, got on the Seminary bus to take us to our first day of classes at Duquesne University. For some reason, we arrived late for our very first class, Western Civilization 101, which was held in the auditorium of University Hall. Eight freshmen entered the room, the professor stopped his lecture, and over a hundred students turned around to see each of us dressed in black suits, white shirts, and black ties carrying our books as well as our black

hats! That was a small tidbit of my first History Class at college! Fortunately, none of us turned around and ran out.

In the over 50 years since that occurred, history to me became much more than what has happened to me. We all have our own history and now we are living at a time when these past weeks will become an integral part of that history. What started as a strange virus in China, has now completely changed our lives. Now the concept of a “pandemic” is no longer strange, and if we have heard once that the COVID-19 virus was “unprecedented,” we have heard it many times. From being social beings, or sometimes even anti-social, we are now learning how to practice “social distancing.” From being free to go wherever we please, we have learned to “shelter-in-place.” From looking forward to visiting our family and friends, we have had to stay away from those we don’t live with. As a priest, I could not visit the sick and shut-ins of the parish, was not been permitted to visit hospitals or nursing facilities. Almost every newscast has listed the number of those who contracted the virus or who died as a result. Every commercial included how that business was impacted by Coronavirus.

From the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross at the midpoint of Great Lent, I have not been able to celebrate the Divine Liturgy or any services with the faithful of my parishes. In my last article I wrote that this pandemic would be our cross. Many have suffered in different ways; some have lost their lives, some have had to care for the many who lost their health, many have lost their jobs. Each of us has a chapter to write in what has become our history these past months. As I am writing these words, what has been a bleak time for our world has also given us a time to see the good of mankind. So many have gone out of their way to comfort and give joy to those in need or in hunger through “random acts of kindness.” We were not able to join together to share the joy of the Resurrection of Our Lord, but we have found ways to “virtually” join in celebration. There is a light at the end of the darkness... here in Ohio as well as in many other states and countries, priests will be able to join together with the faithful to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles marking the birth of the Church. Hopefully all will in time be able to celebrate this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives.



Atty. John J. Urban

# Lessons in the Law

## Are You Joint on Your Accounts?

**T**his is the time of year when many of us clean out the clutter and dress up the outsides of our homes. Now is a perfect time to get a solid plan in place in the event the unexpected happens, like death or sudden illness. Many of us make New Year's resolutions that we have long given up on and even forgotten. Proper estate planning is something that should not be treated like a resolution and you can't afford not to stick with. If you have money, if you have a family, you need to have a plan—right now is the time to begin your estate planning.

The key components to a well-planned estate include a will, a living will, and a durable power of attorney for finances and healthcare. If you get sick or die, these are the basic documents that you need to have in place. I call it having a Critical Family Protection Plan because these documents are vital to protecting yourself and your estate.

Most spouses think they are automatically protected against asset loss because they are married, but that's not the case.

**Now is a perfect time to get a solid plan in place in the event the unexpected happens, like death or sudden illness.**

If you aren't joint on property, bank accounts or investments and a spouse gets sick or passes away, you will have to go through probate court and have a guardian appointed who will make the decisions as to which bills get paid and what monies are used. In the meantime, improperly titled accounts could delay your gaining access to your funds. It can be devastating, emotionally and personally. If you are incapacitated, precious time will be lost while your family struggles to get a guardian appointed because you didn't have a plan in place. Nobody will have the power to make decisions on your behalf.

## GCU Home Office Hours of Operation

The GCU Home Office (800.722.4428) is open Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5 PM EST.

The Call Center (855.306.0607) accepts calls Monday through Thursday from 8:30 AM to 7 PM EST and Fridays 8:30 AM to 5 PM EST.

**The Home Office will be closed Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>.**



This year's theme was "Investing in FUN"

# 2020 Art Contest Winners



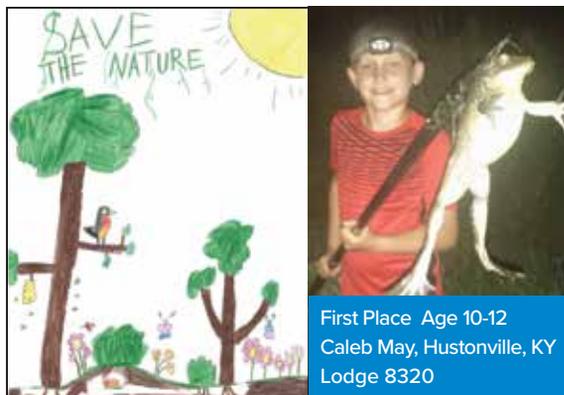
First Place Age 6 & Under  
Scarlett Revilak, West Mifflin, PA SEPRL

*I like to play outside with my family and our dog.*



First Place Age 7-9  
Emily Osifchin, Olney, MD Lodge 8324

*One of my favorite things to do for fun is dancing for an audience.*



First Place Age 10-12  
Caleb May, Hustonville, KY  
Lodge 8320

*I like to spend time in the woods. I explore the woods and follow the creek and play in the water.*



Second Place  
Age 6 & Under  
Michaela Revilak,  
West Mifflin, PA SEPRL



Second Place Age 7-9  
Leah McGee, Aliquippa, PA Lodge 994



Second Place Age 10-12  
Emanuel Revilak, Munhall, PA SEPRL

This year's theme was "Investing in FUN"

# 2020 Photo Contest Winners



First Place Age 13-15  
Nathan McGee, Aliquippa, PA Lodge 994

*My photo is of a Painted Lady. In my spare time, I have fun by looking for insects and learning more about the ecosystem.*



First Place Age 16-18  
Coy Ambrose, Atwaters, OH Lodge 644

*This is Penny, our pig. She is fun to watch and pet along with the other animals that we have.*



First Place Age 19-23  
David Foran, Vestal, NY Lodge 47

*I like to make big bonfires. I build the structure as high as I can, then my family tells stories and have outdoor family fun. (See the face in the fire?)*



Second Place Age 13-15  
Casey Allshouse,  
Clarksburg, PA CPRL



Second Place Age 16-18  
Tommy Charnie, Weirton, WV Lodge 268



Second Place Age 19-23  
Caitlin Weitzel, Chagrin Falls, OH  
Lodge 302



**Basil M. Wahal**  
Fraternal-Communications  
Director

# 2020 Scholarships

The GCU National Scholarship Committee met via teleconference on Saturday, May 2 and announced the awarding of 14 National Scholarships (13—\$1,750.00 and 1—\$1,250.00) together with 52 Academic Performance Scholarships (51—\$1,000.00 and 1—\$500.00). Awardees appear over the next four pages.

Scholarship Committee members include: GCU National Directors Dorothy Foran-chairperson, Melanie Basl, Lisa Gulibon, Barbara Kushner and David Oleksa; Patricia Dietz of Lodge 151, Judith A. Gula of CPRL, Jack Mendenhall of Lodge 10 and Connie Strittmatter of Lodge 93.

GCU National Scholarship recipients must maintain a minimum 2.75 GPA and submit a collage showing them volunteering within their community focusing on “Community Service and You.” The Scholarship Committee decided this year to name this award in memory of longtime committee member John Katana who passed away last year. He was the driving force in moving away from an essay requirement to the collage format. First place winner of the John Katana Memorial Collage Award is Lily Balcerek of NWPRL, she will receive an additional \$500.00 award for her winning collage. A second place \$250.00 award was also established and awarded to Maile Erwin of GHRL. Two of the national awardees this year will receive an additional \$500.00 award for maintaining a 4.0 GPA: Hunter Lynn Gray of Lodge 8344 in Pittsburgh, PA; and Jolie McDonnell of Lodge 7 in Yonkers, NY.

Five APS Scholarship recipients have continued to maintain a cumulative 4.0 GPA and will receive an additional award of \$250.00: Nicholas Benson of Lodge 442; Brooke L. Bonaparte of Lodge 10; Nathaniel Dowell of Lodge 252; John T. Durica of Lodge 625 and Amanda Kaschak of GHRL.

Congratulations to all of the scholarship recipients!

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## 4.0 GPA Winners



**Hunter Lynn Gray**  
Pittsburgh, PA—L8344  
Thiel College  
Early and Special Education



**Jolie McDonnell**  
Dobbs Ferry, NY—L7  
Johns Hopkins University  
Applied Mathematics and Statistics

# The John Katana Memorial Volunteer Collage Winners



**Lily Balcerek - 1<sup>st</sup>**  
Indian Trail, NC—NWPRL  
Clemson University  
Communication



**Maile Erwin - 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
Quakertown, PA—GHRL  
Temple University  
Health Professions



**Brandon M. Bonaparte**  
Prosper, TX—L10  
Arizona State Univ.  
Sports Broadcasting/  
Journalism



**Rachael M. Harris**  
Pittsburgh, PA—  
NWPRL  
Allegheny College  
Computer Science  
and Political Science



**April H. Kibalo**  
Hillsborough, NJ—  
L254  
The College of New  
Jersey  
Economics



**Krista Kissell**  
Cresco, PA—L945  
Lafayette College  
Economics



**Veronica C. Martonik**  
Conyngham, PA—  
GHRL  
 Elizabethtown  
College  
Occupational Therapy



**Maci M. Raybuck**  
Punxsutawney, PA—  
L62  
Penn State DuBois  
Animal Science



**Courtney M. Roman**  
Baden, PA—L8344  
Penn State University  
Elementary Education



**Nathan L. Taggart**  
Aliquippa, PA—L697  
Kent State  
Nursing



**Caitlin A. Weitzel**  
Chagrin Falls, OH—  
L302  
Ohio University  
Communication  
Studies



**Mary T. Wilson**  
Baden, PA—L10  
University of South  
Carolina  
Sport and Entertain-  
ment Management

# Academic Performance Scholarships

## 4.0 GPA Awardees

**Nicholas Benson**

Canfield, OH—L442  
Youngstown State University  
Masters in Nursing Anesthesia

**Nathaniel Dowell**

Hubbard, OH—L252  
Youngstown State University  
Accounting

**John T. Durica**

Johnstown, PA—L625  
Coastal Carolina University  
Master of Science in Coastal  
Marine and Wetland Studies

**Brooke L. Bonaparte**

Prosper, TX—L10  
Texas Woman's University  
Speech Language Pathology

**Amanda M. Kaschak**

Allentown, PA—GHRL  
Seton Hall Law  
MSJ - Pharmaceutical & Medical  
Device Law & Compliance

**Melanie K. Bates**

Morrisville, PA—L20  
La Salle University  
Chemistry and Biology

**Andrew S. Borsh**

La Crescenta, CA—SEPRL  
Arizona State University  
Business Sports Media

**Mallory R. Eperesi**

Mars, PA—NWPRL  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Nursing

**Sarah R. Foran**

Vestal, NY—L47  
Binghamton University  
Psychology

**Sarah Fullard**

Pittsburgh, PA—NWPRL  
California Univ. of Pennsylvania  
PreK-4 Education & Special  
Education

**David Gulibon**

Souderton, PA—L321  
University of South Carolina  
Public Health/Pre-Dental

**Anais E. Haftman**

Daisytown, PA—L57  
Duquesne University  
Pharmacy

**Stephen C. Haralambis**

Chapin, SC—L360  
Charleston Southern University  
Master in Business Administration

**Rebecca Harhai**

West Homestead, PA—SEPRL  
Ohio University  
Strategic Communications

**John F. Hogan**

Alexandria, VA—L151  
Virginia Tech  
Building Construction

**Gordon M. Hulak**

Mars, PA—L151  
Pennsylvania State University  
Mechanical Engineering

**Jarret M. Ingram**

Penfield, PA—L8344  
University of Pittsburgh  
Biological Sciences

**Jessica Rae Jones**

Mechanicsburg, PA—L10  
Slippery Rock University  
Public Health-Health Science

**Kristi M. Karaffa**

Wadsworth, OH—L302  
Kent State University  
Early Childhood Education

**Rebecca N. Kaschak**

West Hazleton, PA—GHRL  
Misericordia University  
Early/Special Education

**Elyse M. Kostelnik**

Aliquippa, PA—L697  
Seton Hill University  
Health Science - Pre-Allied  
Health Track

CONTINUED

**Emma Lalley**

Buffalo, NY—L151  
University of Notre Dame  
Business

**Gregorio T. Montalvo**

Scottsdale, AZ—L999  
Arizona State University  
Political Science

**Leah Narkevic**

McKees Rocks, PA—L8344  
Penn State  
Kinesiology - Applied Exercise  
and Health

**Ashley Pajer**

Plainview, NY—L151  
Manhattan College  
Marketing and Business Analytics

**Jessica N. Palakovich**

Freedom, PA—L994  
Community College of Beaver  
County  
Professional Pilot and Aerospace  
Management

**Gina M. Palasz**

Naperville, IL—L271  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism  
Management

**Sarah M. Pavlick**

Brentwood, PA—CPRL  
The Ohio State University  
Electrical Engineering

**Indigo A. Pavlov**

Brooklyn, NY—L442  
Cornell University  
Industrial and Labor Relations

**Marina Pegula**

Dunmore, PA—L92  
Marywood University  
Exercise Science

**Marlena C. Pegula**

Dunmore, PA—L92  
Keystone College  
Math Education

**Albert C. Peters III**

Brooklyn, NY—GHRL  
International School of  
Photography  
Photography

**Joseph W. Petro**

Windsor, CT—L235  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Electrical Engineering

**Hayley Ann Planitzer**

Venetia, PA—CPRL  
Slippery Rock University of  
Pennsylvania  
Accounting and Professional  
Spanish (*Double Major*)

**Alexandra G. Plummer**

Pittsburgh, PA—L18  
University of Pittsburgh  
Theatre and English Writing

**Diane Rabiej**

Woodland Park, NJ—L8335  
Seton Hall University Immaculate  
Conception Seminary  
School of Theology  
Theology

**Lucy Race**

North Huntingdon, PA—L994  
Penn State University-University  
Park  
Kinesiology

**Jacob A. Rau**

Flushing, MI—L644  
Michigan State University  
Exploratory / No Preference

**Justin M. Rau**

Flushing, MI—L644  
Wayne State University  
Global Supply Chain  
Management

**Star M. Rosnick**

Pittsburgh, PA—CPRL  
Washington and Jefferson  
College  
Business or Economics

**Brigid B. Shanahan**

Munhall, PA—CPRL  
Point Park University  
Funeral Service

**Alexandria L. Shirilla**

Brunswick, OH—L302  
University of Pikeville College of  
Osteopathic Medicine  
Osteopathic Medicine

**Alexandra J. Sluko**

Jessup, PA—L945  
La Salle University  
Psychology and Criminal Justice  
(*Double Major*)

**Sarah Slusark**

Duryea, PA—L17  
Temple University  
Therapeutic Recreation

**Diane E. Smith**

Export, PA—SEPRL  
West Virginia University  
Speech Language Pathology

**John L. Soyka**

Ebensburg, PA—L401  
Dickinson College  
Political Science

**Jacob Spillane**

Syracuse, NY—L211  
D'Youville College  
Physical Therapy

**Daniel E. Terek**

Cresson, PA—L625  
The Pennsylvania State University  
Accounting, Master's of  
Accounting Program (MAcc)

**Shannon T. Terek**

Cresson, PA—L625  
LIU Post  
Master's of Genetic Counseling

**Michael A. Tomchak**

Coraopolis, PA—NWPRL  
Community College Allegheny  
County (CCAC)  
Computer Information Systems

**Mackenzie N. Wissner**

McKees Rocks, PA—NWPRL  
Robert Morris University  
Nursing

**Heather Witherow**

Reynoldsville, PA—L62  
Pennsylvania State University  
Secondary Education-Social  
Studies

# 2020 Athletic Scholarships

The GCU Fraternal/Athletic Committee, consisting of five GCU National Directors, is pleased to announce the winners of the 2020 Athletic Scholarship. The awardees were selected from 14 applicants for this year's awards. Jennifer Durica of Johnstown, PA (Lodge 625) & Colin Kissell of Cresco, PA (Lodge 8344) will each receive a \$1,500.00 scholarship to assist with their first-year expenses of post-secondary education.

Jennifer excelled in volleyball and track & field throughout her high school career. She received individual recognition as an all star in both sports. Jennifer volunteered part of her

2019 summer for a mission trip to Nassau, Bahama to work with Haitian refugees.

Colin was a member and captain for both his high school tennis and soccer varsity teams. He has organized a charity fundraising youth soccer camp and plays piano & assists with events at his parish.

Will you be the 2020 Athletic Scholarship awardee? Online applications from high school senior athletes will be accepted at [www.GCUusa.com](http://www.GCUusa.com) beginning on October 1, 2020.



Jennifer Durica



Colin Kissell

# Giving

## St. Paul Parish Expansion

**Weirton WV.** The St. Paul Holy Name Society and the Christian Mother's come together annually to raise money for the parish. This year, Lodge 268 joined them to assist with their fish fry which was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event is a great way for the church members to come together and work as a united team. St. Paul parish would like to thank St. John Parish of Mingo Junction, OH, Lodge 268 and the GCU for the opportunity to participate in their Parish Expansion program.

**Marilyn E. Charnie**



Members working together.

## St. Joseph Byzantine Catholic Church Parish Expansion



Dana Royal and Joanne Derosky.

**Toronto, OH.** Lodge 268 of Mingo Junction was happy to sponsor Saint Joseph BC Church for a Parish Expansion Match. The parishioners made delicious nut, poppyseed & apricot rolls and paska for Easter. Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus the sale was cut short. They are planning and hope to bake again for Christmas.

**Carla Gasser** | Lodge 268 President

## Annunciation of Mary Parish Expansion



Christine Hulak setting up for the event.

**Fresh Meadows NY.** A Parish Expansion Matching Funds St. Patrick's Day Fundraiser was held for Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church. Christine Hulak of Lodge 151 assisted the parish with obtaining the Matching Funds.

## Saint Michael The Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church Parish Expansion

**Mont Clare, PA.** Spring was in the air during the month of March in Mont Clare, PA along with the tantalizing aroma of freshly baked rolls and pascha. Approximately 25-30 parishioners and friends of St. Michael the Archangel Byzantine Catholic Church assembled to prepare their delicious nut, apricot, lekvar and poppyseed rolls as well as traditional pascha as part of the annual Lenten fundraiser. Unfortunately, this year's bake was cut short by the quarantine imposed by the unexpected and imposing Coronavirus. However, participants at both bakes made the best of it and realized a modest profit for St. Michael's which will be put to good use wherever needed to improve the interior of the church or to assist with general expenses. Roll chairpersons, Sharon Vance and Jayne Batyko, and pascha primary baker, Pani Maria Kovach, are genuinely appreciative of all contributions of volunteer time, talent and funds to both of these worthwhile projects and to the GCU Parish Expansion Matching Funds program.



Fresh made pascha.

**Lisa Gulibon**

## Fitnessing While Social Distancing

Social Media is known for its pros and cons— especially during a pandemic. It can be a watering hole for self expression and opinion sharing.

I have been teaching live, in person group fitness classes since 2015. As soon as Pennsylvania began shutting down businesses and initiate stay at home orders to mitigate the spread of Covid-19, I immediately had to think of a way to continue offering classes. My certifications permit virtual teaching and I began offering 4 classes per week mid-March and continue to offer them presently via Live streaming through Social Media. My students wanted to pay for the service I was providing, but it didn't feel right. I knew this could be expanded further.

People were helping others left and right, trying to make a difference, they wanted to raise money and to support each other. I initially found a woman who was making COVID-19 Care Kits for nurses and healthcare workers. I opted to give those who were enjoying

my classes the opportunity to donate to various COVID-19 efforts in lieu of payment to me with 100% of proceeds being donated. I was immediately able to donate 7 cases with a portion of the money going towards local food banks.

Then I saw local news reports continuing to share the desperate need of support for Food Banks. This is where the GCU comes in. I remembered that the GCU had initiated the new GCU GoGive! Direct Program. They would match up to \$100 of my direct donation so I immediately chose the Greater Allegheny Food Bank, made my direct donation and the GCU quickly acknowledge that my donation was matched. Thanks to the GCU GoGive! Direct and of course to all of those who have donated through my fitness classes, I have been able to give over \$1,000.00 of donated money to Local Food Banks.

**Melanie Basl**



Melanie Basl.



Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM and Sharon Horvath with the baskets ready for distribution.

## Go Give Fundraiser

Parishioner Sharon Horvath of St. John BC Church in Hazleton, PA had a GoGive! Fundraiser to help the needy families of the parish and community for the Easter season.

Thanks to the Home Office for the GoGive! program and the generosity of parishioners and friends that contributed food and monetary donations, there were 12 baskets made up of non-perishable foods and each had a \$25 gift card included.

With so many donations, the overflow of food was donated to the Catholic Social Services food pantry in Hazleton and a monetary donation was made to the St. Nicholas Fund at St. John BC Church.

A big heartfelt thanks to Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM for taking the time to deliver all the baskets and thanks to one and all who helped with this great project.

**Agnes Rohrbach** | GHRL Secretary & Activities Director

## Sarris Easter Candy Basket Drawing

**Weirton, WV.** Tommy Charnie, a sophomore at Brooke High School and member of St. Paul Catholic Church, St. Mary BC Church and Lodge 268, wanted to give back to his community. He made good on a plan to do so, raising money for the Community Bread Basket (CBB), located at 3501 West Street in Weirton.

Tommy sold tickets for a drawing of a basket of Sarris Easter candy valued at \$250.00, which was purchased with the GCU GoGive! funds. He planned on selling the tickets at local fish fries and pirohi sales. However, when they were shut down due to the pandemic, he asked his mother to help. She turned to Facebook to try and sell tickets which resulted in \$500.00 worth of ticket sales, but Tommy knew that wasn't enough. So, he reached out to the local newspaper for more publicity.

The winning ticket was drawn on April 11, 2020 by the Rev. Vasyl Symyon, pastor of St. Mary Church. The winner of the drawing, Mrs. Huffman of New Cumberland, offered the basket of candy to be shared with children of the community. According to Tommy, the candy



Rev. Vasyl Symyon.



Program administrator Tara Sheperd of the Community Bread Basket and Tommy Charnie.

was provided to seven families with children—thank you Mrs. Huffman!

Tommy presented a check for \$1,858.00 to program administrator Tara Sheperd of the Community Bread Basket which fell \$142 short of his goal to raise \$2,000.00.

The newspaper did a follow up article showing Tommy presenting the donation to Community Bread Basket. The following week, an anonymous donor walked

into the CBB office and said they wanted to donate the \$142.00, so Tommy would reach his goal.

Tommy would like to express appreciation to all those who bought tickets and to the GCU for the opportunity to give back to the community. The money will be used by the CBB, which is in need of a roof. "During this pandemic, I've learned there are many great people in the world," Tommy noted.

## OUR MEMBERS

### David & Mary Bubonics Celebrate 50 Years of Marriage

David Richard & Mary Veronica Bubonics were married at St. Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church in Euclid, OH fifty years ago on June 13, 1970. They are blessed with a daughter Tracy Marie and son in law John Salvia and two beautiful granddaughters, Amanda Catherine and Concetta Nicole. The entire family belongs to GCU Lodge 336 in Euclid, OH.

The couple loves to travel and have visited every state in the U.S. and 15 countries giving them many fond memories.

A mass of celebration at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church in Wickliffe, OH and a family celebration will take place at a future date.



Mary & David Bubonics.

# 2019 Annual Fraternal Report

Charity and caring for each other—the foundation of GCU lodges and the good things they do. While GCU lodge members and staff do good because it’s the right thing to do and it makes them feel good, it has become imperative to put those acts into trackable and quantifiable figures.

Lodges are required to submit quarterly reports to record their events and volunteer hours. Thank you to the lodge officers and members for being charitable, holding meetings, organizing events, and reporting back to GCU. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has put a halt to much of these activities in the first six months of 2020. However, we have a lot of good things to report from 2019.

This year’s fraternal report is once again broken into two categories that reflect the reporting system lodges follow.

Community Service is defined as assisting those in need or

improving the community-at-large. Social activities that benefit a charity or cause are considered community service. In March of 2020 we began taking volunteer submissions from individual members as well, so that next year we can show even more how GCU members volunteer in their communities. To learn more visit the Member Benefits page at [www.GCUusa.com](http://www.GCUusa.com).

Fraternal Fellowship & Support is defined as social, educational, cultural, religious, recreational or patriotic activities as well as activities necessary to maintain the local lodge, personal development of members, or those that advance the GCU mission or build fellowship among members.

In a world with many distractions, GCU members should be proud to be part of an organization that puts God, family and community at the top of the list.



**We invest our time, effort and talent into creating strong, stable products that make your family's future more secure. We make sure they bring high returns and peace of mind.**

**We strengthen the places where neighbors come together to feel a sense of belonging. We lift up young scholars, the elderly and people in need.**

**Not big bankers, just people of faith. Not motivated by profit, but by protecting the assets of families. Not tied to Wall Street, only Main Street.**

**In every moment, we invest our highest selves in doing the right thing for your family, your neighbors and the place we call home.**

**At GCU we invest...**

**... in the goodness of community.**



## GCU Annual Fraternal Report

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Community Service  | 404 events                       |
| Fraternal Fellowship and Support   | 487 events                       |
| Total Volunteer Hours  | 92,587                           |
| Matching Funds Donations<br>Lodges & Districts<br>(GCU Contribution-\$241,412. <sup>00</sup> ) | \$549,989. <sup>00</sup>         |
| Parish Expansion Matching Funds  | \$55,600. <sup>00</sup>          |
| <b>Total 2019 GCU Charitable Donations</b>   | <b>\$1,157,001.<sup>00</sup></b> |

# District 5

## UPCOMING DISTRICT 5 EVENTS

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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### Annual Golf Tournament

**Saturday, August 1**

**8:30 AM Shotgun**

**Captain & Crew Format**

**Pig Roast & Prizes to follow**

Sugarloaf Golf Club

18 Golf Course Road, Sugarloaf, PA 18249

Contact Ed Keil at 570-824-1264

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### Railriders Baseball Game

**Saturday, August 8**

**Game time is 6:35 PM**

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Railriders vs. Lehigh Valley Iron Pigs (Philadelphia Phillies affiliate)

PNC Field

235 Montage Mountain Road, Moosic, PA 18507

It is Copa de la Diversion Night

Gleyber Torres Emoji head giveaways to the first 2,500 fans

Fireworks after the game

Contact Ed Keil at 570-824-1264

# District 15

## DISTRICT 15 EVENT

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### An Afternoon at Narcisi Winery - **Canceled**

Narcisi Winery

4578 Gibsonia Road, Gibsonia, PA 15044

Due to the limited capacity restrictions at Narcisi Winery, we are unable to hold our event this year.

We plan to bring this popular event back in the summer of 2021.

**Like and Share us on Facebook where you can find additional details for all District 15 events.**

# Lodge News

## Lodge 47

BINGHAMTON, NY

### Parking Lot Banquet

Forced to cut their season short, GCU League Bowlers came together on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 to celebrate an end to their 2019-2020 season. Unable to have the traditional buffet style banquet, league bowlers gathered in the Holy Spirit Church parking lot. Greeted by Father Peter & Pani Michelle Tomas, they parked their cars in the configuration of ten official bowling pins.

Pre-ordered takeout Chicken BBQ was the dinner selection this year with bowling pin shaped cookies for dessert. Themed masks were provided so everyone could share socially distanced conversation and prepare for September. The event concluded with bowlers receiving their award gift bags.



A surprise Parish Expansion Matching Funds check in the amount of \$2,748.00 was presented to the parish's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee members and parishioners of SS. Peter & Paul Church in Endicott, NY by Daria Shierly and Bob Sufliita. Thanks to the GCU Home Office for the opportunity to participate in the Parish Expansion Matching Funds Program.

### Caring for Our Caregivers

For the last several weeks, everyone has been practicing social distancing and been isolated from family and friends. At this point, the overall feeling is that it has become unpleasant, inconvenient, depressing and even lonely.

Across the United States, it is the essential workers who have continued to show up for work every day – the ones who have been keeping communities running. The grocery store workers, doctors, nurses, other healthcare professionals, funeral home staff, sanitation workers, utility workers and public safety personal have done a wonderful job.

On April 21, 2020 Lodge 47 was honored to provide lunch to United Health Services Wilson Hospital Emergency Room and to Hilltop Nursing Home as a way of showing appreciation, boosting morale and paying tribute to lodge members, family and friends who work and reside at these facilities.

### Caring Thoughts

Since it is likely everyone knows or has somehow been impacted by the sad and unfortunate circumstances of COVID-19, our thoughts remain with everyone in all the affected areas. Please continue to pray for loved ones, neighbors and friends. Thank you to the GCU Home Office for investing in the communities where its members reside, through the generous donations the Board established for local food banks.

Daria Shierly | Secretary-Treasurer



Cars at the parking lot banquet.



Bowling pin cookies.



Dianne Metzlar and Bob Sufliita presenting Fr. Peter Tomas with a check to support the annual St. Nicholas celebration. This photo was mis-identified in the April issue and the GCU Communications staff apologizes for the mistake.

## Lodge 62

PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA

### Pirohi Making

Lodge 62 got off to a great start making pirohi during the Lenten season, but Covid-19 brought the project to a halt. God willing, the volunteers will be back together again soon.

Thanks to the GCU Matching Funds program the funds raised will assist with necessary repairs to the church hall.

Helen Meko | President



Tables full of pirohi.



Joan Bridges with her friend in her car.



Cathy Phillips.

## Lodge 81

UNIONTOWN, PA

The Coronavirus pandemic restrictions did not dampen the spirit of Lodge 81 members to continue involvement in parish and community activities.

### Blessing of Palms/Pussy Willows & Baskets

Although all St. John Church public liturgical services were cancelled during the last half of the Lenten season, the traditions of the blessing of palms/pussy willows and Paschal basket blessing were held. Several parishioners attended the outdoor services while social distancing and wearing masks. Father Ron directed everyone to place their basket on the hood of their vehicle as he went to each car to bless them. Stephen Petruska led the responses.

### Members Doing Good

Even though the quarterly meeting scheduled for May 17 was cancelled, lodge members kept in touch. Bonnie Balas shopped for Joan Bridges and Janet Gaydos who felt their health could be compromised. Lodge 81 President Marcia Harrer and ECF Coordinator planned to treat the

CONTINUED

**Lodge 81 CONTINUED**

ECF students with Dairy Queen gift cards in lieu of the usual end of year party that Lodge 81 sponsors for the children of the parish. On Sunday and Wednesday evenings a group from local Catholic churches has been praying the Rosary at local church shrines and at the Lourdes Grotto at Mt. St. Macrina. Gerry Dorobish and Bonnie Balas are among those praying during this extraordinary time.

**Memorial Day Panachida Service**

On Memorial Day a Panachida service was held at St. John Cemetery. Those attending wore masks and social distanced as Stephen Petruska and Father Ron Larko led the service for the deceased. Gerry Dorobish, Theresa & Stephen Petruska, James Mihalko and Bonnie Balas were in attendance.



Fr. Ron Larko and Cantor Stephen Petruska at the Memorial Day Service.

**Helping Mt. St. Macrina**

With the onset of pleasant weather, Gerry Dorobish and her sister Linda Zungri cleaned up the grounds of Mt. St. Macrina. Parishioners of St. John Church along with them helped with the planting of flowers. Bonnie Balas helped with weeding of the flower gardens. Although the Annual Pilgrimage has been cancelled for this year, the beautification of the grounds is still continuing. Sister Carol Petrasovich planted her usual decorative array outside of the House of Prayer. Gerry Dorobish has also been helping Sister Ruth Plante to prepare for the reopening of the Religious Gift Shop.

**Bonnie Balas** | Vice President & Publicity Coordinator



Gerry Dorobish & Marjorie Noone at the gift shop.



Bonnie Balas weeding flowers.

## Lodge 144

AURORA, CO

### Palm Sunday Pussy Willows

GCU Lodge 144 was pleased to be able to supply the Palm Sunday pussy willows to four churches in the Eparchy of Phoenix. The willows were shipped to one church in California and three churches in Arizona including the Cathedral in Phoenix.

Thanks to Russ Haas, Audrey Peek, Mary Ellen Oslick and National Director John W. Oslick who volunteered their time to work on the Pussy Willow Project.

John W. Oslick



National Director John W. Oslick preparing to ship the willows.

## Lodge 151

NEW YORK, NY

### Our Members are Heroes

COVID-19 hit New York city very hard and quickly. GCU Lodge 151 Secretary Marie Panchuk is a Social Worker at New York Presbyterian Queens. She said the hospital was overwhelmed due to the surge of patients that got very sick, very quickly. In

one day 198 patients were admitted with the virus. She and other essential workers helped send them home as well as to nursing rehab centers and hotel shelters. Some still in need of oxygen tanks and home care. Families were also assisted with counseling and funeral arrangements. The social workers helped the medical team with calling families of the patients



Marie Panchuk

to update their medical conditions. At this point cases have diminished to less than 10 patients admitted each day. "It was a hard battle we hope to win" says Marie.

Lodge members are most grateful to local parish priests

who have found ingenious ways to bring church services to them at home. Marge Russell has been able to watch services at Resurrection Church in Smithtown, NY or at St. Andrew in Westbury, NY. Christine Hulak has been watching services online at St. Mary in Manhattan and at Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Fresh Meadows-Queens, NY. Ann Kandratino

was able to watch Easter services from the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord in Brooklyn. Laura Muhlfeld's priest at St. Nicholas in Whitestone-Queens, NY held services regularly and on feast days throughout Lent and continues holding Saturday night Vespers and Sunday Divine Liturgy using Facebook. In addition, he holds an on-line coffee hour via ZOOM every Sunday from 12:30-1:30 PM. The coffee hours have provided parishioners a great opportunity to chat with one another and share their experiences during this pandemic.

Four lodge members recently graduated from college. Unfortunately, they had to celebrate at home. Many area families have decorated their homes and put signs outside so when anyone passes, they honk or yell out congratulations.

CONTINUED

## Lodge 151 CONTINUED

**Ashley Pajer**, granddaughter of Margaret Russell, graduated magna cum laude with a double major in Marketing and Business Analytics from Manhattan College. She served as president of Sigma Delta Tau Sorority, communication coordinator for the Marketing Club and a mentor for the Women in Business Club. She was chosen for the Honors Enrichment Program and inducted into three of the National Honor Societies at Manhattan College. She considered herself fortunate to take what was learned in the classroom and apply it to the real world with internships at 1-800 Flowers and with the National Football League. She looks forward to all the adventures ahead and is excited to continue working with the NFL after graduation.

**Max Hulak**, nephew of Christine Hulak, graduated cum laude with a major in Mechanical Engineering at Pennsylvania State University. During his four year collegiate career, he was on the board of several clubs including: the American Society of Mechanical Engineering, Engineering Orientation Network, and Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society. His plan is to work through the Engineering Leadership

Program at Lockheed Martin. The program will allow him to experience multiple job roles and to work with other employees in the program on a special project. He will complete his master's degree in system engineering at Cornell University.

**Peter Torrente**, grandson of Margaret Russell, graduated from Lafayette College with a major in Media and Filming. During his four years he was Vice General Manager and a disc jockey of WJRH, the college radio station. He was vice president and snowboarding captain on the Ski and Snowboarding Team. He was secretary of the Squash Team and president of the Visual Arts Club. Peter studied abroad in Rome, Italy where he interned at Romeing Magazine. He also worked 4 years in the IT Department at Lafayette and interned at both Major League Baseball Advanced Media and Jump Editorial in New York City.

**Lauren Mamay**, granddaughter of Marge Russell, graduated from the University of Alabama with a major

in Chemical Engineering. She was in the honors society of chemical engineering Omega Chi Epsilon and in the American Institute of Chemical Engineers Club. She was also part of the Society of Women's Engineers. She was very active in the Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority and participated in the health and wellness club within the sorority. She will be working for National Grid as Assistant Associate Engineer for their Gas Design and Engineering department in Waltham MA, outside of Boston. Lodge 151 wishes all lodge graduates lots of luck and happiness in their new future.

The lodge hopes everyone stays safe and healthy.

Marge Russell | President



Ashley Pajer



Max Hulak



Peter Torrente



Lauren Mamay

## UPCOMING LODGE 151 EVENTS

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Meeting

#### June Zoom Meeting

Contact Marge Russell at 516-307-1016.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Meeting

#### Sunday, August 16, 2020

Subject to change depending on the opening of NY.

Contact Marge Russell at 516-307-1016.

## Lodge 254

HILLSBOROUGH, NJ

### Fashengyi Celebration

On Sunday, February 23 the St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Parish celebrated their annual pre-lenten "Fashengyi" with great food, music, games & camaraderie. Lodge members enjoyed the afternoon along with seventy of St. Mary's parishioners.



Lodge members at the Fashengyi celebration.



Charlie Bazaral, Director of Life & Annuity Products Gary Sorensen, Theresa Tomaszfski, Margorie Stanley, Elaine Zuzik, Alberta Folsome and GCU VP/COO, Scott Schuetz.

### GCU Home Office Speakers

On Saturday & Sunday, February 8 & 9, GCU Executive Vice President/COO Scott Schuetz along with Director of Life & Annuity Products Gary Sorensen, presented workshops following each Liturgy at St. Mary B.C. Church. Lodge 254 members welcomed the speakers & guests with refreshments at each session. Everyone was well pleased with the presentations. The lodge members and parishioners look forward to having Scott & Gary visit again soon. A total of 75 lodge members & parishioners attended. Fr. James Badieux is pastor at St. Mary.

Elias Zareva | President

## Lodge 268

MINGO JUNCTION, OH

### Piroghi Sale

GCU Lodge 268, along with St. John Byzantine Catholic Church parishioners, made piroghi on Saturday, March 7, 2020. A delicious lunch and wonderful fellowship were enjoyed by all the volunteers that assisted with the fundraiser. St. Patrick's Day and Easter cards were signed and sent to shut-in members of the church and former piroghi workers. Due to the Coronavirus the second scheduled piroghi sale was cancelled.

Carla Gasser | President



Lodge 268 members and St. John parishioners working together for the piroghi sale.

A JOINT FRATERNAL EVENT FOR  
FCSU, GCU, NSS & SCS MEMBERS



# Brookgate Lanes

14950 SNOW ROAD  
BROOK PARK, OH  
216-676-4325

2021 NATIONAL BOWLING TOURNAMENT  
CLEVELAND, OH  
FRIDAY, MAY 14 & SATURDAY, MAY 15, 2021

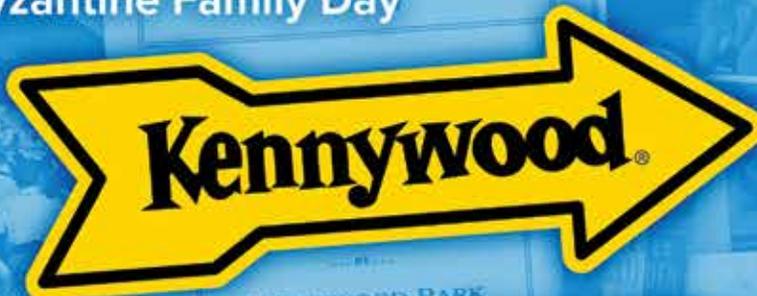
The 11th  
**GCU**  
Byzantine Family Day



# Knoebels

SUNDAY, JUNE 6, 2021

The 100th  
**GCU**  
Byzantine Family Day



THURSDAY, JULY 22, 2021

GCU & Kennywood... a partnership of family fun over a century in the making!

## Greater Hazleton Regional Lodge

HAZLETON, PA

### Cancellations

While we should be outside doing a lot of normal things, like enjoying the sunshine and the season of Spring and the forthcoming of Summer, the majority of Pennsylvanians and many in other States, are under stay at home instructions from the government. The Coronavirus has really taken its toll on all. Hopefully, by the time the *Magazine* is published, the Country will be moving towards better circumstances.

A lot of cancellations of social activities had to be made due to COVID-19—hopefully some will be able to rescheduled in the fall. A lot of people were disappointed that events were canceled, but we have to be very cautious and protect everyone during this time. Remember Stay Safe; Stay Home and Stay Healthy!

In the middle of March, the GHRL bowling season came to an abrupt end. With five weeks left to finish out the season. Congratulations to the Cents team—Charlotte, Bob, Anne and Carol for taking first place for the year. Awards have been mailed to all the bowlers and hopefully bowlers will be back in the fall for another great season.

### Matching Funds

The April fund raiser for Parish Matching Funds was a huge success—thanks to all who sold the calendars for this event. A check was presented to Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM of the Holy Dormition Monastery in the amount of \$3,076.<sup>00</sup>. The June fundraiser is being held and the results have been pretty great so far. More details will follow in the next *GCU Magazine*.

### Notes

GHRL would like to salute all high school and college graduates. School was cut short for the year, but be proud of who you are and what you have accomplished during your academic years.

Remember Father's Day is Sunday, June 21, please keep them in your prayers and thoughts—they are always there to lend a helping hand in time of need.



Matching Funds check presentation to Fr. Jerome Wolbert, OFM by GHRL Secretary Agnes Rohrbach.

Hopefully all will be able to celebrate the nation's 244<sup>th</sup> birthday on July 4<sup>th</sup>, with a group of people. Make it a special day to honor the great country that we live in.

Keep in your prayers and thoughts all those who have been devastated (both living and deceased) by the COVID-19 virus, hopefully everyone will come out of this pandemic soon. If your church is open for prayer, stop by and take the time out to say a prayer for all those affected and especially all the EMT's, nurses, doctors and healthcare professionals. May God Bless us all!

I know it was a rough time during the Easter season this year, but hopefully all GCU members had a very Blessed and Happy Easter.

As always, every effort is made to keep members updated on GHRL activities. If you are computer savvy, check out the GCU website for updates. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Agnes by phone: 570-454-4869 or e-mail: agnesr@ptd.net.

Until next time, take care and May God Bless.

Agnes Rohrbach | Secretary & Activities Director

## UPCOMING GHRL EVENT

### SUBJECT TO CHANGE

### Quarterly Meeting

**Sunday, August 30**

**2 PM - Tentative**

St. John's Church Hall, 5 East 20th Street, Hazleton, PA

Contact Agnes Rohrbach at 570-454-4869

## UPCOMING LODGE CPRL EVENTS

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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### Gene Tarabek Memorial Golf Open

**Saturday, July 18**

**12:30 PM Shotgun**

**\$70 GCU Member**

**\$100 Non-Member**

**Open to all Districts & Lodges!**

Seven Oaks Country Club  
132 Lisbon Road, Beaver, PA 15009

Info call John Miller 412-576-4328 or email at  
j.miller121253@gmail.com

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### Fun Day at Seven Oaks Pool

**Saturday, July 18**

**Pool open from 1 PM - 6 PM**

**FREE for GCU Member**

**\$10 Non-Member**

**\$27 for adults & \$14 for kids 10 & under for dinner  
after golf**

Seven Oaks Country Club Swimming Pool  
132 Lisbon Road, Beaver, PA 15009

Info call John Miller 412-576-4328 or email at  
j.miller121253@gmail.com



Fr. Tom Schaefer blessing Easter Baskets.

## Central Pittsburgh Regional Lodge

GREENFIELD, CARRICK & SOUTHSIDE-PITTSBURGH, PA

### Basket Blessing

Fr. Tom Schaefer blessed Easter baskets on Holy Saturday, April 11, 2020 at St. John Chrysostom Church in Greenfield, PA. Precautions were in place to protect everyone during the pandemic.

**Kim Kolesar** | Trustee

# Southeast Pittsburgh Regional Lodge

CLAIRTON & MUNHALL, PA

## Trying Times

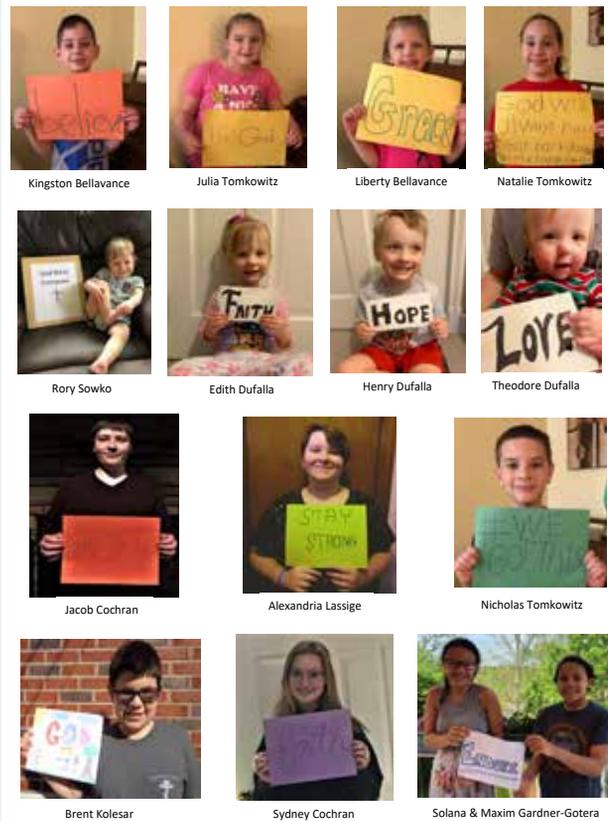
The last couple of months have been trying for all of us. Activities and meetings have been cancelled for the health and safety of everyone. In Clairton, the Sarris Candy sale concluded in time to distribute the orders before Easter. The food drive started and ended in the same week. The few items collected were dropped off at the local Clairton Emergency Food Bank site. In the meantime, GCU offered lodges the opportunity to apply for a donation to their local food banks. The Greater Pittsburgh Foodbank in Duquesne was selected by SEPRL to receive a \$1,000 donation to be shared with the Clairton and Munhall food distribution sites.

## Signs of Hope

Children from Ascension Parish had fun creating signs with their thoughts and sent in photo's for a collage to share. Of course, some of the younger members had some help from parents!

## Second Quarter Meeting

The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter meeting scheduled for June 7 was changed to an officers only meeting. Plans for a regular lodge meeting in the fall will be made once it is safe for the meetings to take place.



Children's Collage 2020.

## Matching Funds

At Ascension Church, a cemetery upkeep mail in campaign has been designated as a Parish Matching Funds event. The committee is in the process of locating names and addresses of family members who moved out of the area. Thanks to help from parishioners, friends and Facebook, there are already positive results that included conversations with long lost friends. The fundraiser will help cover the cost of the upkeep of the cemetery grounds from March through October.

Trish Roberts | President



Working hard pinching the pirohi.

# Northwest Pittsburgh Regional Lodge

MCKEES ROCKS, PA

## Pirohi Sale

Holy Ghost pirohi have long been recognized as among the best in the Pittsburgh area. Although Lenten sales were short due to the Coronavirus, the sale still did fairly well. Gratitude is expressed to all who participated in this project. The Northwest Pittsburgh Regional Lodge was pleased to sponsor the fund raiser for Parish Matching Funds increasing the benefit for the church.

Steve Puluka | Secretary-Treasurer



Helping Hands helps lodge member Rick Schen and his brother Mike are putting finishing touches on the flower pot at the entrance of the parish's Saint Nicholas Icon Shrine.

## Lodge 644 BARBERTON, OH



Lodge members Sue Irving and Marsha Ambrose are sprucing up the pots at the office entrance of Saint Nicholas Church in Barberton for the Helping Hands project.

## Lodge 945 DUNMORE, PA

Hopefully this article finds everything well with you and your families as we continue to navigate in a manner to keep our loved ones and ourselves safe during this pandemic crisis. Though restrictions in Pennsylvania have begun to ease across the state, Lodge 945 events scheduled through July have been postponed due to the state regulations restricting the number of attendees allowed at social gatherings. Lodge officers will continue to monitor the mandates of the state along with communicating with the GCU Fraternal Department regarding possible future lodge sponsored activities.

### Matching Funds Programs

Parish Expansion Matching Funds—A baked goods sale during Lent was held to benefit the Byzantine Nuns at Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugarloaf, PA. The event resulted in a Matching Funds donation of \$877.<sup>35</sup> Mother Marija asked that the lodge offer her appreciation to Byzantine parish families at St. Michael in Dunmore and St. Mary & St. John in Scranton, PA who purchased the Easter delights from the Carmelite Kitchen. It goes without mention, Mother Marija and the Sisters are praying for all of us to remain safe and healthy.

Another successful Lenten Pirohi Sale was held by St. Stephen Byzantine Catholic Church in North Huntingdon,



Father John Petro and GCU National Director George Kofel practice social distancing during Parish Expansion Matching Funds check presentation.

PA in February and March. (My daughter's family attends St. Stephen Church and I have the pleasure of enjoying these delicious pirohi every year.) Through the hard work and efforts put forth by the parishioners a total profit of \$4,702.<sup>00</sup> was matched. Father John Petro extended his gratitude to Lodge 945, the Board of Directors and President Juba for GCU's continual support of the Byzantine Catholic Churches.

### Cancelled Events

Lodge Volunteer Cleanup Day at The Dunmore Walking Trail has been tentatively re-scheduled for the fall, pending

CONTINUED

## Lodge 945 CONTINUED

Pennsylvania state Coronavirus restrictions.

GCU Helping Hands Day Spring 2020 at Holy Annunciation Monastery in Sugarloaf, PA has been cancelled until 2021. Visiting with Mother Marija on Memorial Day, while delivering the Matching Funds check along with a supply of newspapers for the Carmelites' Mini Horse Corral, Mother Marija mentioned the continual need of old newspapers (no books or glossy inserts) for the Corral. She would greatly appreciate everyone's kindness in saving old newspapers along with bringing them to the Monastery.

### GCU COVID-19 Special Community Food Bank Grant

Lodge 945 has chosen The Scranton Rescue Mission as the recipient of GCU's Special Community Food Bank Grant of \$1,000.<sup>00</sup>. I would like for a moment to switch my role from Lodge 945 Publicity Director to GCU National Director. At the Board's recent 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter meeting in May, the directors discussed how the GCU could assist families struggling with securing basic food items during this crisis in communities where GCU has members. Supporting our tag line of "Investing in the Goodness of Community" and our mission of "Protecting Families and Strengthening Communities," the Board of Directors authorized a \$1,000.<sup>00</sup> grant for each of our Lodges and Districts to help support local food banks in their respective areas. At the time of this writing, of the

53 grants authorized, 27 of them have been utilized. If your Lodge or District has not as yet requested this grant, fill out the paperwork sent by President Juba or contact Mr. Basil Wahal at the GCU Home Office for information. Help us reach our goal of 100% participation. Your involvement in this project will assist GCU in making a difference in the lives of people living in your communities.

### The Great American Debate

Help me solve the great American debate regarding what is the correct way to spell and pronounce that dumping stuffed with potatoes, cabbage, or lekvar. Is it perogy, perogie, pirohi, pirohy, piroghi, piroggi, pierogy, pyrogy, pyrohy, or pirozhki—I'm curious. How do my fellow GCU sisters and brothers spell it? Take a moment and email me at [gkofel@GCUusa.com](mailto:gkofel@GCUusa.com) and tell me where your from and how YOU spell that tasty little dumpling. My spelling is pirohi.

In closing, please continue to social distance, wear your mask, cover your cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water while singing happy birthday twice or use hand sanitizer if soap isn't available. And, continue to pray to our Lord and his Holy Mother, the Blessed Theotokos to protect us and to rid us of this terrible disease. A new normal has been established in our daily lives. We all need to follow the rules and live this new normal so we can get through this together safely.

George Kofel | Publicity Director



Lodge members decorating the church.

## Lodge 999

PHOENIX, AZ

### Cleaning & Decorating for Easter

On Good Friday, a few lodge members gathered to clean and decorate St. Stephen Cathedral for the Easter Celebration. Over 500 carnations were placed on the awning that covered the Shroud. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the procession was canceled but the flowers could be seen in the live stream video over the Shroud of Jesus

### Volunteering at the Andre House

On Saturday, April 11, lodge members made 670 cinnamon rolls for the Andre House Easter dinner on Sunday, April 12. Because of restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, members were

unable to be physically present for the breakfast, so the rolls were delivered the day before.

Joanie Mahar | President.



The Andre House cinnamon rolls!

## Events

### SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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#### Golf Classic

**Monday, September 21** *New Date*  
**9:30 AM Shotgun Start**

Seven Oaks Country Club  
132 Lisbon Road, Beaver, PA 15009

Applications will be emailed to previous participants and are available in the Events Section of the GCU Website

Contact GCU Fraternal-Communications Department at 1-800-722-4428 ext. 3810.

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#### 64<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Nicholas Celebration

**Sunday, December 6**

St. John Cathedral Center  
210 Greentree Road, Munhall, PA 15120

A Benefit of SS. Cyril & Methodius Byzantine Seminary.

Contact Frat.-Comm. Dept. at 1-800-722-4428.

## Available

### Carpathian Cookery Cookbook



Having sold over 18,000 copies, the cookbook has entered its 19<sup>th</sup> printing and was requested by the Library of Congress to be in their ethnic cooking collection. The 330-page cookbook has a new look and features a protective plastic cover. The book includes sections on Christmas and Easter customs and recipes, traditional Rusyn and Slavic foods, other ethnic dishes, and many other tried-and-true recipes of St. John's parishioners. There is a variety of paska bread and kolachi (filled roll) recipes, as well as meatless dishes and Lenten recipes, suitable for the Great Fast, as well as the Pre-Christmas Fast. The cost of the cookbook is \$14.<sup>00</sup> plus \$4.<sup>00</sup> postage and handling (\$18.<sup>00</sup>). If ordering from Canada, please send a \$28.<sup>00</sup> U.S. Postal money order payable in U.S. dollars to reflect the difference in the exchange rate and postage cost. To order please send a check or money order to: Ethnic Craft Club, St. John Byzantine Catholic Church, 201 E. Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401, call 724-438-6027 (M-F 9 AM-3 PM please leave a message) or email [carpathiancookery@gmail.com](mailto:carpathiancookery@gmail.com).

# Remembrances



**Helen Yurko**  
Honorary Officer

Former GCU National Auditor Helen Yurko, 90, passed away peacefully on May 15, 2020. She was born on February 17, 1930 in Youngstown, OH the daughter of the late Imro & Anna Klimcak Yurko.

Helen, was retired from the Accounting Department of GF Business Equipment and a lifelong member of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in Boardman, OH. She loved to support all church events and was active with both the Senior's and Byzantine Ladies Clubs, where she held officer positions and supported their sponsored fund-

raising events. A lifetime member of the GCU, she served as a National Auditor for 12 years from her election to the office at the 1992 National Convention until the office was retired at the 2004 Convention. At that time, she was given the title of Honorary Officer. Helen was also involved with Lodge 252 where she served as an officer in numerous capacities and took an active role in planning local lodge events.

An avid bowler she participated in the GCU sponsored Sunday Mixed League and at National Bowling Tournaments. Helen enjoyed playing bingo, going on bus trips to various casinos and was an avid traveler including several trips to Europe. She had the opportunity to take a trip to Slovakia to visit family. Helen most enjoyed being

around her family for various events and was always willing to shuttle family and friends when needed.

Helen is survived by her sister Mary Oleyar of Youngstown, as well as several nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, siblings: John Yurko, Anne Hrusovsky & Margaret Iannazone and her long-time companion Ed Kikta.

Helen was buried at Calvary Cemetery in Youngstown with a memorial Liturgy to be held in her honor at St. Nicholas Church at a date not yet determined. Her family would like to thank the staff of the Inn at Poland Way for the kindness and care shown to Helen during her stay there.

Blessed repose and eternal memory.

## Marie Cibik

Marie Cibik of GCU Lodge 15 died at her home, surrounded by her loving family, on Wednesday, April 8, 2020 at the age of 94.

Born and raised in Hazleton, PA and a graduate of Hazleton High School. Mrs. Cibik was an original Levittown homeowner in Bristol Township, PA.

She was the daughter of the late John & Anna Yurcho and the beloved wife of the late George Cibik. She was the loving mother of Michael J. Cibik (Jo-Ann), George E. Cibik (Christine) and Patricia Mallon (Patrick).

She was a founding member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Levittown, PA. She was former Secretary of GCU Lodge 389. Marie and her husband, George, frequently made the travel arrangements for many of the

lodge's sporting and fraternal activities for various GCU events.

She loved sewing, cooking and gardening, but will be remembered most as "EVERYBODY'S BABA." She will also be sadly missed by her several grandchildren & great grandchildren, Godson John Yurcho (Peggy) and her extended family.

The family would like to extend thanks and gratitude to the staff of Touching Hearts-Yardley and Heartland Hospice.

All services and interment were held privately.

In lieu of flowers, please say a prayer in her memory or make a donation to a charity of your choice.

Blessed repose and eternal memory.

# Remembrances

## Bernard “Bernie” Cipa

Bernard “Bernie” Cipa, born on August 16, 1934, passed away on March 28, 2020 at the age of 85. Born in Pittsburgh, PA, he moved to Detroit as a teenager where he met his wife, Eleanor, at St. Cyril High School. They were married in 1955 and raised three sons and two daughters in Warren, MI before moving to Oxford, MI. He worked in the steel industry, later starting his own company, TCT Stainless Steel, with two partners in 1979. After his 1995 retirement, he and Ellie moved to Rochester Hills to be closer to their church and family. Bernie, a member of Lodge 250, and his family were regular attendees of the GCU National Golf Tournaments held at Seven Oaks CC. Many golfers enjoyed playing additional golf after their tournament round was completed in what affectionately became known as the Cipa Scrambles.

He enjoyed playing golf in retirement and spending winters in Florida, but most of all spending time with his family and friends. During his retirement years, he did not need a GPS to find the local casino or racetrack. His daily goal during these times was always to put a smile on someone’s face.

Bernie played an active role in his grandchildren’s lives by attending sporting events, concerts, plays, and supporting all of their endeavors. He felt extremely proud that all of his children and grandchildren were able to graduate college. He had a deep faith in God and was an active member of St. Basil the Great Byzantine Catholic Church in Sterling Heights, MI where

he enjoyed singing in the choir. He felt extremely blessed in life and believed strongly in giving back to the community. Bernie is survived by his wife, Eleanor, and children/grandchildren: Chris (Ken) Wilson—Evan, Alyssa, & Kelsey; Bernie (Jill) Cipa—Lexie & Zack; Drew (Anita) Cipa—Andy, Allie, & Macrina; Scott (Shelley) Cipa—Zander and Lisa (Rob) Elder.

Blessed repose and eternal memory.

## Basilian Sister Mary Grace Skuban Enters into New Life

For Sister Mary Grace, Holy Week 2020 was to be the threshold of her entrance into the life for which she yearned. Her last words to Sister Ruth, Provincial, were "I want to go to heaven." In mid-afternoon of Holy Wednesday, April 8, 2020, she got her wish. She had received the Mystery of Holy Anointing earlier that week, and was well prepared to meet Jesus to whom she had dedicated 63 years of her life.

Sister Mary Grace (Marion) was born in Dunmore, PA, the daughter of the late John & Mary Margaret (Lesko) Skuban. She entered the Sisters of St. Basil from St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Taylor, PA on October 1, 1957 and received her Final Profession of Vows on August 25, 1963 in the presence of the late Very Rev. Msgr. Basil Smochko.

As a Sister of St. Basil, Sister Mary Grace was called to a variety of ministries. She served on the staff of Mt. Macrina Manor as an LPN in direct nursing care and later, in medical records. She had also served at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, at Mt. Macrina House of Prayer, as Activities Director at St. Basil's Home and as a substitute teacher. At the monastery, she served for a number of years as monastery sacristan, as well as assisting with the health care of the Sisters and in clerical and other supportive services.

Her final years were spent as a resident at Mt. Macrina Manor. At the Manor, until

Sister Mary Grace was no longer able to do so, she participated in the Divine Liturgy and other services planned for the residents' spiritual nourishment and refreshment. One cannot forget, either, her daily praying of the rosary. One of her requests was to have the rosary she prayed on with her on her final journey.

Sister enjoyed taking part in the activities offered at the Manor; she was a familiar figure at the sing-along on Sunday morning, and whenever there was bingo, she was there, too. She was always quick to thank those who visited, accompanied by a smile and "God be with you!"

Following is a reflection Sister wrote upon completing a sabbatical program. "The Lord is my Shepherd . . . He takes care of me and my needs better than I can ever do myself. That He has such great love for me is really overwhelming! For this, I am most grateful. It gives meaning and purpose for my life's journey... It lets me know I am solidly grounded in His love." These thoughts, spoken from Sister's heart are the best way to portray her life! Now she lives even more fully in a heavenly sabbatical.

As Sister Mary Grace was ushered into the chapel on Tuesday of Bright Week, the joyous strains of "Christ is Risen" accompanied her. Immediately, the Divine Liturgy began with the Resurrection Canon. As all the doors of the Icon Screen were opened, one could not help

but think that so, too, were the gates of heaven to welcome Sister Mary Grace. In his remarks, Father Jerome noted that every time he visited Sister Mary Grace, he found her praying. After his visits to her, Father noted that he always felt uplifted and a little closer to God. Sister made the prayer of Jesus, "Not my will, but thy will be done," her prayer, too. Father concluded that this should be our prayer, too, as God's plan is always bigger, always better than our plan.

Sister Mary Grace was preceded in death by her parents and her three brothers, John (Eleanor), Andrew (Julie), and Joseph (Kay). She was the last surviving member of her immediate family.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated privately in the Monastery Chapel on Tuesday, April 14, by Rev. Jerome Botsko, Monastery Chaplain. Due to the Coronavirus restrictions, there was no public viewing.

May God grant his handmaiden, Sister Mary Grace, eternal memory and peaceful repose!

# Deceased Members

(Lodge-Member-City-State)

- 8344 Janet Anderson, Youngwood, PA  
8344 Mary Andrade, Mount Carmel, PA  
8344 Elizabeth Auld, Furlong, PA  
8327 Laurene H. Babler, Winona, MN  
8344 Reta M. Bailey, Tamaqua, PA  
8344 Gary Lee Bair, Port Carbon, PA  
SEPRL George Balta, Dravosburg, PA  
81 Theodore Barbush, Wickliffe, OH  
8344 George Basalla, Bellefonte, PA  
8344 Ann C. Bechtold, Bolivar, PA  
8344 Ruth Beck, Oil City, PA  
8344 Kay H. Beidelman, Bethlehem, PA  
8344 Gilda Bellano, Broomall, PA  
GHRL Emmet Betterly, Hazleton, PA  
8344 Wahneta Bish, Dayton, PA  
360 Daniel Bleyl, Easton, PA  
8344 Frank Boario, Vandergrift, PA  
8334 Ann Joyce Bobbin, Shenandoah, PA  
8326 Patricia A. Bohannon, Bellaire, MI  
SEPRL Barbara Brennan, Munhall, PA  
GHRL Margaret Breznak, Hazle Township, PA  
8326 Thomas J. Bulgarella, Wyoming, MI  
8344 John Burda, Coraopolis, PA  
8344 Anthony Caccese, Harleysville, PA  
SEPRL Helen Campbell, Clairton, PA  
8344 Janet Carpenter, New Castle, PA  
47 Jean Carrington, Haverhill, MA  
8344 Joseph Cataldo, Sugar Grove, PA  
8344 Pauline J. Cerkovnik, Mt Pleasant, PA  
8344 Maxine B. Charles, Annville, PA  
8344 Francis Charney, Baltimore, MD  
351 Mary Ann Chiodo, Lackawanna, NY  
8358 E Rose Chitwood, Boscobel, WI  
8344 Dorothy Choy, Pittsburgh, PA  
15 Marie Y. Cibik, Levittown, PA  
250 Bernard Cipa, Rochester Hills, MI  
8344 Theresa Cipolla, Aliquippa, PA  
8344 Arlene B. Cliggett, Doyleston, PA  
8341 Lula Clinkscales, Youngstown, OH  
8335 Ruth H. Conrad, Princeton, NJ  
319 Rosemary Cook, Davison, MI  
7 Irene Dalba, Ormond Beach, FL  
8344 Philomena Dalto, Mountain Top, PA  
8344 Margaret Dancisin, Cheswick, PA  
8344 George Davies, Hatboro, PA  
8344 Marie Davis, Coatesville, PA  
8344 John C. Dellaria, Gibsonia, PA  
994 Mary DeMatteis, Aliquippa, PA  
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92 Martin Krowiak, Jessup, PA  
NPRL Richard Kutzavitch, McKees Rocks, PA  
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8344 William Long, Danville, PA  
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GHRL Herbert R. Witta, York, PA  
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