

# Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation Newsletter

Published for those interested in preserving the memory of St. Nicholas Church, N.S.

## PCHF Joins with Senator John Heinz History Center

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PCHF is working with the Senator John Heinz History Center (HHC) administrators  to build a collection of objects and archival material that documents St. Nicholas Church, North Side, the first Croatian Roman Catholic Parish in America and the surrounding Croatian neighborhood, Mala Jaska. We are excited about the tremendous opportunity to preserve this story at the HHC so that it can be used for future research, exhibits, publications and programs and shared with those who visit the Center.

PCHF invites everyone to participate in this project by helping to locate artifacts that can be donated to the HHC collection (see page 2 for examples of items of interest to HHC). In the past, many of you have been generous with donations of photographs which help to preserve our Croatian

culture. These reside on the Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation website, [stnicholasns.org](http://stnicholasns.org). We are indeed grateful to all of you and periodically add more photos as they become available.

Do you know the story of someone who immigrated to this country from Croatia, then Yugoslavia, perhaps with just the clothes on his/her back and started a new life? Do you know the details of how that person worked and grew into an American life or interesting stories about items they brought with them to the United States? These are the kinds of stories that we are looking for so that we can help the curators of Heinz History Center preserve a valid story of the Croatian migration, specifically of the North Side neighborhood of Mala Jaska and of St. Nicholas Church, N.S. (see Page 2)

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## Memorial Day Service set for May 29 at Cemetery



PCHF invites everyone to join former parishioners and friends of St. Nicholas Church, N.S. , at the Saint Nicholas Cemetery located on Hahn Road, Pittsburgh, PA at **11 AM** on Monday, **May 29**, 2017, to pay tribute to the 27 North Side Church parishioners who were killed or listed missing in action during their service to our country.

For more than a decade, this beautiful and solemn service has been held at the North Side Church Cemetery, and we urge you to spend a half hour with us to reflect on all those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom. Participating in this service could help to make your festivities on this day more meaningful.

We are pleased that Deacon Greg Jelinek of Most Holy Name Parish will be joining us again this year to offer scriptural readings and reflections about the importance of this day of remembrance. American flags will be distributed to the attendees; a eulogy will be given; votive candles will be lit and the bell tolled as the names of each deceased veteran is called. The ceremony will close with the (see Page 3)

# PCHF Joins with Senator John Heinz History Center

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We are asking you to look in all of those forgotten places — the attics, the basements, old trunks and those bottom drawers for items such as photographs, letters or other family keepsakes that were related to the St. Nicholas Church, North Side, and the surrounding Mala Jaska neighborhood and to gather any information known about the object, image or document that is important to its historic significance.

You can then email or call the Acquisitions Curator at the HHC, Emily Ruby. She can be reached at 412 454-6350 or by email at [elruby@heinzhistorycenter.org](mailto:elruby@heinzhistorycenter.org). Emily will discuss the objects with you— their condition, the story they document if they fit into the HHC’s mission and whether the HHC already holds similar examples to what you are offering. She will then present your items at the weekly collections meeting where the curators and archivists discuss all offers to the collection. If your material is accepted for the permanent collection, HHC staff will work with you to complete the paperwork and bring the material into the collection. After it is cataloged by the Museum staff or processed by the Library and Archives, it is then



preserved, safely stored and available for researchers and HHC programs and exhibits.

*Donations of artifacts and archives does not mean that an item will definitely appear in any present or future exhibit.* But the HHC will catalog and preserve the materials that come to them so that they are available for use in exhibits, virtual media, publications, and programs. They also provide valuable research material for scholars, collectors, and the general public. Sometimes those of us who have been the recipients of the past generation’s keepsakes have little or no interest in keeping or storing inherited items. At the HHC, those materials are preserved and shared -- the story lives on and is accessible to a broad public audience.

Even though we no longer have our North Side Church, it still lives on in our memories. Please help to preserve those wonderful memories by participating in this very important endeavor. St. Nicholas Church, N.S., and its parishioners made a huge impact on Pittsburgh. We can keep this memory alive through a future collection at the Senator John Heinz History Center.



## ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR THE ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH, N.S., HEINZ HISTORY COLLECTION

The items of interest should be of Croatian origin and have some type of connection to the St. Nicholas Church, North Side, or the Croatian community that surrounded it.



Religious objects such as the statue of Jesus carried by the men of the parish in the annual Good Friday Service procession, pageant costumes, sheet music, church hymnals, altar cloths, and banners



Holiday ceremonial, or traditional objects such as Easter baskets and covers, pisanice eggs, Tambura costume or instrument, toys and games



Tools and equipment used in traditional arts such as embroidery, food ways ( baking, cooking), family traditions



Objects related to work—tools, ledger books, images

Clothing - traditional Croatian clothing brought here and used/worn in this region, work-related clothing, ceremonial costumes, wedding dress, baptismal dress, other



Material related to the first Mala Jaska Croatian book store, Marohnic Book Store

Church anniversary books — 50th, 75th, prayer books

## SOLEMN TENEBRAE LENTEN SERVICE, APRIL 3

By Susan Petrick



As many of you know, St. Nicholas Church, N.S. held a traditional, inspiring candlelight prayer service every year during the Lenten season focusing on Christ's Passion and Death — *the Tenebrae*.

The Tenebrae Service begins in a darkened church illuminated by lit candles on the altar. A candle is extinguished after each of seven psalms is read and a hymn is sung, until a single candle, symbolizing Christ, remains on the altar. All then leave in silence.

You are invited to attend this very solemn, holy service with friends and family on Monday, **April 3, 2017 at 7 p.m.** at **Most Holy Name Church** (Troy Hill).

Choir members of MHN Church, including former choir members and the organist of St. Nicholas Church will carry on this traditional Tenebrae service. We believe you will find it a very beautiful, peaceful and moving experience.

Most Holy Name Church is located at 1700 Harpster Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

## Memorial Day Service set for May 29 at Cemetery

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playing of Taps and the singing of "God Bless America" led by Bernice Goyak.

Please invite your family members and friends to join you at this most important St. Nicholas Memorial Day Service, **Monday, May 29, 2017, 11 AM.**



## Church Video Available in Web Store



By Susan Petrick

In 2000, when the Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation was formed, one of PCHF Board's first course of action in trying to save and preserve St. Nicholas Church, N.S. was to make a video of the Church and Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto.

At that time, Bishop Donald Wuerl was deciding the fate of our beloved St. Nicholas Church, and he was to consult with the priests in the Bishop's Priest Council for their recommendation to save or demolish our Church.

The 23-minute video demonstrated that St. Nicholas was, in fact, a very active and viable Parish. It contains a collection of still photographs of numerous masses, services, Church functions and activities. The video portion includes the Church's interior and exterior, as well as the Grotto. A special feature of the video is the live testimony from former Pastor Father Grgo Sikiric, T.O.R, demonstrating why he believes St. Nicholas Church should have been saved. Father also talks about the Grotto, its significance to the parishioners and why our Croatian ancestors built such a magnificent Church.

The still photos are accompanied with songs sung by the St. Nicholas Church

choir and organist, along with recordings from other Croatian ensembles.

Completing this video was a challenging task as the video needed to be completed in just a couple of weeks. With Father Grgo having been forced to retire, he no longer lived in the rectory. Father Grgo was residing in Cleveland with sporadic visits to Pittsburgh.

Once finalized, a copy of this video was hand delivered to the ten Priest Council members. We requested that each priest view the video and make their recommendation to Bishop Wuerl to *save* St. Nicholas Church, N.S.

This video is now available on a **DVD** in our web store. It is a wonderful remembrance of our beautiful, beloved Croatian Church and would make a precious keepsake or gift.

The price of the DVD is **\$15 (including shipping)**. The supply is limited, so don't delay. Just go to our website, [stnicholasns.org](http://stnicholasns.org), to place your order or call Susan at 412 821-3725.

Proceeds from DVD sales will help the perpetual funding of the new, Our Lady of Lourdes statue erected at the St. Nicholas Church Historic Site and to replenish the Brochures of St. Nicholas Church's history and architecture that are offered to visitors at the historic site.



## Cemetery Addition to Website



PCHF has located a list of names and dates from the tombstone markers at the St. Nicholas Church Cemetery on Hahn Road, Ross Township, PA that is accurate through 2004.

Perhaps those who are involved in family genealogy research will find it useful. Just click on the link at the top right side of the web site home page, under the word, **CEMETERY**.

[www.stnicholasns.org](http://www.stnicholasns.org)



## New Troy Hill Sign Erected

*As neighbors in District 1, members of PCHF are particularly happy for Troy Hill's new signage. We again extend our thanks to Troy Hill Citizens, Inc. for their support in working closely with PCHF, Preservation Pittsburgh and PennDOT's Dan Cessna, in the planning, designing and construction stages of the Rt. 28 roadway to document, promote and preserve St. Nicholas Church, North Side's legacy for future generations.*

*By Susan Petrick*



The following article was written by Tony Benvin, Troy Hill Citizens, Inc.

This past November, the New "Welcome to Troy Hill" sign was installed and dedicated, marking the primary entrance to Troy Hill on Troy Hill Road. This project by Troy Hill Citizens, Inc. was five years in the making and with the cooperation of the Community Alliance of Spring Garden and East Deutchtown, Penn DOT and former State Senator James Ferlo.

The sign was designed and fabricated by local artist, James Simon, whose work is exhibited throughout the United States and abroad. Locally, his work can be seen at the ToonSeum (Pittsburgh Museum of Cartoon Art), the tall Musicians sculpture on Liberty Avenue and the three fallen police officers monument in Bloomfield.

## Croatian Heritage Day at Most Holy Name Parish

Come and experience a piece of Croatia's culture -- enjoy a day of Croatian celebration at Most Holy Name Parish of Jesus Church (Troy Hill) Pittsburgh PA on **Sunday, November 11, 2017**.

Plans are being made for two, live, Croatian musical performances and a luscious, Croatian, hot dinner with homemade baked goods.

An English-speaking mass will be celebrated at 6 pm with *Croatian hymns* sung by the Most Holy Name Church Choir, including former members of St. Nicholas Croatian Church, N.S.

The social hall will be decorated with Croatian memorabilia, including color poster-size photographs of Croatian towns, villages and cathedrals that will line the walls.



Authentic, Croatian artifacts will be on display, with merchandise available for purchase



There will be raffles that include Croatian items, and there will be activities for the youth.

People of all nationalities are welcome to attend and partake in all the festivities.

More details will be given in a future PCHF newsletter and in upcoming editions of the Croatian Fraternal Union's *Zajednicar* newspaper.

By Susan Petrick

## Annual Candlelight Prayer Service Update

Due to the continuous, heavy rainfall on December 6, the Candlelight Prayer Service planned for Saint Nicholas Day was cancelled.

The candles could not keep a flame, and



there was a concern that someone might slip and fall. We are hopeful and prayerful the weather will be more accommodating next year.

## Annual St. Nicholas Day Banquet Fills Javor Hall

The spirit of St. Nicholas Croatian Church, North Side, was alive and well when nearly 100 persons gathered at Javor Hall on Saturday, December 3, 2016, to celebrate the annual, traditional St. Nicholas Day Banquet.

The decorated walls of Javor Hall reflected the holiday spirit with Christmas wreaths and red ribbons. The dinner tables were decorated with red and green tablecloths with assorted pictures of St. Nicholas Church posted on the walls at the ends of the tables.



Emcee, Bill Vergot, welcomed new and returning guests of all ages on this most festive night. Bernice Goyak then led us in prayer. Guests were served a comforting meal of Croatian favorites including: stuffed cabbage, baked chicken, kielbasa with sauerkraut, pirogues, tossed salad & rolls. PCHF board members provided a sweet finale of a wide variety of homemade desserts.

Saint Nicholas, with crosier in hand, made his annual rounds handing out gold coins and photo-Christmas Cards from 1998 of St. Nicholas Church to the young and the old.

Darlene Harris, Pittsburgh City Councilwoman, District 1, took a break from her busy schedule to stop by and wish us well.

Co-chairs, Bill Vergot and Stephen Willing, recapped the PCHF related events of 2016. The annual Memorial Day Service was well attended. PCHF is still exploring the possibility of fabricating and installing a plaque to memorialize all of the children who are buried in the St. Nicholas Cemetery. PCHF and the Heinz History Center are moving forward in their partnership to collect and display St. Nicholas artifacts at their museum in the Strip District. And a partial list of names of those buried at the Hahn Road cemetery has been added to the [stnicholasns.org](http://stnicholasns.org) website.

Steve Willing reminded guests that St. Nicholas Christmas cards, note cards, and ornaments were for sale throughout the evening at Javor and also available on the PCHF website. New this year are note cards with a beautiful photograph of the St. Nicholas Historic Site.



Two lucky winners took home door prizes. Dennis Petrick won the first door prize — a framed print featuring the unique, onion-domed steeples of St. Nick's Church. The second door prize, a framed print of the St. Nicholas Church, Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto, was won by Alan Zivic.

The banquet hall was filled with the beautiful voices of the Javor Pittsburgh ensemble, entertaining guests with Croatian melodies. The Mikey Dee Band played ethnic and holiday music all evening. Javor Pittsburgh and former members of St. Nicholas Church sing-along was accompanied by Mikey Dee's Band as they sang beautiful Croatian and English Christmas carols.

Mark your calendars for the next St. Nicholas Banquet, scheduled for Saturday, December 2, 2017. We look forward to seeing you then!

by Steve Willing





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**How to Reach Us**

**E-mail us at [pchf@stnicholasns.org](mailto:pchf@stnicholasns.org)**

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**Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation  
St. Nicholas Church, N.S. WEBSITE**

**[www.stnicholasns.org](http://www.stnicholasns.org)**

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