

# Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation Newsletter

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*Published for those interested in preserving the memory of St. Nicholas Church, N.S.  
and our Croatian Heritage*

## St. Nicholas Day Banquet, December 7

by Bill Vergot

Plan now to attend the Annual St. Nicholas Day Banquet at Javor on Saturday, December 7, 2013, sponsored by Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation. A social will be at 5 PM which includes a cash bar and a hot buffet dinner at 6 PM. The cost is \$20 per person and \$10 for children age 5 - 12.

Our special guest, Dan Cessna, District Executive, PennDOT, District 11, will give a report of plans concerning the Rt. 28/E. Ohio Street Project. This will be a most interesting report as the plans will depict how St. Nick's will be remembered. In addition,

LJELJO, a newly formed Croatian Folk Ensemble, under the direction of Zeljko Jergan -- internationally

known Folk Dance Choreographer, will present a short choral set from the CFU Adult Festival held November 2 at the Westin Hotel.

Saint Nicholas will make a visit at the Banquet followed by the Mikey Dee Band who will provide the music for singing of traditional Croatian Christmas carols followed by dancing.

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## TRADITIONAL FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS, DEC. 1

by Susan Petrick

Former St. Nicholas Church choir members and choir director - organist, Carol Spehar, have joined Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish (MHN)



located at 1700 Harpster Street., Pittsburgh, PA 15212 (Troy Hill). MHN's choir is composed of 25 men and women whose beautiful voices fill the Church every Sunday at 9 a.m. Mass. Ethnic hymns are a part of the selections

sung by the MHN choir including beautiful Croatian hymns.

As many of you know, the **Festival of Lessons and Carols** was a beautiful, long-standing, traditional Advent Service at St. Nicholas Church, N.S. It was a special service where people took time away from the hustle/bustle of the holiday season to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas with beautiful hymns and biblical readings of Christ's birth.

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## St. Nicholas Banquet cont'd. from page 1



You will want to join your friends at this exciting St Nicholas Day Banquet to hear the plans to remember St. Nick's Church, N.S., to visit with Saint Nicholas and to hear the magnificent choral selection by Ljeljo — the newest Croatian Folk

Ensemble in Pittsburgh, and the music of our favorite band, Mikey Dee. The date again is **Saturday, December 7**. For reservations, call Bernice Goyak at 412/821-1106 no later than December 4. Make your reservations now, as tickets will not be available at the door. Svi Nam, Dobro Dosli.

## FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS cont'd. from page 1

This year, you are invited to attend the inspirational **Festival of Lessons and Carols** at **Most Holy Name Church** on **Sunday, December 1, 2013, at 2:00 p.m.** Come and ready your hearts

and minds for the coming of Christ during the Christmas season. A small reception will follow the Service in the school hall. All are welcome to attend!



## Guest Speaker at St. Nicholas Day Banquet

by Jack Schmitt

The Route 28/E. Ohio Street Project certainly has been difficult for many of us for many, many, many years. Over the years we at PCHF and Preservation Pittsburgh have worked constructively with the District Executive of PennDOT District 11 who himself came up with some creative ideas. So we have invited Dan Cessna, District Executive of PennDOT, to be PCHF's Guest Speaker since the Rt. 28/E. Ohio Street Project is nearing completion. Our speaker will focus on the positive things we have been able to do together. And they are many, thanks to your support of PCHF.



retaining walls to resemble the stone work in the locks of the Great Pennsylvania Canal which brought immigrants to Allegheny City and Pittsburgh; to restore the safety and historic look of the 31st Street Bridge with its original railings and lights; and to create a quicker and safer access to Rialto Street while eliminating the congestion of the traffic lights at the Bridge intersection. The proposed sterile 60 ft. tall walls with chain link fence on top of them were eliminated, and PennDOT is being sure the hillside will be planted with evergreens and other blooming trees and ground covers to make our City entrance beautiful.

As part of this Project, Dan Cessna assisted building a missing section of the Heritage Trail along the Allegheny River, providing signs that tell the story of the history of the area including St. Nicholas Croatian Church, North Side, Pittsburgh Wool Co., Mala Jaska, etc., and is giving copies of the historic photographs and documents of Mala Jaska to Preservation Pgh for posterity. The



## Guest Speaker at St. Nick Banquet

cont'd. from page 2

of the historic Trail will also incorporate some circa 1826 Canal Stones that had been salvaged from the original canal lock in Allegheny City when the Parkway North was excavated. Dan Cessna and his staff left the area from St. Nicholas to the Penn Brewery as the last part of the Rt. 28/E. Ohio Street Project to be completed in 2014. At the St. Nicholas Day Banquet, Mr. Cessna will discuss

details of how that part of the Rt. 28 Project will look when completed. Also, there will be drawings on display. Be sure to come and listen to the story of how Penn DOT accomplished this difficult task with the help of Preservation Pittsburgh and Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation.



## PCHF TO APPLY FOR PENNSYLVANIA STATE HISTORICAL MARKER

by Steve Willing

Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation will be submitting an application soon to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) for a historical marker. The marker will specifically identify St. Nicholas Croatian North Side and cement its place in history for generations to come. These are the familiar blue and gold markers, which promote Pennsylvania history along the Keystone State's highways and city streets. With over 2,000 markers to date, the program has been around since 1946. A panel of independent experts from across Pennsylvania evaluate each nomination for



photo by Steve Willing

consideration and are reviewed by PHMC commissioners in the spring.

We at PCHF feel that St Nicholas Croatian Church, North Side, the first Croatian Parish in the Western Hemisphere will meet the criteria needed for approval. St. Nicholas has a rich, unique, and influential history in the Croatian community, not just locally, but statewide, and nationally. Established in 1894, St. Nicholas Church was widely considered to be Pittsburgh's Croatian Cathedral, and was the center of religious and social activity for the Mala Jaska neighborhood.

Costs to pay for and install this marker will be covered by the PCHF treasury, which thanks you for all your past, present, and future donations.

## A Sainly, New Overlook of Pittsburgh

by Jack Schmitt



The citizens' Pennsylvania Department of Transportation will own all the land along East Ohio Street from Millvale to the Heinz Plant, and some of that PennDOT property extends to the top of Troy Hill Road above the site of St. Nicholas Church where PennDOT will

own the sidewalk. From this sidewalk, there is a great Troy Hill view of Downtown Pittsburgh, the river crafts, the Hill District, the Strip District, Mary Immaculate Church in Polish Hill and even Lawrenceville. What a view! The City steps from here to the bottom where the site of St. Nicholas Church, N.S.

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## New Overlook cont'd. from Page 3

will be retained by PennDOT and maintained by the City of Pittsburgh.

PCHF plans to cover the cost of a roadside marker to help Pittsburghers remember forever the location of Saint Nicholas Croatian Church, Mala Jaska and especially the Marohonic Bookstore and Home which was eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, there is discussion about placing about ten sturdy Croatian-type sidewalk benches along the sidewalk between beautiful little trees. This will be an especially accessible place for elderly and handicapped people to drive right up to a bench with a view!

This St. Nicholas Overlook would be an attraction that would invite tourists to drive up to Troy Hill for this City view and read the historic markers. Bikers from the Heritage River Trail would bike up to see the view and dine at a local Troy Hill eatery or visit St. Anthony's Chapel (Reliquary), the Firefighters' Memorial, and Voeghtly Cemetery. Bikers and hikers could come up Troy Hill Road,

eat, and go down Rialto Street and join the Heritage River Trail again, making a loop of about two miles.

This St. Nicholas Overlook would also be a nice destination for residents of Troy Hill to walk to in the evenings or daytime to get their exercise and meet other neighbors. A new school that will be in the North Catholic High School building could benefit from such an attraction too. North Side Leadership Conference has offered to prepare a touristy type map of the area including the entrance to Spring Garden-Troy Hill, up Troy Hill Road and a walking route through the neighborhood of Troy Hill including restaurants and cultural-historical sites. An attractive tourist map could be given out at all North Side cultural locations, restaurants, the Chamber of Commerce, and Pittsburgh Tourism Bureau. The St. Nicholas Overlook could be part of the Charm Bracelet places in the North Side to see.

This proposal for a St. Nicholas Overlook could become a "charm" on the charm bracelet of all the wonderful places to visit on North Side.

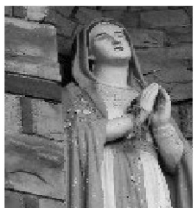


photo by Steve Willing

## St. Nick's Church Bells, Blessed Mother Statue and Corner Stone Whereabouts

Recently an announcement came from the North Catholic High School Staff that the outdoor statue of the Blessed Mother from Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto of St. Nicholas Croatian Church, North Side, would be restored and placed in a newly built grotto on the new North Catholic High School grounds. The grotto is being donated by the contractors of the school project. The new high school being built in

Cranberry, Butler County is set to open next year.

Also, the new high school's chapel will house one of the three original bells that were removed from St. Nicholas Church, N.S.'s bell towers, prior to its demolition last year. In the Spring of 1901, three bells were donated to St. Nicholas Church, N.S. by Croatian Lodges. The bells were cast by the Shane Bell Foundry Co. in Baltimore, Maryland.



# Church Bells, Blessed Mother and Corner Stone Whereabouts

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The first bell is dedicated to both Saints Cyril and



Methodius, brothers. The second bell is dedicated to St. George. The third bell is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin of Trsat. The parishioners were concerned about the welfare of their homeland at the turn of that century. As a prayer and tribute to their homeland, a special message was cast in the largest bell. The inscription reads "Sts. Cyril and Methodius, pray for the great United Croatia." It is unknown which bell will go to the new North Catholic High School or the future of the remaining two bells.



photo by Susan Petrick

Joseph Marohnic who owned a bookstore on East Ohio Street near the Church, sent letters to many of the Croatian lodges throughout the country asking for

contributions towards the purchase of stained glass windows. The response was overwhelming! To date, no information has been given as to the whereabouts of the stained glass windows since they were removed prior to the North Side Church's demolition.

Encouraged by the stained glass windows response, Joseph Marohnic and his committee sent letters to Croatian organizations throughout the United States and Canada requesting donations for the purchase of church bells. Again the response was outstanding. Parishioners from St. Nicholas N.S. Parish donated the remainder of the necessary funds. Instead of having only one or two bells, the parish was able to afford three bells.

Recently, St. Nicholas Millvale Cemetery Committee announced that plans are in process for selecting an area in the St. Nicholas N.S. Cemetery located on Hahn Road for installation of the corner stone from St. Nicholas Church, N.S. Installation of the corner stone will occur hopefully in the spring of 2014.

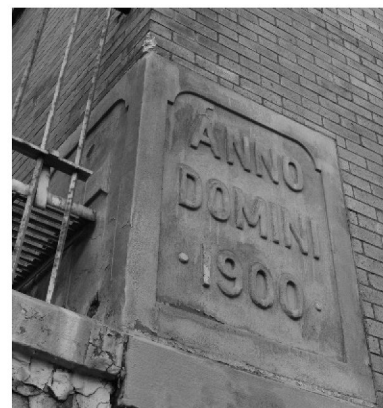


photo by Susan Petrick

Website

Visit the PHCF Website, [www.stnicholasns.org](http://www.stnicholasns.org) to view more, historical St. Nicholas photos, a detailed history of St. Nicholas Church, N.S., architecture, it's historical significance and plans to memorialize our Croatian Cathedral. Share this link with friends, family and supporters of St. Nicholas.

# "We can only grow together"

by Jane Sestric

This is a slogan that appeared in an educational publication I read years ago. This is true of the Croatian Community in Pittsburgh as well.

The destruction of St. Nicholas Church, N.S. took only a few nights, but the scar on the hillside and in our hearts will last for a long time to come. In spite of this, we are still connected to one another by family ties and by memories that can never be destroyed.



As Thanksgiving Day approaches, we want to convey our sincere appreciation for your part in both supporting and commemorating St. Nicholas Church, your faithful attendance at St. Nicholas Day Banquets, Memorial Day Services and countless events that bring us together across generations.

We thank the many people who have contributed their time, attendance, energy and donations to save St. Nicholas and now to remember the church and its members.



We continue to work together

to create a memorial to St. Nicholas Church, N.S.

The donations you have made will be applied to these memorial projects and to the important work that PCHF is undertaking that you can read about in this Newsletter. As Henry Ford said: "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success."



We have lost the structure of St. Nicholas Church, but we know that there are still many friends with fond memories of St. Nicholas, some of which are shared on *storyboards* that will be displayed at the St. Nicholas Day Banquet. PCHF will continue to build on these relationships and find ways to memorialize the people and parish that was the Mother Church of Croatian Catholic Churches in North America.





# St. Nicholas 3 Bags of Gold Fund

by Jack Schmitt

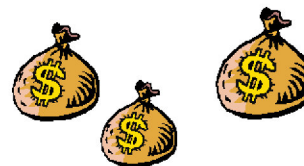
The 3 Bags of Gold Fund was initiated in 2009 for the purpose of helping to offset on-going PCHF expenses. The three-dollar (\$3.00) donation requested from each person of Croatian ancestry coincides with the feast day, December 6, of our patron saint and the three bags of gold St. Nicholas anonymously gave to a peasant man to help his three daughters gather a dowry and avoid being sold into slavery.

Many donors have contributed to this Fund in memory of their deceased loved ones each year. Others have sent in donations to acknowledge living, family members. Whatever your intention, this is a wonderful way to let your family know that you remember them and to pay tribute to the person, St. Nicholas.

If enough people donate only \$3.00 per Croatian in their family or as a memorial each year, PCHF can afford to continue to send out the newsletters with it's printing and postage costs, pay for insurance and other costs.

Please use the form below when sending in your donation.

Thank you.



## 3 BAGS of GOLD FUND

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

*Send your suggestions and/or donation to:*

**Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation, P. O. Box 5812, Pittsburgh, PA 15209**

*PCHF is a 501 (c) (3), non-profit, tax exempt organization*

**2013**



Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation  
P. O. Box 5812  
Pittsburgh, PA 15209-0812

**Address Service Requested**

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**How To Reach Us**

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

You may call any of the following Executive Committee Members by telephone as shown below

Bernice Goyak	412 821-1106
Bill Kurtek	724 625-9145
Susan Petrick	412 821-3725
Pat Polaritz	412 231-4324
Francis Schmitt	412 322-8223
Jane Sestric	412 231-8134
Bill Vergot	724 941-8134
Steve Willing	412 527-5764

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**UPCOMING PCHF EXECUTIVE AND GENERAL MEETING**

All are welcome to attend!

**Monday, December 2, 2013 at 7:00 P.M.**

**JAVOR HALL**

**805 EAST STREET, PITTSBURGH, PA 15212**



# St. Nicholas Day



## Banquet

Saturday,

December 7, 2013

Javor Hall

805 East St., Pittsburgh PA 15212

Special guest visit by  
Saint Nicholas

"Special Guest Speaker"

DAN CESSNA, District Executive,  
PennDOT, District 11

\$20.00 - per adult

\$10.00 - per child

5 - 12 yrs. of age

Cash Bar

Fabulous listening and dancing pleasure  
by:  
The Mikey Dee Band

Doors open at 5 p.m.  
Buffet at 6 p.m

Delicious hot buffet dinner  
prepared by  
Nova Cafe Catering

"Special" presentation by  
LJELJO Ensemble,  
newest Croatian Folk  
Ensemble in Pgh.

Featuring story boards with photos of  
St. Nicholas Church, N.S.  
parishioners' families

The Preserve Croatian Heritage Foundation (PCHF) and Javor Hall will again jointly sponsor the Saint Nicholas Day Banquet. **Everyone is invited to join us!!**

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**All tickets must be paid in advance by December 3, 2013**

*Please make checks payable to PCHF and mail to:*

**PCHF**

**c/o Bernice Goyak**

**254 Arlington Street**

**Pittsburgh, PA 15209**

For more information, call 412 821-1106

