

# OCCJ

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78th NATIONAL CONVENTION:  
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**The mission of the Orthodox Christian JOURNAL is to educate the membership of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America, to showcase the talents of its membership and, in so doing, to propagate the Holy Orthodox Christian Faith.**

## Mission Statement of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America is a national organization of Orthodox Christians. ***Our mission is to proclaim, share and reveal our Orthodox Christian Faith through service, fellowship and example.*** We accomplish this by:

- studying the tenets of our Faith
- supporting, encouraging and promoting Orthodox Youth ministries
- supporting, encouraging and promoting the missionary growth of our church
- encouraging and promoting unity among all Orthodox jurisdictions
- establishing practical means for Orthodox Christians to form enduring friendships on local and national levels through networking
- providing educational, cultural, social and athletic activities for the people of our Orthodox Faith.

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## WELCOME TO THE NEW FELLOWSHIP PRESIDENT AND FAMILY!

John Schultz, the new President of the F.O.C.A., was born on September 24, 1965 to lifelong F.R.O.C members Paul and Mary Ann Schultz. His hometown is Weirton, WV, and his home parish is St. Nicholas Church in Weirton, the first parish of the founder of the F.R.O.C./F.O.C.A. Fr. Vladimir Prislopsky. John is married to the former Sonia Parker of King of Prussia, PA. John and Sonia met at a meeting of the F.R.O.C. Junior Department in Harrisburg, PA in March of 1996. They were married in Weirton on May 25, 1997. John and Sonia have two children: Sarah, age 4, and John Jr. (Johnny), age 3. They currently live in Weirton.



John has been very active in the Fellowship and in the Church since he was a child. He began serving as an altar boy at age five and still serves as a subdeacon and choir member at St. Nicholas. John has served as the parish president for four years and previously was the parish vice-president. John is a member of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania Diocesan Council. On a national level, John is a member of the O.C.A. Medical/Ethics Commission since being appointed in 2002.

His involvement in the Fellowship began when he and a group of Juniors from St Nicholas reactivated Junior Chapter 58-J in Weirton. John served as vice-president for several years and as president his last year as a Junior. For several years the Weirton Chapter 58-J included not only our current president but also our current Vice-President Michael Steffaro, current Journal Layout Editor Michael Schultz, current Sports Department Member Anthony Schultz, and current co-chair of Family Focus Beth (Steffaro) Willison. Their spiritual advisor was past National Spiritual Advisor and current Webmaster Fr. John Steffaro.

John remained active in the Weirton Senior Chapter while in college. He was also a multiple winner of F.R.O.C. Scholarships. John served for many years as a camp counselor for the Junior Olympics. Once John finished his medical residency, he returned to Weirton and became increasingly active in the organization. He became the junior advisor for Chapter 58-J in 1994. He was elected as senior chapter vice president in 1995 and as president in 2001. He still serves as president of Chapter # 58. John served as Pittsburgh District Junior Advisor from 1996 - 1998 and was elected as district governor in 1998. He was governor until he was elected as national vice-president in 2002. John is the current immediate past governor of the Pittsburgh District. On a national level John has also served as Junior Olympics Camp Director, National Junior Department member, as chairman of the by-laws review committee, and as a member of the three-year strategic planning committee.

After graduating from Weirton High School in 1983, John went on to attend West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV. He graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry in 1987. He then attended WVU School of Medicine from which he graduated and received his M.D. in 1991. John was a resident in family medicine from 1991 - 1994 when he was chosen as chief resident in 1993 -1994. After residency, he returned to Weirton to practice medicine. In July of 2002, John formed his own medical corporation, Family First Healthcare, which is now a three physician family practice owned by John. He is clinical assistant professor of family medicine at the WVU School of Medicine and travels to Morgantown monthly to teach medical students and residents. John is currently the secretary/treasurer of the medical staff of Weirton Medical Center.

John's leisure interests include sports, especially baseball. He is an avid fan of the Pittsburgh Pirates, Steelers and Penguins. John is also a fan of college football and basketball. He and Sonia attend most home games of the WVU Mountaineers. As a college sports fan, John expresses his sympathy to the members of the Fellowship who are fans of the Rutgers Scarlet Knights. John's other interests include reading science fiction and fantasy, cooking, and playing with Sarah and Johnny.

As president, John plans to continue to encourage the Fellowship's growth as a valuable service and social organization of the Church. He plans to promote our continued service in whatever capacity we are called upon and is within our capability. He extends his thanks to the membership for their confidence in choosing him as their president and prays that he will fulfill your expectations and live up to the standards of the past presidents and leaders of the F.O.C.A. John asks for your prayers in support of his presidency.

## EDITOR'S NOTES

**Nicholas Ressetar**

Editor, *Orthodox Christian JOURNAL*

As the trees begin to change colors and an invigorating chill fills the air, we're pleased to bring you the annual post-convention issue of the Journal. "It's a Jungle Out There" was the 78th national convention's theme and the Campbell "O" Club certainly lived up to it. Thanks Campbell "Kids"! We have extensive coverage of the sessions, the liturgical services, social activities, the young adult session and the banquet speech of outgoing President John Kruchok. Be sure to check out our full-page of color photos and for over 250 convention photos, log on to the Fellowship's website and follow the link. Thanks to photog Leon Sheean (who's taking a breather as he recovers from surgery). The Journal congratulates and welcomes our new president, Dr. John Schultz, wife Sonia and family, and his impressive bio appears on the President's page. Congrats and welcome also to Michael Steffaro, wife Allison and family (including their new addition!), who becomes vice president after several years as New Jersey District governor.

The other color page is devoted to photography contest winners, courtesy of Nancy Filak, another Journal first. Speaking of winners, congratulations to those Juniors --- Stephan Pron, Peter Lynch, Nicholas Hedge & John Eisengrein --- who penned the essays appearing in this edition. They make us proud! Also, we present the 2004 national scholarship winners in an article by John Kruchok -- our best to all.

Greg Cimboric of the sports department fills us in on the adventurous national summer sports tourney sponsored by the Frackville "R" Club in July, and for those who don't think that Frackville is the "center of the universe" .... well, don't write to me! The Ohio District brings us a story on the new multi-purpose building at St. Vladimir's Camp as well as the district basketball tournament. The Orthodox parochial school in Warren, OH opened the year, and Betty Ann Perschka gives the details. And our continuing coverage of the Diocese of Alaska features an article on improvements to the library at St. Herman's Seminary. Maybe the new SUV we donated can be turned into a sort of bookmobile???

The Kidz page is a St. Nicholas Day (December 6) project: planting of wheat for a Christmas holy supper candle centerpiece. Our thanks to Ellen Motoviloff Miller for the fine drawing and Matushka Theodora Ressetar for the unique idea. The I.O.C.C. invites us to obtain free prayer journals for our children. And OCA director of humanitarian aid Arlene Kallaur, on the back cover, reminds us to support the 11th annual Christmas stocking project so that more gifts than ever can be presented to needy Orthodox children around the world and in Alaska.

A reminder also to start contributing to the Fellowship's annual St. Nicholas Day gift program to children of seminarians. Donations may be sent directly to National Treasurer Michael Bowan. We expect a record number again. And in breaking news, Sherrie Keblish and her dog, "Trouble," won the national service dog competition! We'll have the story next time along with district convention coverage, Amy Barrett's mission trip to Korea and much more. Until then, enjoy the Fellowship you find on these pages . . .

### 2004 Articles Deadlines for the OCJ:

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*Send all material to our Editor:*

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## F.O.C.A.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND NEWS IN-BRIEF

#### Plan Ahead to Spend Labor Day Weekend at the 2005 F.O.C.A. National Convention in Washington D.C.

The Colonial District is planning a "MONUMENTAL EVENT" for everyone of all ages to enjoy. Our goal is to have more Orthodox Christians attend this Convention than attended the last Convention in Washington in 1983.

The hotel room rate of \$85.00 and FREE PARKING (which is unheard of in the D.C. Area) should go a long way toward meeting this goal. In addition, as you have seen from the flyer that you recently received, the Colonial District has provided tremendous opportunities for those who come to Washington. If we haven't enticed you enough, the Colonial District's Halloween treat to you is to have our convention website/link up and running, in both the F.O.C.A. and OCA websites, during the fall. You can then be updated on an on-going basis as new convention activities and happenings develop.

**REMEMBER  
THE F.O.C.A.  
IS ALIVE  
IN '05 IN  
WASHINGTON.**



### FALL 2004 TRANSITIONS

**BIRTH:** Barry and Deborah Koncel of Chapter #96, Burr Ridge, IL, announce the birth of their son, Benjamin John, on August 22, 2004. The proud grandparents are Robert F. and Dorothy Koncel, also of #96. Congratulations and many years!

**BIRTHDAY:** Past National President and Life Member John "Dany" Daniluck, celebrates his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in October. Cards can be sent to him at Rosewalk #337, 1301 Ritter Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46219. Mnoghaya Leta!

**MARRIAGE:** Mary Semanchik, daughter of Don and Alix Semanchik, all of St. John's, Chapter #180, Bridgeport, CT, was married to Charles Hall, III, on May 30, 2004. Mary is vice president of her chapter. Congratulations and many years!

# PRESENTING THE 2004 FOCA NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The 2004 FOCA National Scholarships were formally announced at the Grand Banquet of the 78th National Convention in Grand Island, New York, July 18, 2004. \$12,000 in awards were reviewed and approved by the Executive Board and included eleven \$1,000 and two \$500 awards as a result of a tie for the Mischa Michaelson Seminary Award. Mrs. Sandra Kapelan, FOCA National Administrative Secretary serves as Scholarship Program Administrator. The Scholarship Board of Judges was chaired by Elizabeth Dutko and included members of the Anthracite District, which completed its three year term. Judging will move to the Michigan District as approved by the National Board of Trustees.

Several important changes were approved on the convention floor for scholarship awards beginning in 2005. National Scholarship Awards will now be available for undergraduate and graduate study if you meet the course load requirements. (Applicants receiving either William Fekula or John Klimkosky can win a maximum of two awards in any two years.) You must be a member from July of the previous year (i.e. July, 2004 through 2005) and the year of applicant to be eligible. You can obtain an application from the National Administrative Office by calling (570) 825-3158 or via email request to orthodoxfellowship@yahoo.com Applications should be available by December, 2004.

Here are the winners:

## FRED LEWIS AWARD

For the applicant deemed most outstanding by the judges

(Tie) \$1,000 each



**KRISTIN FERRICK**  
(FRED LEWIS AWARD \$1,000)

Kristin is a member of the Campbell Jr. "O" Club, chapter 27 and resides in Youngstown, Ohio. She plans on attending the University of Akron. She is active in St. John the Baptist parish in Campbell and has served as chapter president and Ohio District Governor. At school, she was a member of the Volleyball team, National Honor Society and Student Council.



**SARAH VANSUCH**  
(FRED LEWIS AWARD - \$1,000)

Sarah is a member of the Campbell "O" Club and resides in Warren, Ohio. Sarah also received the Fred Lewis Award in 2003, which is the highest award possible. She attends Youngstown State University, entering her sophomore year and is a political science major. She is a choir member, Reader and helped

reactivate the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCJ) at Youngstown. She is a member of the FOCA National Junior Olympics review committee, has been a camp counselor, national and district convention alternate, national sports tournament participant and was Junior chapter President.



**CHELSEA SPECHT**  
(WILLIAM FEKULA AWARD - \$1,000)

Chelsea is a member of the All Saints Junior "O" Club, chapter #105 and resides in Olyphant, PA. She was Junior chapter President, sings in the church choir and was an assistant teacher in the Sunday School program. She intends to pursue an engineering degree in college. In addition to volunteering to many civic service projects, Chelsea was captain of the Girls

Basketball and Softball teams in high school and a member of the National Honor Society.



**CHRISTOPHER MALACKANY**  
(WILLIAM FEKULA AWARD - \$1,000)

Christopher is a member of the Akron "O" Club, chapter 20/32 and resides in Canton, Ohio. He attends Miami University and is entering his junior year as a marketing major. He was an altar server at church, worked at St. Herman's Home in Cleveland, participated in Project Mexico and is a former member of the Russian youth dancers. As a junior, he

was chapter treasurer and participated on the basketball team. At college, he is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta and Phi Eta Sigma and has participated in service activities at soup kitchens and homeless shelters. He is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and works part-time for the university.



**ERIN MCGUINNESS**  
(WILLIAM FEKULA AWARD - \$1,000)

Erin is a member of the Syracuse chapter 47/135J and resides in Jamesville, New York. She plans to attend Daemen College, Amherst, New York this fall. She served as Junior Chapter President and is active in the parish community. Erin was a member of the high school swimming team and school concert band. She worked as a lifeguard during the summers.



**PETER CZERWINSKI**

(WILLIAM FEKULA AWARD - \$1,000)

Peter is a member of the North Suburban Junior "O" Club, chapter #1J, Allison Park and resides in Cranberry Township, PA. He plans to major in Mechanical Engineering. At St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, he served as altar boy and website designer. He participated in FOCA National Basketball Tournaments and at high school, was a member of the varsity tennis team and marching band. He is a member of the National Honor Society and has volunteered for the Winter Special Olympics and Salvation Army.



**JOSEPH UHRINA**

(WILLIAM FEKULA AWARD - \$1,000)

Joseph is a member of the St. Andrew's "O" Club, Maple Heights, Ohio, chapter #220. He resides in Brunswick, Ohio. He attends Ohio State University as a Business major. He has been an altar server, reader and choir member. He served as junior chapter president and remains very active in all facets of FOCA life.



**STEVEN BONDIRA**

(WILLIAM FEKULA AWARD - \$1,000)

Stephen is a member of the St. Stephens Jr. OCF chapter 82J and resides in Warminster, PA. He accepted appointment to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Groton, Connecticut this fall. At church, he served as altar boy and participated in many service projects connected with the chapter and parish. At school, he was a member of the track team, concert band and symphonic wind Ensemble. A member of the National Honor Society and the Future Business Leaders of America, Stephen is an Eagle Scout (Boy Scouts of America) and received the Order of the Arrow, the National Honor Society of Scouting.



**ANDREW FOURNARIDIS**

(WILLIAM FEKULA AWARD - \$1,000)

Andrew is a member of the North Suburban Jr. "O" Club, chapter 1J, Allison Park and resides in Gibsonia, PA. He will attend Grove City College and plans on majoring in political science. At the cathedral, Andrew is an Epistle Reader, Sunday School leader and Christian Pageant Assistant. At school he has been a member of the National Honor Society, the Marching and Con-

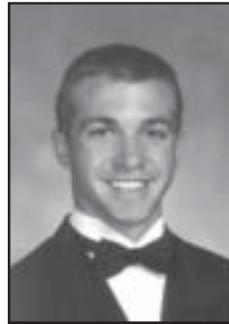
cert Band, Jazz Band, Jazz Ensemble, Student Council, Chess Club and Pennsylvania state-wide Mock Trial Competition. In the community, he is a peer tutor for the Richland Youth Center and is a library volunteer for summer reading.



**MARY CONROY**

(JOHN KLIMKOSKY AWARD - \$1,000)

Mary is a member of chapter #47/135J and resides in Syracuse, New York. She served as junior chapter vice-president. She is active in the parish and has helped with coffee hours, dinners and visiting the homebound. A member of the National Honor Society, Mary was active in band and orchestra. Her community service included volunteering at St. Camillus Nursing Home and lifeguarding.



**CHRISTOPHER SKVIR**

(JOHN KLIMKOSKY AWARD - \$1,000)

Christopher is a member of the St. Stephen's OCJ chapter #82 and resides in Delran, NJ. He attends Rutgers University and plans on majoring in turfgrass science. At church he was the head altar server, attended Sunday School and worked many church dinners. As a junior, he was chapter vice-president. He has attended district and national events. In high school he was captain of the varsity golf team, receiving 4 varsity letters. He is a member of the National Honor Society and was selected as a Burlington County Scholastic League Athlete (2003).

**MISHA MICHAELSON SEMINARY AWARD  
(TIE, \$500 EACH)**

**Alexei Knagin and Stephanie Trefon** were selected to co-receive the Misha Michaelson Seminary Award. They attend St. Herman's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kodiak, Alaska.



## F.O.C.A PRESIDENT JOHN KRUCHOK 2004 BANQUET SPEECH

YOUR BEATITUDES, MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, DELEGATES, MEMBERS AND GUESTS.... TEN MONTHS AGO, IN COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG, WE CONCLUDED ANOTHER OUTSTANDING NATIONAL CONVENTION... WE ADDRESSED A THEME... "SUPPORTING OUR SEMINARIES"... BUILT NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR SEMINARY DEANS, AND MOVED FORWARD WITH INCREASED INTEREST AND ASSISTANCE TO OUR SEMINARIANS AND THEIR FAMILIES. WE LEFT WILLIAMSBURG, ENERGIZED AND DETERMINED TO FURTHER THE SEED PLANTED SEVERAL YEARS AGO. LAST FALL, DISTRICT CONVENTIONS PLACED THE CHALLENGE OF SEMINARIAN ASSISTANCE ON THEIR AGENDAS – THEY PASSED MOTIONS TO FURTHER SUPPORT. AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON ARRIVED, DISTRICTS, CHAPTERS, MEMBERS AND FRIENDS COLLECTED FUNDS SO THAT EVERY SEMINARIAN FAMILY COULD RECEIVE A \$50 GIFT PER CHILD, SO THAT THIS CHRISTMAS COULD BE AS SPECIAL AS EVERY OTHER. AS THE HOLIDAYS CONCLUDED AND WE MOVED INTO THE NEW YEAR, FOCA MEMBERS DUG INTO THEIR POCKETS EVEN DEEPER, AS WE SOLD "ICE-SCRAPERS" FOR A CAUSE IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND COMPLETED A SECOND ROUND OF CONTRIBUTIONS FOR OUR "GIFT OF LOVE" PROJECT.



BY SPRING, THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF HIS GRACE, BISHOP NIKOLAI, A NEW VEHICLE WAS SECURED AND OUR "GIFT OF LOVE" BECAME REALITY. EVEN AFTER ITS PURCHASE AND FULL-FUNDING, MONEY CONTINUED TO POUR IN AS FOCA MEMBERS ONCE AGAIN PROVED THAT THEY ARE UNIQUE.

TONIGHT, AS WE REJOICE IN THE BLESSINGS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US IN OUR MISSION TO ASSIST IN SEMINARY LIFE... ON BEHALF OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, MAY I OFFER OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED IN SO MANY WAYS POSSIBLE. I'D ALSO LIKE TO TAKE THIS TIME TO THANK FR. CHAD HATFIELD, DEAN OF ST. HERMAN'S SEMINARY, WHO JOINED US THIS WEEKEND AND OFFICIALLY BECAME PART OF THE FOCA FAMILY. WE HAVE A VERY SPECIAL ORGANIZATION. THERE ARE FEW ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CHURCH TODAY WHERE ONE PERSON CAN TRULY MAKE A DIFFERENCE – ONE IDEA, ONE DETERMINED INDIVIDUAL, AND A WHOLE NETWORK OF CHAPTERS WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR SUPPORT. THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY THERE HAVE BEEN COUNTLESS EXAMPLES BUT MORE RECENTLY, THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF DR. MICHAEL WUSYLKO, NOW DEACON MIKE, HE INITIATED "HEARTBEAT SUNDAY" WHICH IS NOW "GIFTS OF LOVE"... OR BETTY SLANTA, WHO FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS HAS RUN THE FOCA MISSION HOTLINE, TO ALLISON STEFFARO, WHO COORDINATES OUR SEMINARIAN ASSISTANCE.

IT BEGINS WITH A "SEED", IT IS NURTURED AND IT GROWS, AND THE POTENTIAL IS LIMITLESS. 2004 MARKS THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR FORMAL AFFILIATION WITH THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA. MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS – INCREASED COOPERATION IN YOUTH MINISTRY, SUPPORT OF CHURCH PROGRAMS FROM OUR GIFTS TO F.O.S., SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO OUR SEMINARIES AND SEMINARIANS, COOPERATIVE FUND RAISING EFFORTS FOR THE "CHRISTMAS STOCKING PROJECT" AND FOR NEEDY ALASKAN CLERGY AND THEIR FAMILIES TO NAME A FEW.

THE PAST TEN YEARS HAS ALSO SHOWN A TREMENDOUS INCREASE IN FOCA MEMBERS SERVING IN CHURCH DEPARTMENTS AND ON COMMITTEES. THROUGH THE LEADERSHIP OF METROPOLITAN THEODOSIUS, AND NOW METROPOLITAN HERMAN AND FR. ROBERT KONDRATICK, OCA CHANCELLOR, THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN OPEN DOOR TO COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT, AND I WOULD LIKE TO PERSONALLY THANK THEM FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE THE FOCA THROUGH THE CHURCH WEBSITE AND NEWSPAPER. WE HAVE ALSO HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE HOLY SYNOD OF BISHOPS AND NOW TO PREPARE FOCA REPORTS TO DISTRIBUTE ON MANY LEVELS OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP.

MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND I AM SURE MUCH MORE CAN BE DONE. THE FOCA HAS A REAL FRIEND IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA AND THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA HAS A REAL FRIEND IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA. IT IS A NATURAL MARRIAGE, ONE OF LOVE AND MUTUAL RESPECT, AND A UNDYING COMMITMENT TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH. AT NEXT YEAR'S ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL IN TORONTO, THE THEME WILL BE CENTERED AROUND "THE CHURCH AND ITS FUTURE". WITH THE FOCA'S LONG STANDING COMMITMENT TO YOUTH MINISTRY, SEMINARIAN ASSISTANCE, CHURCH PROGRAM FUNDING, HUMANITARIAN AID AND SERVICE PROJECTS, I HOPE THE FOCA WILL BE USED AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE CAN BENEFIT THE FUTURE GROWTH OF ORTHODOXY IN NORTH AMERICA. IN CLOSING, I WISH TO THANK EVERYONE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE SERVED AGAIN AS YOUR PRESIDENT. WE HAVE A SPECIAL ORGANIZATION BECAUSE SO MANY OF YOU ARE SO SPECIAL.

THANKS TO ALL OF SERVE AT THE LOCAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS. YOU ARE REALLY THE HEROES OF THE FOCA. IT'S A THANKLESS JOB TO COLLECT DUES, HOLD MEETINGS, DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION AND MEET YET ANOTHER FUNDRAISING APPEAL. WHILE WE MAY HAVE CHANGED OUR NAME TO FOCA, WE REALLY ARE THE F.R.O.C. "FUND RAISING ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS". THANKS AGAIN, AND GOD BLESS.

## 78TH NATIONAL CONVENTION: SOCIAL/FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

In keeping with the Fellowship's name, a multi-faceted range of social activities were enjoyed throughout the convention. On Thursday morning the President's Open golf tourney was held at a nearby state park in the wind, rain and cool temperatures. Fr. John Steffaro, nicknamed "Banana Hook" by Elephant's Ears, the convention newsletter of Matt Vansuch, was said to be literally "walking on water" as he shot an admirable 83. Brother Bob Steffaro, however, didn't play quite as well, joking that he was too worried about messing up his hair! Prizes were awarded to the winners. "Let's Monkey Around" welcomed gathering delegates that evening in a last-minute change of program. The curtains opened to reveal three African drummers in costume playing native songs. The room was decorated with "spotted" balloons, giraffe candles and palm trees with lights. "Greetings to our Orthodox brothers and sisters," they said, as they sang and played songs like "Lion of Judah" and "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Jordan," West African music from 1325 A.D. Two women singers and dancers appeared with a "gourd rattle" that kids in the audience used as the "Jumbai" drum played on for unity and peace. "Devil we're going to bring your kingdom down!" It was an auspicious beginning to the "Safari Weekend."

Friday afternoon saw a number of tours, including a trip to nearby Niagra Falls (about 5 miles from the hotel) for a "Journey thru the Jungle" ride on the famous "Maid of the Mist" boat beneath the falls or a visit to historic parts of Buffalo. Others visited the Seneca Indian Casino or Casino Niagra on the Canadian side. The misty, cool weather broke into warm sunshine just in time for "Jazzin in the Jungle," a sold-out seafood buffet under a tent along the river (although to this writer it sounded much more like blues/rock than jazz). That evening the "Golden Agers" gathered under the direction of Eleanor Skuby for their annual song-fest and booby-prize giveaway as did the young (and not-so-young) adults.

After sessions Saturday, the Juniors held a "Chillin' with the Chimps" social at poolside while others continued sightseeing or relaxing. Three busloads on a "Sassy

Safari" journeyed to the Canadian side for the evening after vespers. Border security delays took a full hour each way. On Sunday a sold-out "Animal Kingdom" brunch followed the Divine Liturgy. That afternoon numerous district and other receptions were held, including the St. Andrew Fellowship's. The young adults held their annual volleyball game despite a thunderstorm. And Juniors boarded the "Grand Lady" boat, the hotel's own, for a dinner/d.j. cruise along the Niagra River.

The convention's social highlights undoubtedly were the "King's Royal Feast" banquet and "Swingin' with the Monkey's Ball." Fr. Bob Kondratick graciously served as M.C. for the dinner and somewhat of a stand-up comic as well. After introducing the head table and guests, he recognized Lori Rusnak and JoAnn Sirilla as wearing the best hats at church, joking that "the two Metropolitanans want to exchange their white klobuks!" On a more serious tone, Metropolitan Herman, he said, was just about to observe the 2nd anniversary of his election as primate (as Metropolitan Theodosius was celebrating the 2nd anniversary of his retirement) and 40th anniversary of his ordination to the holy priesthood. In the last 2 years, His Beatitude has made official visits to Alaska, Constantinople, Russia, Poland, Ukraine and Georgia, representing the Holy Synod and all of us. He has visited all the religious leaders in the U.S. and Mexico and next year will do the same in Canada. And he just returned from an inspiring pilgrimage to Russia as the Tikhvin icon of the Mother of God "came home."

Metropolitan Herman, who has been a Fellowship member since his childhood as a junior, told the banquet assembly that it was good to be here for a rest after busy weeks of traveling. "In no way can I express to you what the people felt and witnessed in Russia with the Tikhvin icon. One had to be there." It was a feeling that one can say truly was a faith of love that can lead us to the Heavenly Kingdom. "Russia is our Mother Church, and most of our relatives came from that Church," he said. Over 250,000 faithful came to pray before the icon, deep within their hearts and souls. The crowds could not be held back, even kissing the armored car the icon had arrived in.

"Where did we go wrong in America," His Beatitude asked. "Before so few venerated the icon while it was here for many years. The first thing out of the people's mouths was

thank you for returning the icon. Patriarch Alexis asked me to personally thank the Orthodox faithful in America." Metropolitan Herman then posed this challenge to F.O.C.A. members: assist the hierarchs and clergy in the spiritual renewal of America. The Russian faithful waited in line for 6 to 7 hours to venerate the Tikhvin icon, including small children and the elderly. What can we do? "We must be willing to live our Faith as they do. And their zeal reminded me: why do some of our churches no longer have vespers?"

His Beatitude bemoaned the inescapable fact that numbers are going down in our parishes and dioceses. "There can be no change unless we make the change. We must decide to participate fully in the liturgical life of the Church. We cannot tell the priest not to have vespers because it's summer-time." Next year St. Tikhon's Monastery, the oldest in North America, where saints have walked on the hallowed grounds, will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and he urged all Fellowship members to bring your families and friends and be a witness to the Lord at the Memorial Day pilgrimage. "We have taken our Faith for granted and must repent and renew and invite others to join us. May God bless you for all that you do and keep you for many years!" the Metropolitan concluded. All stood and sang a hearty "Eis polla eti despota!"

Fr. Bob then introduced President Kruchok noting that because he received the "gold" St. Innocent's medal reserved for patriarchs (which was mistakenly brought from the chancery instead of the bronze), we must now refer to him as "Your Holiness." He stated that this organization was founded by Fr. Prislopsky, and that John has followed worthily in his footsteps. (Note: the president's address is published separately in this issue). President Kruchok also announced this year's scholarship winners, several of whom were in the audience.

Shortly after the banquet finished, Bob Spiwak and his Orchestra from Cleveland entertained dancers at the gala ball with polkas, the folk dances and other favorites. A d.j. also played as enthusiastic kids, teens and young adults crowded the dance floor. As it came to an end well after midnight, dozens of young people clasped hands and sang the F.O.C.A. anthem.

The convention's final day wrapped up with the "Out of Africa" farewell luncheon at the hotel after sessions ended, leaving conventioners to say their goodbyes, head out of the jungle, and go back to reality.

## *Leadership Training Seminar at FOCA Convention was a success!*

By: Lara Herzak

The second annual Young Adult Session was held at this year's Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America's (FOCA) convention in Niagara Falls, NY. The session was a success on all levels with over 30 young adults participating.

Fr. Chad Hatfield, Dean of St. Herman's Seminary in Kodiak, Alaska and Vice President of OCMC spoke about the needs and opportunities for missionary work in Alaska. He is starting a camp for kids in Alaska and hopes that young adults from across the country will volunteer to be camp counselors. Alaska is a secluded place and by bringing young adults in from around the country, he hopes to show the kids in Alaska that they are not alone; that there are plenty of kids around the country that share in the same faith.

A Leadership Training Seminar was lead by FOCA Past-President, Michael Herzak. This seminar included Robert's Rules of Orders, meeting planning, public speaking, creating change, etc. He also encouraged the young adults in attendance to get more involved in the FOCA and OCA as the time is now. It was easy to see that the seminar was successful. For the remainder of the weekend, the young adults talked about the seminar and got excited when they knew and understood what was happening on the session floor.

The young adults in attendance also discussed the FOCA young adult sponsored service project at the 2005 All-American Council. Following the service project, the FOCA will host a social and dance. All young adults at the AAC will be invited and encouraged to participate.

Mark your calendar now - Next year's FOCA Convention will take place Labor Day weekend 2005 in Alexandria, VA.

If you, or someone you know, would like to be added to the OCA young adult email distribution list, please email Lara Herzak at lherzak@yahoo.com.

To see pictures from the first young adult session at the 2003 FOCA convention, visit <http://www.orthodoxfellowship.org/>

For more information on young adult opportunities, visit [www.yya.o.ca.org](http://www.yya.o.ca.org). For more information on the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA), visit [www.orthodoxfellowship.org](http://www.orthodoxfellowship.org).

## 78<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL FOCA CONVENTION: JULY 14-19, 2004 CAMPBELL "O" CLUB, ST. JOHN CHURCH, CAMPBELL, OH GRAND ISLAND, NY "IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE"



Thank You Committee

### **Convention Sessions**

With the theme "It's a Jungle Out There," the 78<sup>th</sup> annual national convention of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America convened at the Holiday Inn Resort & Conference Center on Grand Island, NY from July 14-19, 2004. Sponsored by the Campbell "O" Club, Chapter #27, of St. John's Orthodox Church in Campbell, OH, convention co-chairs were Nicholas Vansuch and JoAnn Sirilla; Fr. John Steffaro served as convention committee spiritual advisor. The site was scenically situated along the Niagra River, just between Buffalo and Niagra Falls.

Friday morning the traditional opening procession was led by Ed Korolenko and Harold Homyak bearing the icons of St. Andrew, the patron saint, and the North American saints, followed by the National Board of Trustees, department directors and past national presidents. Michael Stenko of Hartford, CT, the convention choir director, led the singing and National Spiritual Advisor, Archpriest Eugene Vansuch, celebrated the molieben. National President John Kruchok gavelled the first session to order at 8:55 a.m. and Kathy Lazor, national recording secretary, called roll. (Kathy also chaired the superb convention program book which realized a superb profit!) The convention co-chairs then proceeded to present special "surprise" gifts to the entire board of trustees appropriate to the jungle theme. Past National President Joseph Baldowski was appointed parliamentarian, Walter Alesevich was named credentials committee chair and Nicholas Ressetar served as resolutions committee chair.

President Kruchok, after offering welcoming remarks and acknowledging the guests and past national officers present, made the assignments for the break-out sessions: membership/communications; CP&O/Internal-External/Finance; sports and juniors; and by-laws. He complimented the members on the extraordinary "Gift of Love" presented to St. Herman's Seminary in Kodiak, Alaska in May: a new Chevrolet Blazer SUV, purchased at a cost of \$27,500 and said that Fr. Chad Hatfield, the seminary dean, was traveling to the convention to personally offer his thanks and to report on their progress. National Treasurer Michael Bowan reviewed the detailed

financial reports of expenditures and income, noting that the "Gifts of Love" had exceeded its goal and the balance of funds would be given to the seminary. And then delegates and alternatives adjourned to their respective break-out sessions for the remainder of the morning.

Highlighting the second session at noon was the always stimulating report of the Fellowship's good friend, Orthodox Church in America Chancellor Protospresbyter Robert Kondratich, known to us simply as "Father Bob." He started by thanking the FOCA for all the fine things that we do for the Church, from the young adults/juniors programs in support of the OCA youth movement to humanitarian aid to the orphans in Ukraine, from the new seminary SUV to funding the chancery summer intern. Father Bob remarked that His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, the Fellowship's spiritual leader and OCA primate, had just returned from an extended visit to the Orthodox Church of Russia with his delegation and other pilgrims where the Tikhvin Mother of God icon was formally brought home from America in an inspiring visit receiving widespread media coverage and attended by several hundred thousand faithful. He reviewed many other aspects of Church life, including next year's All-American Council in Toronto, the problems of sexual misconduct and vocations.

President Kruchok next presented the membership plaques to those senior and junior chapters demonstrating the greatest numerical increase in members. This year's winners are St. Tikhon's Seminary "R" Club, with a net increase of 22 and St. Mary's Junior "O" Club, Minneapolis, MN with an overall addition of 14 new members. Congratulations to both chapters! He then awarded new chapter charters to St. Stephen's "O" Club in Orlando, FL, Chapters #251 and 251-J, where John had made a presentation over the winter (and ended up winning the raffle of 3 nights at Disney!). He specially thanked Fr. Mark Stevens, the pastor, and Nina Malinich for their efforts in organizing the new chapter, which had 4 delegates and alternates participating in the convention. And the new St. Andrew Jr. "O" Club in East Lansing, MI, chapter #249-J, was awarded its charter. Welcome to the Fellowship!

The sessions then turned to Dr. John Schultz, national vice president, who introduced a series of proposed amendments to the FOCA constitution and by-laws. The first was proposed by St. John's Sr. "O" Club of Alpha, NJ: to permit associate members to represent their chapters at district and national conventions/meetings (but not hold elective office). Much spirited debate was generated, pro and con. For example, Fr. Theodore Boback, spiritual advisor of St. Andrew's chapter in Baltimore, spoke strongly against, stating that voting on Orthodox issues should be for Orthodox only for theological and doctrinal reasons (Editor's note: associate members by definition are non-Orthodox). Alice Mallick, president of the Harrisburg "O" Club, however, supported it: as a convert herself, she said that this was a way to welcome non-Orthodox and a chapter could always instruct its delegates on how to vote. Michael Herzak, past national president and Cleveland #4/6, argued that since 1927, we had had a consistent policy of not allowing non-Orthodox to vote or hold office and we should keep that policy. Many others also contributed their opinions.

The motion did not receive the necessary 2/3 vote and was defeated.

Thirteen separate proposed amendments were made by the Weirton Orthodox Christian Fellowship, #58, many of a house-keeping nature to conform to actual practice and they were approved essentially as presented. Among the more significant: the board of executives will determine the salary and status of the administrative secretary; chapter meetings are to be held at a frequency determined by the chapter (not necessarily monthly); simplifying the process of membership transfer; deleting the section on "retaining membership"; empowering the national board of executives to determine the minimum chapter size (used to be 10 minimum); transferring responsibility of maintaining the official copy of the constitution and by-laws from the secretary to the vice president and giving him/her the responsibility of reviewing them; reducing the number needed for a quorum for board of trustees meetings; deleting the sergeant-at-arms provision; empowering the board of trustees to set the convention registration fee (now \$10); and for past national presidents who have registered as a convention delegate-at-large: "No Past President shall be permitted to serve as a Delegate or Alternate for their Chapter and as a National Officer and register as a Past President at the same convention. Their registration status may not be changed during the course of any single National Convention." It was also agreed to post an updated version of the constitution/by-laws on the FOCA website (Note: now posted). Sessions adjourned at 1 p.m. for a free afternoon of tours, sightseeing and swimming.

Following the Saturday morning memorial service, President Kruchok reconvened sessions at 9:10 a.m. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, retired OCA primate and FOCA life member, was welcomed to the convention with a slightly off-key version of "Eis polla eti despota." Metropolitan Theodosius, with his usual good humor, announced a special choir rehearsal. Margaret Pysarchyk, who received a 2003 OCMC/FOCA short-term missions grant, addressed the convention assembly on her trip last summer to Alaska. She offered her deep thanks to the Fellowship for its generosity in providing her funds, reported on her experiences and brought poster boards with photos. (Note: a written report with photos appeared in the last edition of the Journal.)

In keeping with the Alaska theme (any jungles up there?), Fr. Chad Hatfield, St. Herman's Seminary dean, was introduced. Flying all night to get to the convention, he had been fogged in for days in Kodiak and said that 23 missionary workers on Spruce Island were also fogged in and getting low on food. Fr. Chad noted that there was a "multitude of opportunities" for Orthodoxy in Alaska, not just problems. For the first time he arrived at the airport he was met by the old, broken-down FROC van which used a lot of gas (at \$2.42/gallon). This May, at the commencement exercises, the seminary was blessed to receive the shiny new SUV from the Fellowship to replace the van, he said. "You are all missionaries," according to Fr. Chad, "and the new vehicle is a sign of your loving concern. You have contributed to the vision of St. Herman and the other missionaries." He reported that in the upcoming school year, the seminary will have so

many students that there will not be enough on-campus housing, a problem he is happy to have. Inviting all to visit the birthplace of American Orthodoxy, Fr. Chad said that if his 82-year old mother could visit Spruce Island, with some assistance getting in and out of the boat, we could too. "Thank you again from the bottom of our hearts, and may God bless you for all that you do!"

John Kruchok then presented Fr. Chad and the seminary with an additional Fellowship gift of \$8,900: \$4,800 for gas and upkeep of the SUV (the excess funds) and \$4,100 from the United Fund. He pointed to this "Gift of Love," the realization of a 2-year project, as an example of the wonderful things the FOCA could achieve working together toward a common goal. A resounding round of applause concluded their remarks.

Delegates continued to address business as the break-out sessions were reported on. From membership/communications came a series of proposals made by Sandra Fedorko. The assembly agreed to designate the 2005 "Gifts of Love" project for the OCA Diocese of Canada, to empower the executive board to consult with Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa for a suitable project or recipient, and to make the award at the July OCA All-American Council in Toronto. In addition, the FOCA will host a young adult social activity in conjunction with a young adult service project at the council. Allocated from the "Gifts of Love" fund was \$1,000 toward the YA service project in October at the SS. Cosmas & Damian Adult Home in Staten Island, NY. After considerable discussion, a motion to designate a Sunday in December as "F.O.C.A. Sunday" was defeated.

Approved was a motion by Sports Director Robert Steffaro to assess a participation fee of \$25 to non-FOCA members participating in national sports tournaments. Junior Department Director Jennifer Pishko moved that a national junior summer sports tourney be held in 2005 pending the report of the review committee and that 2 scholarships be awarded toward it; Fr. Daniel Ressetar offered an amendment to increase it to 5 scholarships from the Sutyak Sports Fund; motion carried. A proposal to limit the 2005 essay contest to FOCA members was withdrawn. Delegates agreed to a motion by Treasurer Bowan to allocate \$10,000 in William Fekula scholarships for 2005 and that for the first time graduate students be eligible; this will address the needs of an increasing number of applicants who are in graduate school, including seminarians who often are obtaining graduate degrees. \$3,000 was allocated for short-term OCMC mission grants. And the allocations for un earmarked United Funds monies was set at 35% for juniors/youth ministry, 35% for the Fekula scholarships and 30% for missions/outreach. Sessions adjourned for the day.

The final convention session was held on Labor Day Monday. United Fund Chair Mary Jane Lucak proudly announced that we exceeded this year's goal of \$31,000. Business returned to finance. Tabled was a recommendation to change the United Fund's name to "FOCA St. Andrew's Fund." Treasurer Bowan moved that the St. Andrew's Fellowship be renamed "Friends of St. Andrew," that levels of giving be established, and that donations continue to be

considered part of the local chapter goal; an amendment to delete the latter provision was defeated. A lively discussion ensued with the proposal passing by a vote of 78 to 34.

The proposed 2004/5 budget was then presented by Treasurer Bowan, who made several adjustments upward based on better than expected national convention profits and increased Journal ad revenue; it passed without dissent. A total of \$4,640 in Journal listings was collected by the wife-husband team of Kaye and Pete Garman, business manager, including \$1,755 on the convention floor! Many thanks. On behalf of Junior Essay Contest coordinators, Marissa Hedge and Marge Kovach, the winners were announced by Jennifer Pishko, department director. (Note: the winning essays appear in this issue). Nancy Filak announced the winners of the photo contest from among 42 entries. (Note: the winning photos are in this issue). And Mary Jane Lucak announced the stock awards winners.

Presentations were made by Jerry Vaughn of the new St. Stephen's chapter in Orlando on the SS. Cosmas & Damian AIDS house which is associated with their parish (ststephenoca.com) and by Sherrie Keblish, whose USDA detection dog "Trouble" in Miami was in competition for a national award of service dogs. A spirited promotional program was undertaken by the Colonial District for next year's convention in Alexandria, VA. Led by Governor and Co-Chair Walter Alesevich and Barbara Freimann, flags and hats and hand-made posters of famous Washington landmarks and personages were distributed (Lincoln Memorial, George Washington, etc.) As the sites or people were mentioned, those holding them waived them vigorously. Past National President Peter Melnik looked particularly impressive holding his. The Campbell "Kids" proceeded to raffle off the many stuffed animals and other jungle decorations as door prizes.

The convention's final order of business was the election of national officers. Michael Herzak was appointed temporary nominating chair with Faith Malinich as temporary nominating secretary. Anne Cvercko, nominating committee chair, reported that the following had received nominations so far: Dr. John Schultz, president; Michael Steffaro, vice president; Kathy Lazor, secretary; and Michael Bowan, treasurer. Nominations were closed and the slate was elected unanimously. Congratulations! Sandra Fedorko said good-bye after 10 years on the executive board, remarking that the young adults are "here and now" and being ceremoniously carried off the stage by her fellow past presidents as is the custom. John Kruchok, who becomes the i.p.p. for the second time, noted that "we Orthodox tend to do things in three's!" Fr. Vansuch led the installation ceremony, invoking God's blessings on the new board and the entire convention assembly.

New President Schultz formally adjourned the convention at 12:02 p.m. Over 200 delegates, alternates, members and friends gathered for the traditional circle of hands, recited the motto, and sang the FOCA anthem for the last time, looking forward already to next year's national convention in Alexandria over Labor Day weekend. Many thanks to Nick, JoAnn, Fr. John and Campbell for a great convention of faith, family and fellowship!

## F.O.C.A. PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Nancy Filak, coordinator, announced the winners of this year's photography contest held at the national convention. With the theme "scenic" photos, 42 entries were received in the two age categories: 18 to 45 and 46 plus.

**The judges** - Betty Czech of the New Jersey District, Sandy Fedorko, imm. past pres., and Ohio Gov. Leon Sheean - had a difficult time selecting the winners.

The winner in the 18 to 45 category is Nicole Dziamba, New Jersey District.

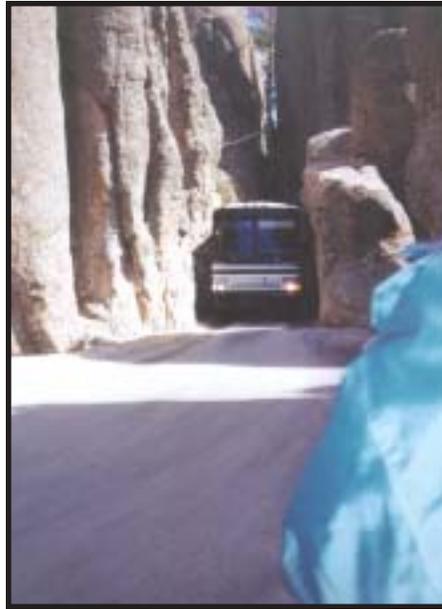
The winners in the other group are:  
Mary Ann Soltis, Upper New York State, 1st place.

Pat Lelo, Central PA, 2nd place.

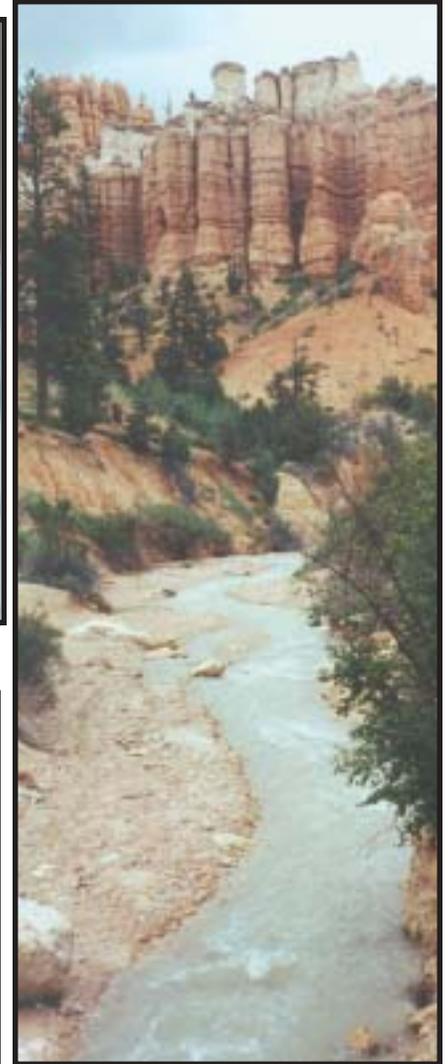
Betty Perschka, Ohio, 3rd place.  
Janet Finley, Midwest, 4th place

Prizes were awarded.

*Thanks to all who participated,  
and better luck next year  
to those who did not win!*



*Pat Lelo*



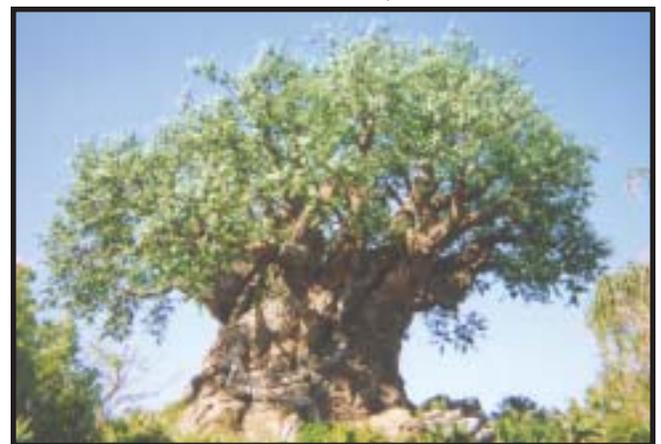
*Mary Ann Soltis*



*Janet Finley*



*Nicole Dziamba*



*Betty Perschka*

# National Convention Photos



## 78th NATIONAL CONVENTION: LITURGICAL SERVICES

As always, the national convention celebrated a full schedule of services, highlighted by the Sunday Hierarchical Divine Liturgy concelebrated by Metropolitans Herman and Theodosius. In addition to the molieben opening the sessions served by Fr. Eugene Vansuch, the national spiritual advisor, members gathered to remember their departed loved ones at the memorial service on Saturday morning. Specially mentioned were those F.O.C.A. members who had departed this life since last year's convention in Colonial Williamsburg.

Later Saturday afternoon, just prior to Vespers, Metropolitan Herman blessed the new portable altar table and table of oblation donated by the Campbell "O" Club and expertly hand-crafted by Paul and Eli Schultz, the father and uncle of V.P. Schultz and Journal layout editor Mike Schultz. Also blessed were a newly-designed hand cross and coverings donated by Peter Holoviak of Holoviak's Church Supply in Berwick, PA. Many thanks for the donations. Vespers was then celebrated by Fr. Vansuch with both Metropolitans and several clergy in attendance as well as nearly 200 F.O.C.A. members who sang the responses.



Sunday morning Metropolitans Herman and Theodosius were greeted by President John Kruchok with the bread and salt and the members of the Board of Trustees. Concelebrating the liturgy with them were Fathers Kondratik, Vansuch, Resselar, Hatfield, Boback, Stephen Karaffa and Emilian Hutnyan. Past National President Rev. Dr. Deacon Michael Wusylo served as deacon and subdeacons included Jason Vansuch and Gregory Hatrak together with altar servers. Responses were sung by a 40-voice choir under the direction of Michael Stenko. Approximately 375 faithful were in attendance.

Fr. Chad Hatfield preached an inspiring sermon. "Although I had a difficult journey from Alaska, I did not feel

as an outsider when I arrived at your convention. Orthodoxy creates that bond, that sense of family. The water of Holy Baptism is thicker than blood. We are family." He noted that it is important to recognize our identity as members of the same family; there are many others who wish to be members of this same family, the Church of the Fathers, even if they are unaware of it.

In 1992 Metropolitan Herman received an honorary degree at his Episcopalian college and Fr. Chad was a speaker. He recalled: "I remember Metropolitan Herman's kindness and invitation: 'Come and visit us. Our door is always open.'" All are invited to participate in the joy and holiness of Our Lord, he said. "It is no small miracle that today I serve as an Orthodox priest at the Holy Altar with His Beatitude." No other Christian denomination, Fr. Chad reminded us, can claim to be part of the Church of the Ecumenical Councils. "At times it takes a great shock to make us aware of what we have," such as when the Episcopal bishops issued heretical statements with little protest. The problem is that the Western Church has become absorbed into the secular culture.

"Apostle Paul knew that he had to preach to the Gentile world. We must become uncomfortable. We must speak up on matters that offend us on every level. Yes, there is sin in our own households but we have the ability to repent in the Church. Let us rejoice with those who have stood on the firm foundation of the Apostles and with the Faith. Let us never fail to make a true confession, like Peter, that you, Lord, are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" Father Chad concluded.

Following liturgy, President Kruchok was awarded the St. Innocent medal (bronze) by Metropolitan Herman for his second-term as Fellowship president. Immediate Past President Sandra Fedorko and Michael Stenko were presented with icons of St. Herman of Alaska. His Beatitude then offered the following remarks: "It was the intent of Fr. Prislowsky and the other founders of the Fellowship that all would follow in the steps of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. We give thanks for all that the Fellowship has done. We know that 78 years have gone by and it is sad to know that our organization has not grown stronger but weaker."

"We must reexamine what we need to do to build up the organization and most importantly, to build up the Church of Christ. This is what the Apostles themselves did. We have seen that the right thing is not happening in America, including in our own Orthodox Church in America. Less people are participating in the services of the Church. Many have chosen the side of darkness. May you be instilled with the same zeal, the same fervor as the founders. Much is required of each and every one of us. We need to imitate our Lord and, with that virtue of love in the world, enter into the Heavenly Kingdom."

"The greatest gift given to us as humans," Metropolitan Herman said, "is the Son of God. We all like to receive gifts. Some don't even know that this gift is offered. We must let them know of this gift. I know that we have enjoyed the fellowship of this convention over the last few days. Let the Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council be an inspiration to us. Let us not walk in darkness but in the light of Christ. Keep walking in that light to the Kingdom of Heaven!"

The service ended with Fr. Eugene offering thanks to both hierarchs for their leadership over many years, especially to the F.O.C.A., and "Many years" was sung to them, to the honorees and to all present.

# What does God think about our world today?

## What does God think about our world today?

16 - 18 year old category

By: Stephan Pron

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). God created this world in which He placed all He loves. At any moment, God could decide to end the world in which we live. No one can comprehend God or His reasons, but if He has chosen to let us live in the world we do today, there must be something pleasing to Him. Throughout all the hate and suffering in this world, there is a plethora of reasons why the Lord has decided to bless us with the world in which we live. The truth is, it is not the world that God is interested in. Jesus once prayed for the Apostles and said, "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours" (John 17:9). Jesus showed that it is not the world that is to be thought about, but every person and how they embark upon each day. Knowing that God cares about how we live and react in this world, there is no doubt in my mind that God loves it now, as much as He did when He created it. God loves the world in which we live because He created all that is in it. Through evil, men can show goodness, and through love, we can see God.

Although there seems to be much hate and sin in the world, God created all that is in the world, and continues to love His creation. What evil is there in this world today that has not been in this world since the beginning of time? No matter what evil acts you may find, you can always find similar ones in man's past. Though all these things may seem horrible and sinful, who are we to judge what is right and what is wrong? As humans, we have no say in the matter. It is up to God to decide what happens. Proverbs 19:21 clearly states, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's

purpose that prevails." Everything that happens has already been mapped out, we just have to go through the motions. "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven..."

(Ecclesiastes 3:1). No matter what terrible things we go through, we can use that to our advantage. The old saying, "That which does not kill you makes you stronger," states it perfectly. We can even further please the Lord by using what we went through as a learning tool for others. "Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4). We can help those whom we meet in life later, who are going through what we already did, by comforting them through the rough times. In any situation, it is not what happens that counts. What counts is how a person reacts to what happens, it shows who the man really is. A person who can say they live in the right manner will take any given situation and make the best of it; for he realizes all he goes through is according to God's plan. Jesus knew this and was a prime example for any Christian to live by.

Jesus knew that He must suffer through tremendous pain and suffering to save mankind. He was a man like any other, but His faith in the Lord made Him perfect. "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name" (John 12:27-28). Although he feared His fate and the torture He was about to go through, He followed the Lord's commands and fulfilled His duties for God. By fulfilling His duties to God, Jesus inevitably pleased Him. Now if we were all as perfect as Jesus, God would be eternally pleased. Where is the fun in that? The truth is that no man is even close to Jesus. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory

of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin is all around us, everyday, everywhere. Sin is what portrays the world as the evil place it is. Does that mean all men are evil? No. John 9:41 says, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains." Some people simply cannot grasp the concept of sinning and repentance. Those people are not condemned, but they will be held accountable for their evil deeds. Those who knowingly sin, are those who displease our God. Although He is displeased, He still gives us a chance to redeem ourselves.

Repentance is that which saves all sinners. Through repentance we can make up for the pain and suffering we cause not only to the people we sin against, but to our God whom we hurt as well. In my opinion, repentance is one of the most important things to God. He realizes that no man is perfect, and is it not infinitely better knowing that someone who is not perfect can admit their deepest faults and mistakes? That is why repentance is stressed so much in the church. It is one of the most important tools to keep good favor with God; it is one of the most important reasons why God can still love and respect the world He created. So what then, besides repentance, is the reason for God to still love this world? The answer lies within the question.

In my opinion, love is what keeps this world in existence. "No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:12). God lives within those who love. Anything that is good is derived from love. God loved man so much that He sent His only son to save man. Jesus loved His Father and man so much that He died to save those whom He loved. We are the ones who were saved. We owe it to Jesus and God to love and cherish all that They love. Jesus showed how important love is in John 13:34-35

## FEATURE *stories*

by saying, "A new command I give you; love one another. As I loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." What better way is there to please God than to love one another? There is none. In reality, love can stop all sin and evil. If you love someone you would not steal from them or kill them. If you truly love someone, you would not lust over them because sexual things do not deal with love, but with passion. Love between people, religion, family and God are all reasons why God would care about this world. It is love that is pleasing to our Lord, and as long as there is love in the world, God will be pleased.

Although there are things that seem so evil in this world, God created all and has His reasons for all. The Apostle Paul knew there would be times of trouble and even said, "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:29-30). It is always important to remember that no matter how rough things seem to get, as long as we remember to turn to God, things will get better. "No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you or forsake you" (Joshua 1:5). God will never forsake you because He loves all He created. As long as we reciprocate His love to Him and to the others He has blessed us with, God will be pleased with our world.

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### **What does God think about our world today?**

*13 - 14 year old category*

**By: Peter Lynch**

When considering what God thinks about the world today, we must first ask ourselves what He thought about the world in the beginning and has He changed His mind about it today? In the

beginning God had a plan. Even though Adam and Eve sinned and were exiled from the garden of Eden, through their repentance and God's intervention, they could be redeemed. Why would God change his mind about the world today, even though some might think it is hopeless or lost? God not only desires not to leave or to punish us, but even when He punishes, he does it unwillingly. "I do not want" He says "the death of a sinner, so much as that he should turn and live" (Ezekiel 18:32).

To some the world today might seem more terrible than in times past. Without God a person's life feels empty, pointless and worthless. Why am I even here? is a question that some might ask. Some seek an escape in drugs, sex, alcohol and violence. They try to be different but they just become the same as so many others, yet none of these things make them feel any more fulfilled. Unfortunately, some will take their own life just to escape the hollow world they had lived in. Some people will look to religion, those who sincerely search for the truth will find it in Orthodox Christianity. Some might be momentarily satisfied with some false sense of truth, but there will always be a gap within them. Others will be driven further away in their own anger and frustration at only finding shallow religion. Yet, even in this seemingly hopeless world where truth is twisted and we are brainwashed into believing that good is evil and evil is good, God knows that it is still able to be saved.

God has shown his eternal love for the world by sending His Son to redeem us, "for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life," (John 3:16). "The devil holds sway over this world order, the world of sin and rebellion; "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one," (1 John 5:19). God does not love this world order, for it is corrupt and shall pass away along with all those who continue to live in sin. And yet we have hope, "And let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen." (Psalm 72:19). And again, "The earth is the lord's and the fullness thereof," (Psalm 50:12). If we draw near to God then our eyes will be

opened to see his glory in his creation and His great goodness.

All this reveals how wonderful God's everlasting mercy is and how grateful we should be for His love and patience. God dwells outside of time; for Him there is no today, yesterday or tomorrow; "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). So why would He think differently about our world today than He did at any other time? God has always thought that the world is redeemable. In the book of Genesis it says that God looked at the earth and he saw that it was good and that He was well pleased by it. The world was defiled after the fall but God desires its redemption, though it might often seem dark and hopeless. "For I am the lord, and I change not..." (Malachi 3:6). God never has and never will think differently about the world, His love and mercy are everlasting.

I attend St. Michael's Orthodox Church in Pueblo, CO.

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### **What does God think about our world today?**

*13 - 14 year old category*

*Randolph, New Jersey  
Holy Trinity Orthodox Church  
Chapter 222*

**By: Nicholas Hedge**

From the very beginning of time God has known the world to be imperfect. God has punished the world harshly for being sinful. However, through these punishments God has realized the perfect way to deal with an imperfect world. He has given us free will. He has allowed us to choose our destiny.

In the beginning, God gave man everything he needed. According to Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." However, the fall of man came quickly. The serpent had deceived Eve and told her to eat

from the tree which God had commanded her not to. Adam followed in the footsteps of Eve as he quickly ate part of the fruit. God was frustrated with them for not obeying his commands. God punished the human race by giving us the ability to feel pain and to suffer. After doing so, perhaps God hoped that they would follow his ways and obey his commands.

Alas, God decided to punish man once again, by flooding the world and destroying almost all of his original creations. As quoted from Genesis 6:6, "I will wipe out mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the Earth- men and animals, and creatures that along the ground, and birds of the air- for I am grieved that that I have made them." During this time God tells Noah to build an ark and to take one male and one female of every kind of bird and animal. God was angered by the sins of man and he saw this as another way for us to listen to him.

However, God's perfect answer to mankind's imperfections was to send his son to save the world from sin. Instead of God killing the world with a great flood or inflicting more suffering and pain, he sent Jesus, his only begotten son, to be crucified. With this selfless act, God has provided the means through which to we can redeem ourselves. Jesus died to save us from our sins. We as humans may do bad things. With every one of man's sins comes the opportunity to repent and ask for forgiveness.

God's reasons for punishing the world have been relatively the same. Vicious animal-like actions and violence are reasons. Lying and sexual wrongdoings are also reasons. Most of these terrible actions take place in our world today. However, if we look beyond the wars, bombings, threats, and sins our world is a pretty peaceful place.

I believe God's view on the world has not changed, but, his way of dealing with us has. God so loved man that that he sent his son to cleanse us from our sins and redeem us from the suffering that is inherent in this life. God realizes man's imperfections, but, God has given us a chance to ask for mercy and forgiveness. He punishes those who do bad things and do not repent on judgment day and rewards those that do good things and are truly sorry for their sins.

## What does God think about our world today?

*13 - 14 year old category*

*Chapter 167-J*

*South River, NJ*

*Age 11*

**By: John David Eisengrein**

I think God must be disappointed in our world. So many people have turned away from God. Many people don't even think about Him and even deny His existence. I have classmates who are being taught by their parents to be atheists. Others practice false religions and even worship many "gods." God sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to our world to be an example to us of how we should live. Yet, over and over again, we reject Him or only follow His teachings when they are convenient.

I think God is also very sad about all the violence in our world, such as the war in Iraq, heartless terrorist actions, and the gun violence in the streets of our own country. Every time a child is abused by an angry parent or a teenager turns to drugs, instead to our Lord, I believe that God is very sad. Also, I think that, when we are materialistic and put possessions ahead of virtue and goodness, He is not happy with our actions. Choosing laziness (like when we decide to "sleep in," instead of going to Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning) or convenience (like when we don't pitch in with a charitable project because we'd rather stay home and watch "American Idol") must break His heart.

Yet, God loves us still and continues to bless us with so many wonderful things each and every day. That's because, like a parent, God's love is unconditional. We may disappoint Him with our disdain, but He gives us hope each time a baby is born. We may make Him sad, but He is happy each time one of us reaches out to help a stranger in need. He rejoices each time we bring ourselves to receive Holy Communion and give ourselves once again to Him. He is pleased when we choose not to be bullies, not to ridicule others who are different than us, and not to make fun of those who are less fortunate than we are. Like a par-

ent, He is proud each time an Orthodox boy comes to church to serve in His altar and each time an Orthodox man is ordained to serve in His priesthood. Also, just as Jesus blessed the wedding at Cana, God also blesses marriages and families.

You see, like a father, God is both saddened and happy with His children, because we give Him both disappointment and joy. When we need it, he corrects us and shows us how to behave. He rejoices when we improve, when we change for the better and we achieve goodness. Like a parent, He forgives us when we stumble or stray and helps get back on track. That's why I think God truly loves us and our world, but He thinks there is a lot of room for improvement.

## Byzantine Italy

Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky of Binghamton, NY invites you to join him and his parishioners on a pilgrimage-tour to "Byzantine Italy" on May 16-29, 2005, including sites dear to the Early Church such as Padua, Venice, Bari, Ravenna and Rome.

Participants will have the opportunity to venerate relics of many Orthodox saints and to worship at ancient churches.

Sign-up deadline is Dec. 31, 04.

For more info,  
contact him at  
53 Baxter Street,  
Binghamton, NY 13905

(607) 797-1058  
frilya@verizon.net.

# The Ohio District Invests in the Future of Our Youth

On Saturday July 24th, 2004 the Ohio District of the FOCA celebrated a remarkable day; the culmination of many years of dreaming, hoping, and praying. Approximately 175 people came together at the St. Vladimir Campgrounds and Retreat Center for a celebration which included vespers, and a blessing of the entire property.

The day featured Dimitri (Butch) Wallick and his new "Carolina Smoker" doing all the grilling; many volunteers kept everyone well fed all day, and into the evening. We concluded the day with (smores) at the campfire under the stars.

This celebration followed a major renovation of the main building. Our construction project completely replaced the former "mess hall" and kitchen with a new recreation hall, kitchen, and dining hall covering almost 5000 square feet. This new arrangement permits enhanced craft and indoor activities to be conducted on days of inclement weather, without interrupting food service operations.

The construction costs (still coming in!) will approach a quarter of a million dollars. The major portion of these funds were given to the district as a generous bequest of John "Lefty" Sutyak, a former member of St. Archangel Michael in Broadview Heights, Ohio (Chapter 4/6). These monies were pooled with a construction account funded by numerous district activities and periodic logging revenue generated in the "back forty" acres. Lefty's enthusiasm for fellowship among Orthodox can be seen by other generous bequests to his parish and the Sports Department of the FOCA.

The Ohio District has had four decades of successful camping programs and events for campers of all ages. Our first season took place in the summer of 1964 with the rental of a local camp ground under the direction of Past National Presidents Andrew Cvercko and Fr. Deacon Peter Homik. The foresight of these men and the support of the Ohio District coupled with the enthusiasm of many, many clergy from the Cleveland Deanery developed into an annual summer program. Our current property was purchased in 1966 and has been improved over the years with the addition of a swimming pool (1970), basketball/tennis court (1970), chapel (1973), additional cabins (1969, 1973, and 1978), and a new bath house (1991). Of remarkable note has been the role of volunteerism in this district facility; we have grown and developed, albeit at a modest pace, through the generous donations of time, talent, and resources of Orthodox faithful.

Concepts developed by the initial leaders are still in practice today. Each morning begins with prayers, and will include at least one session led by the resident priest. During the day events incorporate choir practice, reader practice, games, crafts, swimming, soft ball, kick ball, volley ball, and conclude with evening prayers or vespers. At least one Divine Liturgy is served each week with campers doing all the singing and appropriate reading during the services. It is always so inspiring to see campers cease all recreational activity at the sound of the church bell, and hurry to the chapel. Campers leave with so much more than memories of the obvious "fun" events; they are reminded of the importance of daily prayer, the role of readers and singers in the life of the Church, that the church is much more than their individual parish at home, that many priests have wonderful communication and education skills, and that being with other Orthodox campers is a "good thing."

In addition to summer camping, our St. Vladimir's has served as the site of many choir conferences, FOCA Junior Olympics, and local parish, chapter, and club outings. The design of the new building will expand our possibilities since it is also handicap-accessible. We may also extend our "camping" season since the new building is insulated, but as yet unheated!

This past summer the Ohio District held two very successful one-week camping sessions co-directed by Lori and Basil Kochan (Chapter 20/32). Increasing enthusiasm for safe, summer programs will likely expand our sessions to three and ultimately four weeks. Our new facility has met and exceeded all expectations. St. Vladimir's Campground and Retreat Center provides a recreational and meeting site for the Ohio District, Orthodox parishes of northeastern Ohio, and the Cleveland Deanery. We expect this facility to continue serving as a recreational resource in the decades to come.

**PS.** As our program of physical improvement continues, there is a continuing need for financial resources. If you have been a camper or know of a camper who has enjoyed the time at St. Vladimir's please remember us in any way you can. With your ongoing support, we will continue to provide a safe, fun-filled, educational, and Orthodox summer retreat for campers and picnickers of all ages.

## For details or additional information please contact:

Leon Sheean  
Ohio District Governor  
3496 Meadowbrook Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH 44118



## National Summer Sports Tournament

By: Greg Cimbolic

The sky was threatening as some 45 golfers prepared to tee off at the National Summer Sports Tournament hosted by the Frackville "R" club on July 30th and 31st. But as expected, the sun broke out and shone brightly on the place also known as the "center of the universe." The beautiful Mountain Valley golf course proved to be an exceptional venue for the two-day event.

Chairman John Malinchok made sure the tournament ran smoothly, seeing to every last detail. Assisting John were committee members David Keysock, Mary Diffenderfer, Sophia Osenbach, Paul Malinchok and Serge Chrush.

Overseeing and assisting from the National Sports committee were Director Bob Steffaro, Greg Cimbolic and newest addition, Anthony Schultz. National President Dr. John Shultz represented the Executive Board.

Following golf on Friday, a social was held at the golf course pavilion. Afterwards, many golfers made their way over to the spacious deck overlooking the 9th hole for continued fellowship. Saturday's early tee times allowed for the awards lunch to be held in the afternoon so those traveling long distances could get an early start.

The Petronko brothers who took 3 of the top 6 spots dominated the Gross Division. John W (not to be confused with his father, Past Nat'l President John Jr) took first place with Russ taking 5th and Nick close behind in 6th. Rounding out the top spots was Bob Stotler in 2nd followed by Bob Steffaro and Rev. John Steffaro.

John Ihnat captured the Net Division. Rich Grunwald and John Junda tied for 2nd, Mark Marton took 4th and Anthony Schultz finished in 5th.

The 2-Day Scramble prize went to Journal editor Nick Ressetar and playing partners Steve Dura, Dan Kosanovich and John Sostarich.

Father Barnabas Fravel, John Petronko Jr. and Gerry Petronko won the 1-Day Scramble.

## Notes & Quotes

Hotly contested Steffaro battle between Rev John and Bob ended with Bob besting his bother by 4 strokes (Rev John was under pressure to play quickly so he could make it back to Campbell in time for Vespers)...nice to see John and Joe Junda adding their competitive natures to the tournament...Joe was last seen issuing a formal challenge to Steve Mihalik for next year's Cleveland Tr...rumor has it that Top Flite sent a thank you note to Dr John Schultz for boosting their golf ball production to an all time high...Theresa Stotler last seen counting how many clubs were in each bag...anyone seen Craig Grunwald...also missing in action was Ken Baron (last seen sanding his butcher block)... John Malinchok owes Greg Cimbolic a gallon of bean soup... thanks to Nationwide's Frackville office for prize donations...how many golf balls did Dr. John lose?...nice to see Steve and Marge Cimbolic make the trip just for the banquet - Marge, nee Petronko, born and raised in Frackville...Penn governor Gary Lelo also in attendance at the banquet...Anthony Schultz's computer genius again was of great assistance in calculating scores...Joe Junda still trying to figure out how brother John won 2nd place net...in

another hotly contest battle, Greg Cimbolic narrowly bested Joe Junda (writer's license)...too many prizes won by Petronkos makes them ineligible for next year...Dorosh, Soltis, Pishko, Hatrak team is still on the course...John Lord's poor showing contributed to too much time in the hot tub or playing too much with Rich Grunwald...Mark Marton contemplating early retirement between golf and bowlingwinnings...has anyone seen the beverage cart...early tournament favorite Mike Synder slips to 8th place...Stoli Scramblers vow to return next year...gotta love a golf course that serves pierogis...Bob Steffaro considering resuming his banking career...**LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING EVERYONE IN CLEVELANDNEXTYEAR!!!**

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## 2004 Ohio District

## Basketball Tourney



The 2004 Ohio District basketball tournament was a great success. The Campbell "O" Club did a super job of sponsoring it and putting together a well-organized event. Chairman Joe Sirilla and his committee are to be commended. There were 11 teams participating. The games began early in the morning and ran all day, keeping the fans on the edges of their seats. The day concluded with vespers at St. John's Church and a delicious rib-and-chicken banquet in the social rooms. Trophies were awarded for the 1st and 2nd place teams and the all-stars.

### The winners

#### *Bantam boys:*

Cleveland 31, Akron 8

#### *Bantam girls*

Cleveland 16, Akron 12;

#### *Junior girls*

Cleveland 27, Akron 11

#### *Junior boys*

Akron 37, Campbell 31

### *Play of the day:*

When her bantam boys were held scoreless for 3 quarters, Coach Stefanie Uhrina gave her team these inspiring instructions: "*If you get the ball, shoot it no matter where you're at!*" Geno Kennedy then scored their first basket with a hook-shot from 3-point land. Way to go Geno and nice coaching Stefanie!

Gregory J. Mindala

Ohio District Sports Director

## district/chapter news

### New Jersey District Convention:

“From Russia With Love”  
New Jersey District Convention  
Sponsored by the Singac R Club,  
November 6th & 7th  
Banquet and Dance  
Saturday, November 6th  
at the Russian Hall,  
Woodhull Avenue, Little Falls.  
Liturgy, Luncheon, Sessions  
and Open House  
on Sunday, November 7th at  
St. John’s Russian Orthodox Church  
Educational Center, Little Falls, NJ  
For more information contact  
Tamara Bacsik,  
Chairperson, 973-785-1842.

### Singac Jr. R Club Members receive Alpha-Omega Awards

Nicholas Worrall of Troop 70, Lincoln Park, and Jonathan and Christopher Preciado of Troop 74, received their Alpha-Omega Religious Awards on June 19, 2004, as members of the Eastern Orthodox faith and the Boy Scouts of America. After weeks of meetings and discussions with Father Sergei Kosich, pastor of St. John the Baptist R.O. Church in Singac, NJ, they finally completed all the religious requirements pertaining to their personal life, parish life, and community life as well as numerous service projects.



The Holy Trinity Orthodox Christian Academy of Warren, OH has opened the 2004-5 school year at a new facility. Now located in the former SS. Cyril & Methodios school, the academy is renting an entire floor, including 3 classrooms and a chapel/library. The faculty consists of 2 full-time teachers, one part-time and two volunteers (art & music). Eleven students are enrolled in grades K-5. Funds come from tuition and fund-raisers.

For more information,  
write the school at  
P.O. Box 1712,  
Warren, OH 44482  
or call 330.399.7642.

Or contact  
Betty Ann Perschka,  
the school board secretary,  
at 330.792.2750.

## Orthodox Christian Parochial School Begins Year



## Ilaasi and "Friends" Assist St. Herman Seminary Library

Funding for the year 2004, from Ilaasi Friends of St. Herman's, a fundraising arm of St. Herman Seminary, is dedicated to development of the St. Herman Seminary Library: an updated library computer lab and for library cataloging and circulation software, for students, faculty and researchers to quickly know what is in the library. Eventually, the seminary library catalogue will be on the St. Herman Seminary website for public researchers to know what is in the library. The library holds many archival publications, which are valuable to researchers, worldwide.

During 2002-2003, the Ilaasi members contributed over \$20,000 to complete the St. Herman Seminary kitchen renovation is now within Kodiak Health Department code: new appliances, stove; worktable and floor were installed.

With the Ilaasi funds raised thus far, the Seminary library was able to purchase two personal computers with peripherals, a high capacity laser printer and library software (Athena Library). Priest Innocent Dresdow of St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK, Webmaster of [www.alaskanchurch.org](http://www.alaskanchurch.org), assisted with computer hardware selection and installation.

After advising Subdeacon Mark Harrison, St. Herman Seminary Librarian on the library software purchase, Miss Eleana Silk, the librarian at St. Vladimir Seminary, arrived in Kodiak from 4-9 July 2004, to assist with the St. Herman Seminary library reorganization and library and circulation software development. Seminarian Brian Barber of St. Vladimir Seminary is spending his summer internship with the St. Herman Library, focusing on library reorganization.

Subdeacon Mark Harrison, Miss Silk and Mr. Barber worked diligently to sort and organize books, magazines and newspapers on the shelves; the library development team established new library procedures and planned for the future library development. The library development team, with the blessing of His Grace, Bishop NIKOLAI Rector of St. Herman Seminary and Archpriest Chad Hatfield, Seminary Dean, brought all aspects of the library project together. New library furniture and a new library layout will provide a quiet, comfortable atmosphere for focused theological study.

What else can be done to assist St. Herman Seminary and the seminary library?

First, pray for the seminarians, their families and for the seminary faculty.

Second, become an active part of the seminary by joining or renewing your membership in Ilaasi, Friends of St. Herman's Seminary!

Third, the seminary requires dona-

tions of theological books, in good condition. Miss Silk volunteered to provide a clearinghouse for books for St. Herman Seminary; only the books required by St. Herman's will be forwarded to Alaska, saving shipping expense. Any duplicate books received by St. Herman Seminary will go to the development of libraries in monastic communities within the United States. Please contact Miss Eleana Silk, 1-914-961-8313, ext. 365, for details on how to ship the theological books, or send your theological book donations to: The St. Herman Seminary Book Project, Attn: Eleana Silk, 575 Scarsdale Road, Crestwood, NY 10707.

To assist St. Herman Seminary in other ways, please contact Mrs. Elizabeth (Betty) Y. Slanta, Executive Director, Ilaasi, Friends of St. Herman's, via e-mail [slanta@erols.com](mailto:slanta@erols.com), or write to Ilaasi, Friends of St. Herman's at St. Herman Seminary, 414 Mission Road, Kodiak, AK 99615.



# INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (IOCC)

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## NEW IOCC PRAYER JOURNAL OFFERS WAY FOR KIDS TO HELP KIDS

Baltimore (IOCC) – Last year, seven church-school students from St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church in Lubbock, Texas, used the IOCC children's prayer journal to learn about children in need around the world.

Then they went a step further: They held a fund-raiser and raised \$225 for International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC).

In Philadelphia, 60 Orthodox children from seven parishes gathered to do the school kit activity featured in the IOCC prayer journal. They assembled 200 school-supply kits for children in other countries.

Those are just two examples of how Orthodox children in the United States used the prayer journal in 2003-2004. As a result of the journal's school kit activity, IOCC and its partner, Church World Service, distributed 18,000 school-supply kits to children in need.

Now IOCC is producing a second edition of the popular prayer journal, just in time for the new church-school year. All 25,000 copies of the first edition were distributed within months of its release.

"IOCC's prayer journal introduces our young people to the work of IOCC and offers a concrete way that they can participate, whether within a church school class or youth group, or as an individual," said Phyllis Meshel Onest, director of religious education for the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh.

Titled "My Prayer Journal," the colorful, 32-page book is designed to encourage children in their prayer life as they learn about children around the world. Each month features a different country where IOCC, a humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians, is helping people in need.

Along with information about each country, the book contains Bible verses, quotes from the Church Fathers, excerpts from the Divine Liturgy, suggested prayers, activities and facts. Space is provided for children to write in their prayer requests and things for which they are thankful.

The journal is endorsed by IOCC's parent organization, the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). An online version that supplements the material in the print version can be found at [www.iocc.org/kids](http://www.iocc.org/kids).

This year's prayer journal was underwritten by the Behrakis Family Foundation and Sam, Victoria, Stephen, Peter and Breck Souvall.

To order individual copies, go online at [www.iocc.org/journal](http://www.iocc.org/journal).

For parish orders, contact the Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese toll-free at 1-800-566-1088. The prayer journal is free, but shipping charges may apply.

For media inquiries, please contact IOCC Communications Associate Stephen Huba at 1-877-803-4622 or [shuba@iocc.org](mailto:shuba@iocc.org).

Photo courtesy of IOCC



Orthodox children from Philadelphia assemble school kits for children in need in 2003. The school kit project is featured in the second edition of IOCC's prayer journal, which releases in October.

## FOCA CALENDAR 2004/2005

- Dec. 10 & 11:** Winter National Executive Board meeting, Vienna, OH
- Sun. Jan. 16:** Novogodny Ball, Trevese, PA
- Feb. 24-26:** "Spring" National Board of Trustees meeting, Alexandria, VA
- March 1:** Deadline for FOCA/OCMC mission grant applications
- March 14:** Great Lent begins
- March 31:** Deadline for FOCA scholarship applications
- May 1:** PASCHA
- May 13-15:** National Basketball Tournament, Minneapolis, MN
- May 20-21:** National Bowling Tournament, Allentown, PA
- May 30:** Memorial Day Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery, celebrating its 100th ann.
- June 19:** Holy Pentecost
- July 17-22:** 14th OCA All-American Council, Toronto, ON
- July 29-30:** National Summer Sports Tournament, Medina, OH
- Sept. 1-5:** 79th National FOCA Convention, Alexandria, VA

## For Saint Nicholas Day

*This activity idea is coming to you early since there won't be an issue of the Orthodox Christian Journal before St. Nicholas Day.*

Here's how you can make a wheat candleholder. On or near the day when we honor Saint Nicholas, find a small plain empty margarine container. Use acrylic paints or magic markers to decorate it with Christmas designs. Put a lump of clay or putty on the bottom. Get a candle to put into the container. Make it stand upright by sticking it into the lump. Now fill the container with some potting soil. Plant wheat berries that have been soaked in water overnight. Put your wheat candleholder on a sunny windowsill. Water it regularly. Soon grass-like shoots will appear around the candle.



Your wheat will continue growing. Trim the blades if they get too high. By Nativity, your wheat candleholder will be ready to use as the centerpiece for the Holy Supper table. The candle signifies the light of Christ coming into the world, and the wheat signifies the new life He brought for all of us.



**RECYCLE!**

**Use This Issue To  
Encourage New  
Membership**

POSTMASTER - If Undeliverable

Please Send Form 3579 To: *Orthodox Christian JOURNAL* • 10 Downs Drive, Plains Twsp. • Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705-3899

***Attention:***

**All FOCA Senior and Junior Chapters, and FOCA Supporters**

**11th Annual  
OCA Christmas  
Stocking Project**

**Help raise funds for Christmas stockings or equivalent gifts for needy children around the world including: *Albania, Belarus, Georgia, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Alaska.***

**Assembled by young people with cerebral palsy in Roosevelt, NY, each stocking is filled with toys, candy, a toothbrush, and an icon.**

**15,000 stockings were distributed in 2003.**

**This year's goal is 18,000 gifts at a cost of \$4.50 each. *Won't you please help us?***



This project is organized annually by the OCA's Office of Humanitarian Aid, which is funded by the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards.

For more info, log onto [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org)

***3 simple steps to participate:***

**1) ORGANIZE AN EVENT:**

*Suggested fundraising ideas:*

- Spaghetti dinner
- "Bake it ourselves" bake sale
- "Paper Stocking" sale
- Fill the sock project
- Parish Brunch/Luncheon
- Ice Cream "Sundae" social
- Pizza Party
- Bike-a, Bowl-a, Sing-a-thons
- "Hire-a-Kid" for a day
- Handmade Ornaments/Magnets/Icons
- Poinsettia sale

**2) MAIL YOUR SUPPORT TO:**

2004 Christmas Stocking Project  
c/o Arlene Kallaur  
P.O. Box 675  
Syosset, NY 11791-0675

*Make checks payable to:  
The Orthodox Church in America*

**3) SEND PHOTOS OF THE EVENT:**

*Photos should be sent via e-mail to:  
[info@oca.org](mailto:info@oca.org) for posting to the  
OCA's website.*

Log onto the OCA website to see photos from the 2001 - 2003 OCA Christmas Stocking Projects:

<http://www.oca.org/pages/events/2004/stockings2003/index.html>