



Happy Holidays!



State Youth Director Lynette Talasek

SPJST Home Office

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November 23, 2016

I hope you and your family enjoyed Thanksgiving. I have enjoyed the photos of all the youth activities going on across the state. Please be sure to document all your fun times and remember to share them in the Vestnik.

I love seeing all the wonderful things everyone is doing and I am sure our members feel the same. It is great that you do things in your community and that youth leaders and parents are giving their youth experiences that build strong character traits and that can never be taken away. The most important part is that you have fun while doing it! It's even nicer when you take the time to share news and photos of your great works with our SPJST family.

I wish you and your family an amazing Christmas and thank you leaders for the gifts of time, energy and perseverance that you devote to our young members through the SPJST Youth Program.

Youth Leaders Retreat

Please mark your calendars and save the date. Youth Leaders Retreat will start on Saturday, March 25 at 10 a.m. at the SPJST Education and Nature Center. If you would like to come the night before the camp is available for overnight accommodations for both Friday and Saturday night. I would like for all Youth Leaders to come and stay Saturday night with us and head home on Sunday, March 26. All youth leaders and their assistants are encouraged to attend. Spouse and guest are welcome to accompany you. If you are planning to bring a spouse or guest, please let me know and I will work with you on making arrangements. The registration form will be included in the January mailing.

2017 Youth Program Theme:

"SPJST-Live the Adventure"

Our youth club theme is "SPJST-Live the Adventure". This is a great theme that hopefully will give our young artists the opportunity to make some great designs for next year's camp tee-shirt design contest.

2017 SPJST Camp Tee Shirt Design Contest

The camp tee-shirt theme is "SPJST-Live the Adventure". Complete information and an official entry form are enclosed. I would really like for youth leaders to encourage some discussion on this topic during your next couple of meetings. Please encourage all of your youth club members to enter. The grand prize is a \$100 Visa gift card and a free tee shirt for the winner. Contest deadline is January 31, 2017. All participants receive 2 merit points and a participation certificate.

President's Volunteer Service Award

The SPJST Youth Program is sponsoring the President's Volunteer Service Awards for all SPJST youth who are eligible to receive the awards. No youth may receive more than one President's Volunteer Service Awards during the preceding calendar year. The SPJST will recognize youth for volunteer service during January 1 through December 31, 2016. This is a great opportunity for our youth members, parents, and groups. Please read about the program on page 40 of the youth club handbook. Volunteer Service Tracking Forms are available from the State Youth Director or on the SPJST webpage. Forms must be returned by February 28 to the State Youth Director. We can also provide you with log in information and you can electronically log your hours. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the program.

SPJST Scholarships and Leadership Grants

All members who are high school seniors and undergraduates are encouraged to apply for the SPJST General Scholarship. Active youth club members are encouraged to apply for both the General Scholarship and the Leadership Grant. Please, remember that you need to be an active youth club member to apply for the Leadership Grant. For more information or for applications, please call Sandra Dubcak in the Fraternal Department. Completed scholarship applications and related application materials must be postmarked on or before February 1, 2017.

100 Pennies Scholarship Drive

Thanks to all of the young people and youth clubs who have contributed to this wonderful project. All young people who donate at least \$2 will receive 2 merit points. All young people who donate at least \$5 will also receive a certificate. Youth leaders if you do not have any of the 100 Pennies slips, please feel free to accept the donation and send it in on a piece of paper. Please be sure to include the name of the person making the donation and the amount of their donation.

2017 Leader-In-Training Retreat June 9-11

LIT retreat will start on Friday, June 9 and end on Sunday, June 11. This year we have a great LIT retreat lined up for our youth. Our retreat will be held at the SPJST Education and Nature Center at Cooper Farm. Mark your calendars and save the date for a great time. I hope that all youth that will be finishing their 8th grade year through graduating seniors will participate as LIT's. Please be sure to watch your newsletter and the Vestnik for our upcoming LEAD program. The program will be offered to youth entering their Junior and Senior years.

SPJST Christmas Open House December 5

All members are cordially invited to attend the Temple Christmas Parade on Monday, December 5 in downtown Temple at 6:30 p.m. The SPJST will have several entries in the parade — including the appearance of our 2016 - 2017 SPJST State Royalty Court. Following the parade, everyone is invited to the SPJST Christmas Open House. Come by and meet Santa and Mrs. Claus. The Czech Christmas tree will be on display with traditional Czech ornaments.

The open house will feature music, refreshments, and lots of fun. Throughout the holiday season, the Home Office will feature the Youth Christmas Tree featuring the statewide winning youth ornaments. The Czech Heritage Museum and Genealogy Center will be open as well for an enjoyable tour and refreshments.

**Best Wishes to You and Yours
for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

Fraternally,

Lynette Talasek

Lynette Talasek
State Youth Director

December Vestnik Project - Czech Christmas Dinner Customs

This project earns a maximum of 1 point in the SPJST Youth Clubs Merit Points System. Mail completed project no later than January 15, 2017 to:
SPJST Youth Program c/o SPJST Home Office • P.O. Box 100 • Temple, Texas 76503

Name _____ Age _____ Lodge _____

Christmas Tree Symbolic of Religious Devotion

Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. Just as people today decorate their homes during the festive season with pine, spruce, and fir trees, ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows. In many countries it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness.

In the 16th century the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it is credited to Germany, when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. It is a widely held belief that Martin Luther, the 16th century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles. It was not until 1882 that Edward Johnson, assistant to Thomas Edison, came up with the idea of the electric lights for Christmas trees.

Even though people have been decorating trees and homes for the winter months and Christmas time since the early spread of Christianity, the tradition of decorating Christmas trees is not very old in the Czech Republic. Legend has it that the first Christmas tree in Prague was erected for Christmas in 1812 by a wealthy patron of the arts, J. K. Liebich for his guests. Soon after, the Czech aristocracy and wealthy townspeople followed his lead and in 1840, the tradition of Christmas tree decorating was wide-spread.



The Meaning Behind the Tree

Originally, the Christmas tree was hung tip-down, not standing upright. According to legend, the original Christmas tree was used as a symbol of religious devotion by Christian missionaries who used the evergreen to explain a basic religious tenet of the Trinity - God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They were originally hung upside down to make sure anyone who saw a tree in the house knew it was not just a floral decoration.



<http://www.history.com>, <http://www.pragueadvent.cz/prague>, <http://www.chiff.com/>

Fill In The Blanks

1. Long before the advent of Christianity, _____ and _____ that remained green all year had special meaning for people in the winter.
2. In the _____ century the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it is credited to _____.
3. The first Christmas tree in Prague was erected for Christmas in _____.
4. The Original tree was hung _____ down.
5. Christian missionaries who used the evergreen to explain a basic religious tenet of the _____.

2017 SPJST Camp Tee-Shirt Design Contest

Official Entry Form

2017 Theme:

“SPJST - Live the Adventure”

Entry Deadline: January 31, 2017

Draw your original design in the space blocked at left. See 2016 - 2017 SPJST Youth Club Handbook for contest rules for complete details.

Name _____

Lodge _____

Age____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

This is my original artwork -- not traced or copied. I understand that it becomes the property of SPJST and will not be returned.

Youth Member's Signature

Parent's Signature

Date

Mail entry by January 31, 2017 to:

SPJST Camp
Tee-Shirt Design Contest
c/o SPJST Home Office
P.O. Box 100, Temple, TX 76503