



## note the date

### february

- 7 Executive Board Meeting**  
Kolping House 88th Street

### march

- 1 Ash Wednesday**  
The first day of Lent, the season of preparation for the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday.
- 5 Annual Elections & General Meeting**  
Kolping House 88th Street
- 10-12 Kolping Ski Trip**  
Join us for our annual excursion to Mount Snow!
- 21 Full Board Meeting**  
Kolping House 88th Street

### april

- 8 KOH Cleanup**  
Kolping-on-Hudson
- 16 Easter Sunday**  
Celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead
- 18 Full Board Meeting**  
Kolping-on-Concourse
- 22-23 KOH Cleanup**  
Kolping-on-Hudson
- 29-30 KOH Cleanup**  
Kolping-on-Hudson

# FEBRUARY

## Please Join Us!

*Mass, Communion Brunch,  
Annual Elections & General Meeting*

**All members, friends and their guests are requested  
to join together on Sunday, March 5, 2017**

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**German Mass at 10:00 am:** St. Joseph's Church, 404 East 87th Street, NYC  
**Brunch 12 noon:** Kolping House, 165 East 88th Street

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We hope you will be able to join us for this very important day. A delicious brunch will be provided by Wolfgang and Geovanni that will consist of a very excellent sauerbraten, red cabbage, and spaetzli, followed by dessert, coffee and tea. The cost of brunch is \$15.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children under 12 years.

We will be electing new members to our Board of Directors—three senior and two junior positions will need to be filled. We invite you to consider becoming a board member. All candidates must be a member of our society in good standing and senior members must be a member for at least 10 years. All board members must attend at least 6 board meetings per year. We welcome your inquiries and ask that you contact Nominations Chairman Charles Smith at 914-500-8042.

**Please make your reservations for the brunch by contacting  
Jan Kessler at 914-462-7649 or jkessny@aol.com.  
We would appreciate your response by February 24, 2017.**



**MISSION STATEMENT:** We, the members of the Catholic Kolping Society of America, extend the vision of our founder, Blessed Adolph Kolping, by promoting the development of the individual and family; we foster a sense of belonging and friendship through our program of spiritual, educational, charitable and social activities.

## KOLPING BULLETIN

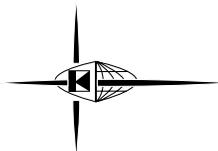
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### 2016 Board of Directors

Rev. Richard Bretone  
(*Praeses*)

Katrina Dengler  
(*President*)

Gerhard Schmitt  
(*Vice President*)

Lou Colletti  
(*Chairman*)

Albert Sartorius  
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(*Recording Secretary*)

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Robert Hemsing

Dennis Noll  
Cecilia Portilla

Donna Richardson  
Albert R. Sartorius

Chuck Smith

### Society Secretary

Jan Kessler  
914.462.7649 / jkessny@aol.com

**National President**  
Lisa Brinkmann

# Milestones & Passages



Everyone could use the power of prayer now and again. If you or anyone you know is in need of prayer, please let us know and we will be happy to include them within the "in our prayers" list. Please contact Jan Kessler (914-462-7649) or email jkessny@aol.com when you know of a member who is ill, in the hospital, or has passed away. We want to be sure to remember them.

Our good friend and Kolping Member **Bill Leili** passed away in early January. Bill spent many summers at Kolping on Hudson and was always volunteering and working on the many projects that needed to be done. Bill will be greatly missed and all our thoughts and prayers are with Irene and his family and friends. Any donation in his memory can be made to Catholic Kolping Society, 95 Montrose Point Road, Montrose, NY 10548 att: Heidi Umland.

Please pray for **Julia Winter** as she is recovering from a fall. She continues to get better and hopes to be released soon from rehab at Mary Manning Walsh.

Please continue to pray for **Violet Nelida Kelly** who is still being treated at the Methodist Home for Nursing and Rehabilitation in Riverdale, NY.



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE BORN IN FEBRUARY:

David Allen, John Barbera, Patricia Barbera, Kate Bergen, Betty Boecklen, Norbert Brunhuber, Karl Buckel, Michael Buckel, John Buscher, Ivan Cantu, Bernhard Dengler, Michael Doyle, Lindsay Froebrich, Thomas Fuchek, Jerry Fullam, Elizabeth Giordano, Bud Gramer, Anne Hemsing, Lisa Hiltzley, Dan Hoek, Violet Kelly, Susan Leili, Jerry Maxson, Walter McDonald, Stephanie McGill, Christopher McGuire, Johanna McGreevy, Mary McGuire, George McNamara, Joseph Mulligan, Laura Mulligan, Sean Murray, Martin Povilonis, Bernhard Preisser, Theresa Rascona, Max Reitter, William Reitter, Ingrid Reslmaier, Maria Reuber, Ed Schmitt, Thomas Seelbach, Nicholas Severin, Edward Specht, Emily Specht, Reinhold Stehle, Daryl Stiloski, Victoria Winklemann, Camden Winter, Joseph Zale, and Gerhard Zoeller. Scott Mohler, Al Park, Brian Ponnaiya, Jason Sink, Dan Stewart.

### SPECIAL FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS:

Special birthday wishes to **Bernard Preisser, Joseph Zale, Maria Reuber, and Martin Povilonis.**

If you know someone celebrating a milestone birthday or anniversary, please let us know so we can include it in the Bulletin. Please email either me at editor@kolpingny.org or Jan Kessler at jkessny@aol.com.

### THANK YOU

Thank you **Gerhard Zoeller** for his generous donation in memory of all the Kolping Members that passed away this year and for the many KOH projects.

Thank you **Lia and Sixto Portilla** for your donation towards the Advent Project.

We greatly appreciate the donation to the Kolping House received from **Karen Staub.**

Thank you to **Katrina Dengler** for her donation to the Radio Project. And a big thank you for to the **Luetz Riedel Charitable Trust** for their generous donation to the Radio Project.

Thank you for the **generous donations to the stained glass window for Doris Petsche:** Kathy & Mike Weinborg, Alfred Vogl & Stacie Truncellito, Jennifer & Mike Scheuermann, Al & Linda Ahrens, Evelyn & Eric, Asta Ondracek, Kathy & Walter Weigand, Marlene & Willy Bittermann, Maria, Jim & Hertha Stang, Heidi Umland, Linda & Joe Szoldatits, Jan & Artie Kessler, Marge Cirincione, and Gerhard Zoeller.

Also **generous donations were made for Bill Leili:** Hans & Doris Lechner, Kathy & Walter Weigand, Marlene & Willy Bittermann, and Gerhard Zoeller.



### BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

This is **Calvin Jackson LaRoche!** Cal was born on 1/17/17 to our members Jill and Brett. Kameron and Conner are happy to share this news of their baby brother! We are looking forward to seeing, holding, and getting to know this baby boy in Montrose this summer.  
—submitted by Ann Hemsing

### DORIS PETSCHÉ

If you would like to contribute towards a stained glass window in memory of Doris Petsche donations should be made payable to "Kolping on Hudson" and mailed directly to Kolping on Hudson, Attn: Heidi Umland at 95 Montrose Point Road Montrose, NY 10548 Thank you from her family to those that have donated already.

# 2017 DUES

Pay your membership dues by April 1st to avoid any late charges. Please forward your check made out to **Catholic Kolping Society** and mail it to Kolping on Hudson, 95 Montrose Point Road, Montrose, NY 10548

**Att: Jan Kessler, Secretary**

Family: \$100

Individual: \$85

Student: \$40

50-year members: paid up forever!

Please take an extra minute to fill in the bottom of the letter **with your current email address**, any change in address, phone number, birthdays, and other information. Mail it back with your dues to our secretary, Jan Kessler. She will be updating the files and will include your email address on her email account. She will be sending out notices of new events to you via email this spring.

SECURITY AND ALARM SYSTEM INSTALLATION  
Kolping Member John Tripaldi

**J&M Security Systems, Inc., Est. 1984**  
**914-332-7874**

- Residential and Commercial Security Systems, specifically tailored to each client's needs and concerns
- Fire Protection as well as Carbon Monoxide Protection, Flood Protection, Low Temperature Protection etc.
- Camera Systems for Home and Business
- Apps available for remote viewing for alarm systems and cameras

## AMBERLANDS TRAVEL INC.

1 Baltic Place, Route 9A  
Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520  
**phone: 914-271-6663**  
**email: ambertrvl@aol.com**

Sadie Longobardi, Kolping member since 2005, is the owner of Amberlands Travel. Her travel agency is a full service agency—she works with individual clients, groups and corporate clients. She has been in the travel business for 31 years and handles travels to everywhere. Call her at when you are planning your next trip. She will do everything she can to get you the best price.

# News & Notes

## KOLPING LENTEN PROJECT

All or our Kolping members have the opportunity to contribute to a project that promotes the teachings of Father Kolping and demonstrates the commitment of our members to his work—we call this our Lenten Project. At our convention in New York, delegates voted to support a national effort to contribute to one of the projects run by Kolping International—Life-stock farming in Kenya. Kolping International invites Kolping members in Kenya to participate in a program that aims to teach the skills needed to raise goats, produce milk and utilize dung by-products for sale, use and sustainability. Kolping Kenya has existed since the mid 1980s and currently includes over 3,500 in five different regions. In a highly agriculture-dependent country, raising goats can mean the difference between living in poverty and enjoying a simple life. We can make a difference for these Kolping members and show them our support! We hope all Kolping members will consider donating at least \$10 towards this Lenten Project.

Here is a website that will provide all the details about the project:

[https://www.kolping.net/en/how\\_you\\_can\\_support\\_us/projects\\_worldwide/africa.html](https://www.kolping.net/en/how_you_can_support_us/projects_worldwide/africa.html)

Please send all donations to Catholic Kolping Society, 95 Montrose Point Road, Montrose, NY 10548, ATT: JAN KESSLER

7 December 2016

Dear Ms. Kessler,

Your very generous gift to Saint Joseph's Church - Yorkville to assist in our faith formation program came in today's mail! Please thank the board of directors on behalf of our parishioners and myself for keeping us in mind so generously during this holy season. I already have in mind how your contribution can be used, and it will be a big help.

With my best wishes to you, the board of directors, and all the members of the New York Kolping Society for a blessed Christmas -

Fr. Boniface Ramsey

## KOLPING BROADCAST RADIO

WKBR-LPFM 102.3 will start broadcasting soon in the Somers area! Stay tuned for more details.

## SAVE THE DATE

Fr. Breton's barn dance will be held on April 22. More details to come.

## SAVE PAPER

Call or email Jan Kessler (914.462.7649) or [jkessny@aol.com](mailto:jkessny@aol.com) if you would like to receive your Bulletin via email. You can also visit our website [www.kolpingny.org](http://www.kolpingny.org) and find copies of the monthly bulletins, list of upcoming events and so much other information that you may find helpful.

## GERMAN MASS St. Joseph's in Yorkville, 404 E. 87th St.

Every first Sunday of the month, the Holy sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated in German at 10am. Confessions in German before Mass. For information please call Julia Winter (347-852-3184). For information regarding counseling and sacraments in German, please contact Rev. James Boniface Ramsey, Pastor (212-289-6030).

## OUR HOLY FATHER'S FEBRUARY 2017 INTENTION

COMFORT FOR THE AFFLICTED.

That all those who are afflicted, especially the poor, refugees, and marginalized, may find welcome and comfort in our communities.

# March 6, 2016 General Meeting Minutes–K88

## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

K. Dengler, B. Preisser (National President), L. Colletti, P. Carruthers, J. Noonan, E. Endrich, A. Sartorius Sr., A. Sartorius, Jr., G. Schmitt, D. Noll, T. Dengler, J. Kessler Society Secretary, A. Hemsing, B. Hemsing, J. Reiter, C. Portilla, D. Richardson, Fr. Bretone. Excused: R. Brunhuber

Meeting opened at 12:45 with a prayer by Fr. Bretone. G. Schmitt handed out ballots.

## Members up for election gave a brief description of their time as members and Board Directors:

**A. Hemsing** commented that she enjoyed being on the Board and working with the others on the board.

**J. Noonan** commented on his 66 year membership.

**P. Carruthers** waxed poetically on the joys of the job of recording secretary.

**C. Smith** stated that he is married, a father of 3 and has been a member since 2007. He is on the radio and spring clean-up committee.

- L. Portilla motions to forgo Sr. BOD vote and vote by acclimation.
- K. Dengler motions to close nominations.
- L. Colletti thanks West Point cadets for attending, and for service to our country.
- Fr. Bretone was presented as recipient of the Lenten Project. He presented the plans for "Heaven's Embrace with a shrine to be built around a waterfall along with a 12-sided gazebo. Works permits are in process.
- L. Portilla and daughter collect for the 50/50 raffle, which will be donated to Fr. Bretone's retreat work.

## TREASURER/COMPTROLLER REPORT

*presented by John Reitter*

- Year-end results were encouraging with all accounts in positive, including KOC, K88 and the Society.
- KOC is positive which includes a large donation and cost of new windows.
- K88 positive, including credits to the Society account, discretionary fund and help for KOH projects.
- Investment returns are net positive with only small recent market setback.

## KOLPING ON CONCOURSE

*presented by Bernhard Preisser*

- Estate gift of \$200k went toward new windows.
- Continued estate gifts help keep the building in top shape.
- Commented that help is needed for the upcoming convention. Meetings will be held every 1st Tuesday of the month. The convention is scheduled for Sept 2-5, 2016.

## KOLPING ON HUDSON

*presented by Heidi Umland*

- Kitchen revenue has been positive
- \$17k revenue from parties
- Pool income remains negative.
- All rooms are full with 2 on the waiting list.
- Playground construction is due to start in two months. Donations are being accepted throughout the build.
- L. Colletti announced an expansion of Oktoberfest celebrations.
- B. Hemsing discussed the solar project:
  - Expected to utilize government subsidies in the build.
  - The KOH installation is expected to generate enough electrical power to fully run KOH with some left over to provide a credit to other properties, if allowed. Good for profits and the environment.
- Finally, the Caretaker's hose has been restored and is rented

## KOLPING ON 88TH ST. REPORT

*presented by Gerhard Schmitt*

- House is almost full—only 5 vacancies after 22 at the beginning of the year (due to holidays and also losing a block of renters from a business.
- As a review the student rate is \$250/week which includes 5 meals.
- The third floor repairs are in progress with the 3rd floor showers rebuilt. Giovanni has been busy with renovations after vacancies, along with the installation of a more powerful WIFI system.
- Ball Room repairs continue with the installation of new air conditioning. The floors come next.
- The paintings are in process of being restored, thanks to L. Szolzatis advice.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

*presented by Jan Kessler*

- Paid-in membership at 639
- There will be a new members Mass on May 22 with 40-50 new members expected to attend.
- Looking forward to upcoming events and thanks to all volunteers and member support

## UN REPORT

*presented by John Reiter*

- John is involved with the NGO committee for Social Development and Justice which met for 10 days in Feb.
- There was a statement published expressing concerns over poverty, education and inclusion.
- The committee posted a request by all member countries to work towards sustainable development goals.
- Kolping is located in 60 countries and works to improve health care and social development.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*presented by Katrina Dengler*

- Katrina thanked all for attending and for helpers at all locations for going great work.
- Highlighted that Kolping offers the National office for Catholic Bible study.
- Commented on the Christmas and Lenten collections
- The 2016 Kolping convention is to be held on Labor day weekend with hotels rooms pre-booked at the Marriot East.
- Cardinal Dolan will be celebrating Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral that weekend, honoring Father Kolping. All are encouraged to attend.

## RADIO COMMITTEE

*presented by Lia Portilla*

- There has been a shift from WETN to Relevant Radio for content.
- \$750 has been raised to-date for the radio station with the addition of a 3 for 1 \$3,500 matching gift!

## NEW BUSINESS

*presented by Gerhard Schmitt*

- NY is expected to signed up the most new members in Kolping North America for 2015-16 and hopes to received the trophy for fastest growth
- New initiatives include reaching out to the German School for new families.
- L. Colletti asks for new membership requests. No questions.
- 50/50 raffle winner announced. \$153 was raised with the proceeds going to Fr. Bretone, and the winner, C. Smith donating his winnings also to Fr. Bretone, Thanks Chuck!
- The Kolping Ski Trip is scheduled for Mar 11-13, 2016
- The KOH Ester Egg hunt is scheduled for Apr 2 and could be extended if all eggs are not accounted for.
- KOH Spring cleanup starts in April with volunteers needed.
- Mother's Day Mass will be held at KOH with the Sisters who were the recipient of the Lenten project to be invited.

*B. Hemsing spoke:*

- Nice job by Katrina in role of President
- Thanks to BOD, fund managers, Wolfgang and assistants and all volunteers.

Fr. Bretone closed the meeting with a review and insight into the Prodigal Son parable. Reconciliation of good and wayward sons reflects the unity of family. Lent is a great time for reconciliation and the unity of family which in turn, makes a strong nation.

Meeting closed at 2:45

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Peter Carruthers  
Treu Kolping

# The German Language Learning Club at the historical Kolping Society

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165 East 88th Street (between Lexington & Third Avenues)

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**We offer small personal classes with native German teachers.**

We meet Tuesdays for 15 weeks.

**ADULT CLASSES:** 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

**AFTERNOON CHILDREN'S CLASSES:**

Toddlers to teens at 4-5, 5-6, 6-7pm

*Kaffee & Kuchen Pause*



**SPRING SEMESTER: January 24 to May 23**

(There will be no classes held on: Feb. 21; April 11; and April 18)

**INTERMEDIATE:** Intermediate classes comprise students who have had some prior German study. This class is tailored to the needs of the students. Reviewing and studying grammar with some German conversation.

**ADVANCED:** Reading and conversation with specific grammar topics as requested.

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Yorkville was once an internationally famous section in New York City from the 30s through the 60s known as Yorkville/Kleindeutschland. Settled by a population of middle and eastern European countries, its largest ethnic group was German speaking. In keeping with tradition, an effort was started in 1990 by the Yorkville Kleindeutschland Historical Society to preserve some of Yorkville's heritage, now lost forever, through our language club.

We are a 27 year old co-operative of students and teachers who wish to preserve the study of the German language and culture in an informal environment. The fee is \$475.00 for the 15 week, 30 hour course. Students may join during a semester at a pro-rated rate.

Our club makes no profit. We are supported solely by our members, and we offer German learning opportunities, and social and cultural events. We also march in the German/American Steuben parade every September. Friends and family of students and teachers are invited to join in the parade and all the festivities during German/American month.

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:** kaj133@aol.com or 212/249-0125

[www.germanlearn.com](http://www.germanlearn.com)

Mail: #3E, 133 East 84th Street, New York, NY 10028

***No trying out of classes***

# 2017 Reflections: Let's Make America Pray Again

Father Richard Bretone's New Years Homily *submitted by Katrina Dengler*

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Dear sons and daughters,

What a deeply strange year it has been, and a more deeply strange year will commence. So strange.

You have heard by now almost ad nauseam that this will be the time when America will be great again. You have heard this over and over, and it has meant so many things to so many people:

- Economic prosperity
- American manufacturing prowess
- Pride in those who are citizens of this great country
- Fearless leadership in world affairs
- A military that is the envy of all the world
- A flourishing populace that harkens to an age when God and country were one!

But, my children, my dear children, if you want to make America great again, then you have to make America pray again!

You see, prayer was the secret behind the whole past nostalgia that people long for and remember. They recall the good jobs, the abundant work opportunities, the ability of one salary to support a whole family. People remember when the military was revered and those who ran the country as political leaders were esteemed.

It was such a simpler time. You could trust your friends and you knew your enemies. It was a more obedient time. People listened to reason. They enlisted experts. They had faith in the democratic process. There was an innocence and lack of cynicism. There was a pattern to relationships and a certain natural order that all people followed.

What made this so? How did they know what to do? And how did they accept the advice of those who knew more or better? How did order rule in their souls and deep faith in their hearts?

This is really the essential question because without order of thought and faith of heart there can be no greatness anywhere, any place, at any time in America, or anywhere else!

What made America great the first time was its prayer—its deep prayerfulness. How America loved its God! In fact, it was what literally made America—religious freedom—the desire to freely worship God in the many ways that He can be conceived and known to humanity. America went “wild” for religion.

So many immigrants flocked to her shores, because of this promise of freedom. Remember all the sacrifices those immigrants made for their churches. How they pitched in and built magnificent edifices to their God. They had such holy pride and a deep mission to find a place of worship and build a structure to finally worship their God without fear of retaliation or tyranny or menacing or prejudice!

These immigrants knew this was what made America great! And they did not take it for granted! They cherished every prayer, every hymn, every sermon, because they knew it was a precious gift given to them by the founding fathers of this great nation. They never took it for granted, so pray they did—on Sundays, in the evenings, on their return home with their families. Fr. Peyton's dictum that “the family who prays together, stays together” was followed by so many people!

The closeness, the forgiveness, the gentleness, the trust, the intimacy of prayer was shared, and the feeling of connection was forged by: a Hail Mary, an Our Father and a Glory Be!

My God, what a simpler time!  
My God, what a great time!  
My God, what a time for America!

Alas, you cannot have the appearance of greatness, the externals of greatness without being great on the inside. If America neglects prayer, her greatness will be fleeting, if, indeed, she achieves it at all! It will be counterfeit and phony and a sham, because it will not have the roots of greatness firmly planted in her God!

Whatever else this country may aspire to, whatever else it is called to by the beats of war or the jangling of riches, if it is not called to prayer, it is called to nothing—to emptiness and loneliness, to disappointment and despair!

Yes, you entrepreneur turned politician turned leader of the free world, you were given a God granted opportunity to do what you said you could do making America great again!

I challenge you and the country you now lead to go beyond the appearances of greatness to the core of this superlative—Make America the best again!

Lead by intensity.  
Lead by conviction.  
Lead by reason.

Guide with the heart, and know all these through union with your God, and that union is prayer—personal prayer, communal prayer, national prayer.

For America to be made great again, it must pray again!

My children, my faithful ones, be there for the people. Teach them what you have been practicing for so long. Teach them how to pray.

*(I begin each year by “asking” the Blessed Mother in prayer what we need to hear in order to orientate our upcoming year. This reflection is the fruit of that prayer. May it bear much fruit! God bless)*

# *Stories of Interest*

## **Paid it “Führ”ward** submitted by Martin A. Kelly



Heinrich Steinmeyer as a young member of the SS. Photograph: Tina Norris/Rex/Shutterstock

“Home is where the heart is” so goes the saying. This was never more beautifully illustrated than in the life of former S.S. soldier Heinrich Steinmeyer. Born in Germany in 1928, he grew up under the indoctrination of the Nazi tyrants. By age 17, he was a member of the Waffen S.S. and stationed in Norway. He was captured and “fortunately” was interned in a P.O.W. camp at Cultybraggan near the village of Comrie in Scotland.

The people he found were friendly and it disproved the brain-washing he had been exposed to all his life. The landscape was breathtaking and he had an “umschwung” (about-face) about Scots. He became a great fan of the Scots and the natural beauty of the area.

He was mustered out of the military; but made frequent visits to the people and scenery that had enchanted him while a prisoner.

Having done well at home, he left his estate of \$485,000 to the Comrie development to “help the elderly”. Further he wanted his ashes scattered among the hills he loved gazing at while imprisoned.

NY Post Dec 4, 2016 p29

## **“Tis the Season to be Merry”**

*submitted by Martin A. Kelly*

Christmas is the time of year to be jolly; but not for someone like the hard task master Ebenezer Scrooge the villain in Charles Dicken’s “A Christmas Carol”. He returned Christmas greetings with the catch word “Humbug” meaning “farce” or “foolery”.

There are several theories on the origin of the word “Humbug”. One feels the play by the Anti Napoleonic Forces (England, Prussia, and some Germanic states) to undermine the value of the franc had something to do with it. Since most of the counterfeit francs were made in Prussia they were called “Humbuggs; and whence “humbug” meant illegitimate scam, falsehood.

## **KOH Beekeepers Visit** ▶

*Submitted by Lou Colletti & Linda Szoldatits*

On Sunday, January 15th the KOH Beekeepers, Frank Kurcz, Richie Polvilonis & Joe Szoldatits came to check on the Bee Hives. Frank is listening for activity & making sure they are ok and happy? The Beekeepers are hoping for a hardy and healthy Spring Flowering Season. They would like bring back the environment that the previous Beekeepers had. That would be to bring back more flowering and fruit trees. In the area around Assumth Hall. Such as Apple, Pear and Cherry Trees. We wish them and the Bees plenty of Honey in the Fall.



# *"Information, Please"* submitted by the late Jack McGee

## How a Boy and His Telephone Operator Formed a Lovely, Lasting Friendship

In this 1996 Reader's Digest Classic, originally published in 1966 as "The Voice in the Box," a little boy forges a strong connection with the local telephone operator. —by PAUL VILLIARD



Gérard Dubois for Reader's Digest

When I was a young boy, my father had one of the first telephones in our neighborhood.... I remember the polished, old case fastened to the wall. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I was too little to reach the telephone, but used to listen with fascination when my mother talked to it.

Then I discovered that somewhere inside the wonderful device lived an amazing person. Her name was "Information Please" and there was nothing she did not know. Information Please could supply anyone's number and the correct time.

My personal experience with the genie-in-a-bottle came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbor. Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer, the pain was terrible, but there seemed no point in crying because there was no one home to give sympathy.

I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone! Quickly, I ran for the footstool in the parlor and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver in the parlor and held it to my ear.

"Information, please" I said into the mouth piece just above my head.

A click or two and a small clear voice spoke into my ear.

"Information."

"I hurt my finger..." I wailed into the phone, the tears came readily enough now that I had an audience.

"Isn't your mother home?" came the question.

"Nobody's home but me," I blubbered.

"Are you bleeding?" the voice asked.

"No," I replied. "I hit my finger with the hammer and it hurts."

"Can you open the icebox?" she asked.

I said I could.

"Then chip off a little bit of ice and hold it to your finger," said the voice...

After that, I called "Information Please" for everything.. I asked her for help with my geography, and she told me where Philadelphia was. She helped me with my math.

She told me my pet chipmunk that I had caught in the park just the day before, would eat fruit and nuts.

Then, there was the time Petey, our pet canary, died. I called, "Information Please," and told her the sad story. She listened, and then said things grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was not consoled. I asked her, "Why is it that birds should sing so beautifully and bring joy to all families, only to end up as a heap of feathers on the bottom of a cage?"

She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, "Wayne, always remember that there are other worlds to sing in."

Somehow I felt better.

Another day I was on the telephone, "Information Please."

"Information," said in the now familiar voice. "How do I spell fix?" I asked.

All this took place in a small town in the Pacific Northwest. When I was nine years old, we moved across the country to Boston. I missed my friend very much. "Information Please" belonged in that old wooden box back home and I somehow never thought of trying the shiny new phone that sat on the table in the hall. As I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me.

Often, in moments of doubt and perplexity I would recall the serene sense of security I had then. I appreciated now how patient, understanding, and kind she was to have spent her

time on a little boy.

A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane put down in Seattle. I had about a half-hour or so between planes. I spent 15 minutes or so on the phone with my sister, who lived there now. Then without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said, "Information Please."

Miraculously, I heard the small, clear voice I knew so well.

"Information."

I hadn't planned this, but I heard myself saying, "Could you please tell me how to spell fix?"

There was a long pause. Then came the soft spoken answer, "I guess your finger must have healed by now."

I laughed, "So it's really you," I said. "I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during that time?"

I wonder," she said, "if you know how much your calls meant to me. I never had any children and I used to look forward to your calls."

I told her how often I had thought of her over the years and I asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister.

"Please do", she said. "Just ask for Sally."

Three months later I was back in Seattle. A different voice answered, "Information." I asked for Sally.

"Are you a friend?" she said.

"Yes, a very old friend," I answered.

"I'm sorry to have to tell you this," she said. "Sally had been working part time the last few years because she was sick. She died five weeks ago."

Before I could hang up, she said, "Wait a minute, did you say your name was Wayne?"

Yes," I answered.

"Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down in case you called. Let me read it to you."

The note said, "Tell him there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean."

I thanked her and hung up. I knew what Sally meant.

Never underestimate the impression you may make on others.

Whose life have you touched today?

# KOLPING SKI TRIP

Friday-Sunday, March 10-12, 2017

Mountaineer Inn at Mount Snow, Vermont

## LODGING

Triple	Double	Single
\$424	\$325	\$230

Children 12 and under are \$55 in room with adult. They do not count towards the adult count, so the child under 12 and one adult is the single price plus child. **Children 13 or older must pay adult rates.**

## SKIING

	Adult	Jr/Sr (6-18 or 65+)
1 day Sat	\$67	\$56
1 day Sun	\$57	\$53
2 day	\$117	\$91
3 day	\$169	\$121
4 day	\$213	\$154

Group discounts are available on rentals and lessons. Contact Joan Dengler at [joanandted@gmail.com](mailto:joanandted@gmail.com) for specific configurations.

Mail checks payable to Kolping to Joan Dengler at 7 Ganung Drive, Ossining, NY 10562

Your reservation at the Mountaineer will include two hearty country breakfasts, wine, cider and cheese reception, Saturday evening gourmet dinner, tax and gratuity.



# Joseph Sartorius Scholarship Application

◆ **TWO SCHOLARSHIPS WILL BE AWARDED. 1ST AWARD: \$2,000 / 2ND AWARD: \$1,000** ◆

**2017 Topic:** *Peace Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; Where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; To be understood as to understand; To be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; And it is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.*

**How would you put the words of St. Francis of Assisi's Peace Prayer into your home life, your school life, and your personal life?**

## Scholarship Applicants must:

1. Be a member or the child or grandchild of a member of the Catholic Kolping Society of New York.
2. Provide proof of enrollment in college or post-high vocational program.
3. Submit an essay of no more than 1,000 words. Please follow the standards and format of the New York State English Regents essay. Remember that correct use of grammar and vocabulary will be taken into account.
4. The essay must be on a separate page WITH NO reference to name family, or anything by which the judges would be able to identify you.
5. Not be a previous winner.
6. Accept the decision of the judges as final.
7. Send application, proof of enrollment, and essay by **SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 2017**. Please email materials electronically to **bfp19@msn.com**. If you prefer, you can mail the materials to Christine Preisser, 19 Revere Road, Ardsley, NY 10502.

Please contact the Christine Preisser at 914-693-5537 with any questions.

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**I hereby apply for the Joseph Sartorius Scholarship and agree to abide by the rules of eligibility.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Initial

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street/City/State/Zip

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_  
Month Date Year Area Code Number

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street/City/State/Zip

Major/Minor Program of Study: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Year (Check One): \_\_\_\_ Freshman \_\_\_\_ Sophomore \_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_ Senior \_\_\_\_ 2-year program

Name of Kolping Member (*Print Clearly*): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date