

LINK

The official newsletter of the Illinois Fraternal Congress



IFC representatives take fraternalism to the state capital

Taking fraternalism directly to state legislators were more than 50 attendees at the Illinois State Fraternal Congress Annual Meeting held in Springfield on March 3-5, 2010. As part of an initiative to demonstrate the millions of dollars and hours of service fraternalists give to their communities, the group toured the capitol building and met with several of their legislators. Senators and representatives staying at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center, site of the meeting, also were invited to an evening reception to learn about fraternal benefit societies.

Speakers during the meeting included Mark Walsworth, Catholic Order of Foresters, who spoke about the success of his society's JOIN HANDS DAY initiative. COF encourages its members to support the Feeding God's Children organization on a grassroots level. Courts and agents are provided brochures, letters, flyers, and programs to use to create interest and participation in their local projects. Twenty courts participated in the 2008 JOIN HANDS DAY. With Feeding God's Children as a national theme, 80 courts and 3,500 volunteers participated in the day in 2009.

Jill Weaver, Modern Woodmen of America, reminded the meeting participants about the importance of the fraternal message. When we talk about fraternalism and fraternal benefit societies, do people understand...do they get what we are all about? She encouraged all societies to review their messaging

to ensure it is clear and concise to those who are fraternal novices.

Elizabeth Snyder, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy of the National Fraternal Congress, provided a legislative update about issues in Hawaii and Washington, and offered suggestions for communicating our message to local senators and representatives.

During the banquet held on Thursday evening, eight Fraternalists of the Year were honored for their outstanding work in serving their communities. They included Juanita Burden, Catholic Order of Foresters; Walter Cygan, Polish National Alliance of the U.S. of N.A.; Patricia Hapeman, Modern Woodmen of America; Mary Lee, CSA Fraternal Life; Ivanka Markun, KSKJ Life, American Slovenian Catholic Union; Vera Minnaert, National Catholic Society of Foresters; Darcy Smith, Royal Neighbors of America; and JoAnn Witte, Western Catholic Union.

Installation of officers was held with David Huber, president of Catholic Order of Foresters, serving as installing officer. Officers serving during the 2010-2011 term are Darcy Smith, Royal Neighbors of America, president; Tom Adamson, Catholic Order of Foresters, immediate past president; Keri Rursch, Modern Woodmen of America, vice-president; Daniel Wenzler, CSA Fraternal Life, treasurer; and Agnes Migiel, Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, secretary; and Jim Tranel, National Catholic Society of Foresters, Lydia Marquardt, KSKJ Life, American Slovenian Catholic Union, Paul Odrobina, Polish National Alliance of the U.S. of N.A., Mary Barbara Kurtz, Catholic Holy Family Society of the USA, Steve Looten, Western Catholic Union, and Brian Miller, CSA Fraternal Life, directors.



At left: Before leaving Springfield on Friday, many delegates and guests gathered at Contact Ministries, a local organization that provides referrals, food, clothing, shelter, financial assistance, and other programs for people in times of need. The group toured the facility and helped organize clothing.



Annual Meeting brings fraternalists together

Above: State Senator Tim Bivens, Dixon, IL, at left, visited with Jim Tranel, National Catholic Society of Foresters, at right, during the Springfield meeting.

Above right: Attendees enjoyed networking during breaks.

At right: Illinois Fraternalists of the Year for 2010 included, left to right, seated, Patricia Hapeman, Modern Woodmen of America; Darcy Smith, Royal Neighbors of America; and Ivanka Markun, KSKJ Life, American Slovenian Catholic Union. Standing, JoAnn Witte, Western Catholic Union; Mary Lee, CSA Fraternal Life; and Juanita Burden, Catholic Order of Foresters.





Tom Adamson
President



Keri Rursch
Secretary-treasurer



Jill Weaver
Modern Woodman of America
Speaker



Mark Walsworth
Catholic Order of Foresters
Speaker



Above: IFC fraternalists gather for a tour of the state capitol in Springfield.



Above: Among the newly elected officers for the 2010-2011 term are, seated, Keri Rursch, Modern Woodmen of America, vice president, and Darcy Smith, Royal Neighbors of America, president, left and right respectively. Standing, left to right, are Jim Tranel, National Catholic Society of Foresters, director; Tom Adamson, Catholic Order of Foresters, immediate past president; Dan Wenzler, CSA Fraternal Life, treasurer; and Paul Odrobina, Polish National Alliance of the U.S. of N.A., Steve Looten, Western Catholic Union, and Brian Miller, CSA Fraternal Life, directors.

If you would like information posted to the Web site, www.ifc-fic.com, or if you have articles for *The Link* newsletter, please contact:

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Greetings from Darcy Smith, *IFC President*

I'm very pleased and proud to lead the Illinois Fraternal Congress for the upcoming term. Our recent Annual Meeting in Springfield was a great success. On behalf of all the Illinois societies, I extend our appreciation to Tom Adamson, Catholic Order of Foresters, and Keri Rursch, Modern Woodmen of America, for planning the event. And to those of you who attended, we also send a heartfelt thank-you.

Next year, the Annual Meeting will be held in Springfield in an effort to once again reach out to our state legislators and educate them about the collective power of fraternalists. In that spirit, I have chosen "Fraternalism...start the conversation" as the theme for 2010-2011. We have quite a story to tell and it is up to each of us to lead the discussion with, not only our senators and representatives, but the media and our communities as well.

I look forward to any feedback or suggestions you have for next year's meeting. We want to plan a get-together that gives you the opportunity to network, learn, and meet with your local legislators. We hope to see many more fraternalists in the state capital next spring!