



OUR STORY

NAŠA ZGODOVINA



Canadian Slovenian Historical Society ~ Vol. 9 No. 2 ~ Summer 2019

About the Flag of Slovenia

Anne Urbančič

The Archives of the CSHS often receive various items decorated with the vivid white, distinct sea blue, and deep red stripes that for our Canadian Slovenian community are immediately recognizable as the colours of the Slovenian flag. Every June 25th the City of Toronto raises the Slovenian Flag at our City Hall to commemorate Slovenian Independence Day. It flies proudly for all the metropolis to see. Perhaps looking up, people wonder whose country it belongs to. Perhaps you wonder what its origins are.

Flags were first and foremost military designators. But by the late 1700s, especially with the founding of the United States of America and following the French Revolution, flags began to designate a country beyond a wartime context. Other countries followed suit, sometimes basing their national flag on traditional standards or banners, sometimes, like Canada with its crisp clean design, they worked from fresh and original ideas.

In time, national flags have become so important as a marker of identity and national pride that they are usually inscribed into the constitution of their country. To burn or destroy a national flag is an act of hostility toward the country and what it stands for, even if the act is symbolic. So important are national flags that numerous protocols govern their display and removal.

Canada's flag has a fairly recent history spanning just over half a century since it was proclaimed in February 1965. It is immediately identifiable and no other world flag to date has a red vertical side panels together with a red leaf icon in a white center field (although Peru comes close). Other flags, especially those that come from countries with older traditions, share characteristics and so a discerning eye is needed to make sure the flag and country match. You'll understand the deep disappointment of many Slovenski Dan volunteers at the Slovenian Farm in Bolton Ontario when, several years ago, they discovered that flags they had ordered as mementoes of the occasion represented Croatia, not Slovenia.

So where does the Slovenian flag originate? There are numerous internet and print resources to tell us the story. The colours are called Pan-Slavic (across the Slavic nations) although the horizontal bands are not necessarily arranged in the same order for other Slavic countries like Croatia, Russia, Serbia and Slovakia. Other countries have also chosen red, white and blue as their colours but laid out in different designs (like France, the U.S.A or Great Britain). When flags, like those of the Pan-Slavic nations, are similar, important details distinguish them from each other. For example, the coat of arms in the upper left-hand corner of the Slovenian flag represents its distinctive geography: the mountains (it is Triglav in the icon) and the Adriatic Sea and rivers symbolized by the two wavy blue lines. In addition, we can read some of Slovenia's history in the flag. The stars of the icon, in their inverted triangular shape, recall the Counts of Celje who ruled the area in the late Middle Ages. The three colours recall the standards of the Dukes of Carniola. Unlike Canada's relatively new flag, Slovenia proudly flew its standard, similar to that of today, as early as 1848. It hung from a building near Prešernov trg (square) in Ljubljana, raised by a group of students led by Slovenian patriot and poet Lovro Toman (1827-1870). A Slovenian flag still waves proudly over the passersby from its original location at Wolfova ulica 8. The main difference between the old flag and the one of today was that the first bore only the horizontal bars, and no coat of arms. The latter was added after Slovenian Independence in 1991, replacing the red star that had marked the country as part of communist Yugoslavia.

The annual flag raising ceremony at City Hall in Toronto is always a moving one. It reminds us of a country and a people whose circumstances have brought them to the country of the bright red Maple Leaf but whose history and culture continue in their pride for the flag of Slovenia. As the summer begins, take a moment to celebrate Slovenia on June 25 and Canada on July 1.

Video Interviews ~ Povejte Nam Kaj

Mario Ulcar

Upon meeting Sonja Obljubek, I was very impressed with the passion she expressed for Slovenian immigrants and their stories. Born and raised in Thunder Bay with a Slovenian father and a Croatian mother, she is an accomplished producer, director and editor of various television programs and documentaries for major television broadcasters. Upon further discussion, it was decided to document, in the form of video interviews, the stories of those immigrants who had lived in Slovenia and were then forced to flee the communist regime after World War II. After waiting in refugee camps for several years, many finally found freedom and the opportunity to prosper when they were accepted by countries like Canada.

Mario Resnik, a retired lighting director and camera operator for TVO and other broadcasters, offered to assist by filming these interviews. Thus, Anne Zagar and I, representing the Canadian Slovenian Historical Society, along with Sonja and Mario have been working on this project with a focus on Slovenians in southern Ontario. The aim, however, is to include the stories of Canadian Slovenians from other parts of the country.

The people who have been interviewed have been candid, and even though they all have different stories to tell of their arrival in Canada, their message is clear. They are proud Slovenians who welcomed the freedom that Canada offered. Not knowing the language, arriving with no money and generally little education, they worked hard, were successful and enabled a promising future for their children. Many of these people showed courage in striving to get ahead and proving to Canada that it had made a wise decision in accepting them. All of them got their Canadian citizenship as soon as they could. The interviews also reinforced their joy in finally seeing Slovenia become independent. Slovenia had always been under

the control of others and, at last, in 1991, it became self-governing. A beautiful, small country, it is often referred to as a “hidden gem.”

This year, we conducted over 25 interviews. Up until now, the work had been performed by volunteers. The editing process, however, requires the expertise of paid professionals. Supporting photos and videos are also necessary. When the editing is completed, the video will be made available on the CSHS website for all to view. It is important that the descendants of these immigrants learn about and appreciate the struggle of those who came before them.

In the fall, we will again be conducting more interviews. If you know of anyone who should be included in this project, please contact Mario Ulcar at marioulcar@gmail.com



M. Ulcar, S. Obljubek and M. Resnik





60th Year of Slovenian Day Celebration

Spoštovane slovenke, slovinci - Honoured ladies and gentlemen

Congratulations to all Slovenians in Canada

Slovenian Day is one of the most important cultural events in the Canadian Slovenian Community.
It is a manifestation of our national pride, consciousness, culture and faith.

On this day we celebrate:

- ◆ 164th Anniversary of Slovenians in Canada
- ◆ 152nd Anniversary of our homeland Canada
- ◆ 28th Anniversary of the Republic of Slovenia - an independent and democratic nation.

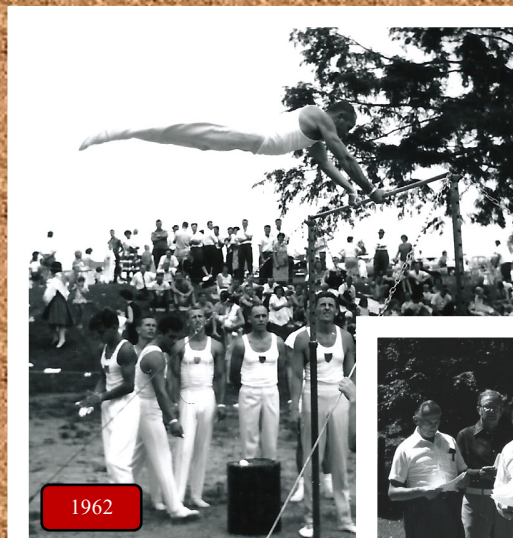
This is also a day to celebrate our traditions, Slovenian culture, language, proud history, past achievements, and our contributions to our community and the Canadian mosaic.

Let us enjoy what our predecessors built and the contributions that our younger generations provide to society.

Let us be thankful for our many blessings, enjoy our friendships and unity.

Bog blagoslovi Slovenijo, God bless Canada

*Želim vam vesel in zabaven dan, ter vse najboljše v prihodnosti,
Stan Kranjc*



OUR VISION and MISSION STATEMENT

VISION:

To preserve the records of Slovenian immigration, cultural heritage and continued contributions to Canada and establish the legacy as *Canadian Slovenians* for future generations.

MISSION:

Canadian Slovenian Historical Society will:

- ◆ archive and preserve the history of Slovenian immigration, its evolutionary heritage and contributions to Canada;
- ◆ gather, record, maintain and augment relevant collections of artifacts reflecting Slovenian cultural traditions, practices and contributions;
- ◆ establish, save and maintain a collection of publications, reports and manuscripts in digital, printed and oral format from Slovenian sources/organizations across Canada;
- ◆ promote academic and literary research of *Canadian Slovenians* in Canada;
- ◆ create/build a display setting of museum format for archives and artifacts;
- ◆ raise awareness, provide access and promote education of the workings and relevance of the CSHS, and strive for community engagement.



Memories of Summer The Button Akordion Championships 2018

Franca Anderson, on behalf of Button Akordion Rocks Club

Button accordion music embraces the heart and soul of Slovenian heritage. The Button Akordion Rocks Club, incorporated in 2017, is dedicated to preserving the wonderful musical traditions of the button accordion and promoting its continued popularity for future generations. The Button Akordion Championships 2018 held on August 4th and 5th 2018, were hosted at Simon Gregorčič Park, Newmarket, Ontario.

The Championships were twofold. Button accordionists showcased their talents in four categories: youth, adult, seniors and groups. Button accordion players from across the country were invited to register for the competition at www.Button.Akordion.Rocks. Awards were distributed to all winners.

The second component of the Button Akordion Championships 2018 included an outstanding musical program featuring renown button accordion musicians **Martin Težak** (*Slovenia*), **Lynn Marie Rink** (*USA*), and **Michael Bridge** (*Canada*). Everyone enjoyed an array of activities, including traditional Slovenian folk dancing, comedy skits, invitational playing of instruments, and dancing to the band Ansambel Atomik Harmonic from Slovenia.

As the Button Akordian Champions are held every other year, we look forward to the next one in 2020. This year the Button Akordian Rocks Club is hosting a Canadian Slovenians Have Talent event at Lovska Farma on August 4th 2019. Come and enjoy a gala celebration of music and dance featuring amazing musicians and dance groups with accordions.



Ivan Udovič
The oldest performer



Bernard Žan Viršek
The youngest performer



HVALA ~ THANK YOU

CSHS appreciates everyone's support.

Your generous donations assist in the preservation of Canadian Slovenian heritage.

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