

# Zarja



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Uradno Glasilo Slovenske Zveze v Ameriki

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Winter 2017

## The Dawn

*Bled Island: The pilgrimage  
church dedicated to the  
Assumption of Mary.*

# Slovenian Union of America

431 N. Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432-1703

TELEPHONE: 815.727.1926

WEB SITE: [slovenianunion.org](http://slovenianunion.org)

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### WEBMASTER

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Postmaster: Send all changes of address to:

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*New Members*  
*Welcome - Dobrodošli*

1, Wojchik, Margaret (Peg)

20, Youngblood, Wesley

30, Gerant, Kathleen

33, Mehle, Thomas

33, Turk, Tasha

71, Anderson, Lydia

## Letter to the Editor

Dear SUA Team,

Dober dan! With regret I have to inform you that I need to cancel my future SUA membership. As I am moving in three days from Ljubljana to Brussels to a new mission requiring a lot of travel, it will be hard to keep the same address as well as contact.

I continue to pray for the great work and people that SUA is. And congratulations also on the last edition of *Zarja*.

Many Blessings,  
Fr. Peter Rožič SJ

## *Zarja - The Dawn*

EDITOR: **Bonnie Pohar Prokup**

DIRECTOR OF DESIGN: **Debbie Pohar**

EDITORIAL OFFICE: **3119 Carrie St., Peru, IL 61354**

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### Communications for the next issue of publication

Do you have something you would like to share with readers? We would love to hear from you! Please e-mail the editor at [wprokup@aol.com](mailto:wprokup@aol.com). We reserve the right to edit any article submitted. Articles must be related to Slovenia, SUA events, or members. The deadline for articles is the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, two (2) months preceding the issue. For example, articles for the Spring issue must be received by January 10. Thank you.

### Submission Guidelines

E-mail your photos attached as jpeg files. If you have an old photo that is irreplaceable, please make a good-quality copy to share with us. (Scanned copies must be a resolution of 300 or higher.)

By submitting material for publication, you grant the Slovenian Union of America the use of the material, including your name, hometown, and state. We may modify, reproduce, and distribute it in any SUA authorized medium and in any manner or appropriate place.





# THE STATE OF THE UNION

This is to inform SUA members that Bonnie Pohar Prokup's husband, William (Bill) Prokup, age 53, died unexpectedly on October 7, 2017. Bonnie is a past SUA National President and current editor of *Zarja - the Dawn* magazine. Bill and Bonnie were married for 28 years and were blessed with two daughters, Bekki (John) Root of Bloomington and Barbi Prokup of Chicago. Let us keep Bonnie and her family in our prayers in the difficult time ahead. Here is Bonnie's home address: 3119 Carrie Street, Peru, IL 61354.

## IT WAS HISTORY IN THE MAKING

On October 1, 2017, archivists Alenka Starman-Alič and Maja Povalej arrived at 431 N. Chicago Street in Joliet, Illinois. Call them brave souls. They flew into O'Hare airport, picked up their rental car, and drove through Chicago in traffic that is unforeseen in Slovenia.

As archivists, their mission was to document the archives of the Slovenian Union of America, materials that held the history of the Slovenian Union of America and its members. VP of Home Office Diane Hohenwater, VP of Culture and Heritage Beverly Kochmann, and yours truly were present during the next five days. Carol Novak,

Carole Terlep, and Georgene Agnich, volunteers involved in the preservation of SUA archives, also met with the archivists.



The archivists pointed out the importance of national board and branch minutes as they hold the names of people involved and the times and places of meetings, conventions, and galas. To all branches who had sent in their branch archives, your history has now been documented.

By gathering this history, Slovenia is intent on building a list of archives that will be available on a Slovenian National Archive website. There is no intent to bring back archival documents to Slovenia. The age of digital records has made this all possible.

The week was truly history in the making. During these five days, 500+ documents were scanned and uploaded to an external hard drive for the trip back to Slovenia. Archival pieces are accounted for. It is now known what needs to be discarded. Never before in the history of the Slovenian Union of America has such close scrutiny been given to our documents or has there been such honor giv-



*Diane Hohenwater, Maja Povalej, Alenka Starman Alič, and Mary Lou Voelk.*



en to the founders of the SUA and to the founders of local branches. The Slovenian Union of America holds the history of Slovenian immigrants, of their offspring, and their involvement in the organization. Despite leaving their homeland, they never forgot where they came from.

*Below are photos of the basement. Notice the labeling. This is for the next team of archivists who will be scanning.*



**From Beverly Kochmann, VP Culture and Heritage**

Question: Where are the archives of branches who, down through the ages, have disbanded? If you have knowledge of such archives, please notify the SUA. For a listing of all 108 branches, e-mail Beverly Kochmann. To branches wishing to send in their archives, please let us know a package is coming. Send an e-mail to [sua@slovenia-union.org](mailto:sua@slovenia-union.org) or mail to Slovenian Union of America 431 N Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432

**Read All about It in Branch News**

In this issue on page 32, read about the 2017 Educational Grant received by Claire Staresinic. Her achievements both in and out of the educational setting can only be expressed as impressive. Three more students have applied for an Educational Grant; read all about it in the Spring issue 2018. Your contribution to the Educational Grant made this all possible. Be generous and help SUA build the fund for 2018-2019. Send your contributions to Slovenian Union of America 431 N Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432 ATTN: Educational Grant.

**From the Washington Post: St. Nicholas**

Archaeologists in southern Turkey say they have discovered the tomb of the original Santa Claus, also known as St. Nicholas, beneath the ancient St. Nicholas Church in Myra (now Demre). St. Nicholas was a monk who was known for his generosity, giving away his inheritance to

help the poor and sick. In Europe he became known as Father Christmas.

Records say the church where the saint's bones were originally interred was rebuilt during the 11th century. Researchers say that the church was demolished and rebuilt and during the reconstruction traders smuggled the bones to the Italian town of Bari. But archaeologists say the Italians in Bari are praying to the wrong guy. These bones did not belong to St. Nicholas but to a local priest.

Archaeologists conducting electronic surveys have found gaps beneath the church. With this find, experts are optimistic about uncovering Saint Nicholas' remains. The excavation will take some time as there are mosaics on the floor that, one by one, must be removed.

**From the desk of Erica Johnson Debeljak, Slovenia**

It was by chance that I came across this article by Erica Debeljak of Slovenia. The article was entitled "Mere Words, Mere Art - Slovenian Literature: Ten Novels." Here is a quote from her opening statement:

*To become acquainted with the literature of a nation, especially one as small as Slovenia, is inevitably to become acquainted with the fears, neuroses, and preoccupations of that particular nation and its people... preoccupation revolving around identity, pride and resistance. Identity resides out palpably in language... and it was language that kept this small tribe together over the centuries.*

Debeljak lists ten Slovenian novels from the twentieth century that provided food for the growing minds, "mere words" of those who lived in the years of the former Yugoslavia. To current generations as well as foreign readers, these same books are not lifeblood but now exist as "mere art."

The first book listed is *Hiša Marije Pomočnice (The Ward of our Lady of Mercy)* by Ivan Cankar, 1904; *ward*, in this case, refers to a hospital ward. Finding an English version of the book took some research. A copy was found in Quebec and sent from Maine! To grasp the book in one's hands, one notices the elegance of this 7½" x 5½" hard-bound white linen book. There are 133 pages, of which 11 pages are an introduction. A single rose adorns the book cover. As the story goes, fourteen young girls have been left in a convent hospital, victims of that period in history. Their ailments are terminal. Malchie (Slovenian for Amelia) is the main character. I found it necessary to read it twice.

**Mary Lou Deyak Voelk, President  
Slovenian Union of America**

*Zarja - The Dawn*



## *Vesel božič in srečno novo leto*

Christmas is approaching; the Advent wreath and the creche have been given a place of honor. The tree is trimmed, and music fills the air. A people count has been taken; the table is readied. The family potica recipe is checked to ensure all ingredients are on hand. No other time of the year carries such nostalgia.

Perhaps changes will come to your family table this year. A new face may occupy a chair left empty; a loved one may not make it home for Christmas. Perhaps a new person will be saying grace; however, there is beauty to it all. While we may be without their physical presence, loved ones remain in our thoughts, in our memories, preserved in photos and family traditions.

From our homes to yours, the National Board of the Slovenian Union of America extends to you and your family a happy and blessed Christmas with a

New Year filled with a wealth of health and happiness.



Let us bow our heads in prayer:

*As we gather during these holy days of the season, we ask for blessings and peace to all families as they face the commercialism and events of the times. Give blessings to those hearts that are ridden with sorrow during this holy season. Lift us, and let us carry a happy and giving ear. May we not forget those less fortunate. Help us to extinguish our pride. Help us to focus on your birth. As we approach the New Year, we pray for love, forgiveness and peace to dwell in our hearts.*

Mary Lou Deyak Voelk  
President

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***From our homes to yours, the National Board of the Slovenian Union of America extends to you and your family a blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.***

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## *Donations Thank you! - Hvala lepa!*

### **\$75 Donation**

Barbara Nash, 103, SUA

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Mary Jo Savol, 20, +Josephine Sumic & Ann Savol  
Susan Harter, 30, +Charles Omarzu of Loudon, TN

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### **\$5 Donation**

L. Maria Breszach, 99, SUA  
Josephine O'Neill, 42, +Joseph McHenry, Jr.

# The season is a reason for potica!

*Slovenian American holidays are not complete without this heavenly nut roll.*

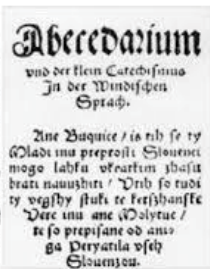
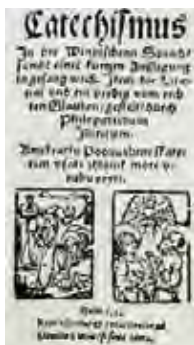
Today family holidays, weddings and funerals or any special occasion will add this iconic delicacy to the serving table. How surprised would you be to find that biting into a slice of potica is like turning back the calendar years more than four centuries? And then to think it all began with a priest.

## How Old Is Potica?

(1508-1586) Primož Trubar was the founder of the Slovenian literary language. He was an ordained priest from the village of Rašica. It was that time in history. Protestant writings were being circulated, and Trubar became involved in evangelical Protestantism. He was forced into exile, banned from Ljubljana, and excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church.

While serving as a Protestant pastor in Germany, he became aware of the vast amount of Protestant writings being circulated among the common people. In retrospect, it was a time in history when the majority of Slovenians were not able to read.

Since Protestants believed in educating people in their native spoken language, Trubar saw the need to write in the language spoken in the city of Ljubljana (the Dolenjska and Gorenjska dialect). This was all important, knowing that the Slovenian written language (literary) was non-existent and the German language was progressively being introduced in administration and in church services in place of Latin. Trubar wrote two small booklets, *Catechism*, a 250-page catechism



with songs, prayers and a sermon on faith, and *Abecedarium*, a 28-page catechism with a few short prayers for those were learning to read. They were published in 1550.

In the published catechism, the word *povitica* would appear in print for the first time. For all Slovenians, it is important that we are aware that Primož Trubar, in his first printed book, was also the first to call us Slovenians.

Trubar went on to translate the Gospel of St. Matthew, published in 1555, the first part of the New Testament in

1557, the second part in 1560, and the last part in 1577. The complete New Testament was reissued in 1582; the Psalms appeared in 1566.

Trubar used the Latin alphabet for the Slovenian script. The only difference between Latin and Slovenian scripts were the new characters which did not exist in Latin and German languages. *Sh* represents the sounds *š* and *ž*. Trubar was considered a heretic, and his books were banned. To reach the people, books were smuggled into Slovenian lands in barrels. Trubar's efforts would have a longterm impact on the Slovenian written heritage and cultural tradition during and long after the suppression of Protestant church activities in the Slovenian lands. Yet, they were to go down through centuries without existing as a national sovereignty. In 1992, a national holiday was declared; October 31 would be known as Reformation Day in remembrance of that period in the 16th century that begat the first book written in the Slovenian language.

Today, Trubar is recognized as Slovenia's national hero and a true historical personality, a cultural reformer. Here is a note of interest: In 2013, Google got into the act and celebrated Trubar's 505th birthday with "What's more, since a unified language brings unity, his contribution is deemed essential in the development of a unified Slovene identity and culture." \*Official Journal of the EU, No. 2008/C 125/06, dated 22.5.2008

(1641-1693) Janez Vajkard Valvasor, in his publication *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*, mentions Christmas pastries. Since the earliest of times, potica was a special holiday food. In the 17th century Valvasor published the first recipe for potica. (*Sinfo* July/August 2017, page 23)

(1758-1819) Valentin Vodnik, priest, poet, and journalist, wrote the first Slovenian language cookbook, *Kuharske Bukve*, in 1799; potica was mentioned three times. He gave no description or recipe. The entire cookbook can be viewed on the Internet. Google search: "first slovene-language cookbook (kuharske bukve 1799."





(1818-1897) A German, Katharina Prato, in the first edition of the *Die Süddeutsche Küche für Anfängerinnen und praktische Köchinnen* (1858), recorded recipes for poticas made of leavened dough, (špehovka, ocvirkovka, and poticas with fillings of raisins, jams, and walnuts). An illustration shows a rolled-up-cake, proving this was indeed a potica without a middle hole. For decades this cookbook was enormously popular, reaching an 80th edition in 1957 in Austria.

(1815-1890) It has been said that *Slovenska Kuharica* was the most successful cookbook written. The author, Magdalena Knafelj Pleiweis, devoted an entire chapter to “good bread and potica.” The SUA can proudly announce that the 1878 issue *Kuharica* can be found in the SUA museum library; it is also listed on the library index. The book was donated to the SUA by Mary Francesch of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Today the library’s copy of this cookbook is very fragile; the National and University Library in Lju-



bljana has recommended scanning the book, placing it in an acid free container, and storing.

(2013) Most recently, Dr. Janez Bogataj, the famous Slovenian ethnologist, has published a book entirely dedicated to potica: *Poticas of Slovenia*. Special thanks to Janez Bogataj for editing this article for historical facts and correctness.

Call it heaven sent, or truly amazing, 450 years ago a visionary, a seer, would ponder laboriously over the writing of a new language. The power of the pen, a man named Trubar, and a bread named potica have given us an added command: Thou shalt hold high the family potica recipe. In commemoration of the first printing of the Winter Issue 2017-2018, I submit the Deyak family recipe.

Winter 2017

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 2 cups milk, scalded    | ¾ cup sugar       |
| ½ cup butter            | 1½ tsp salt       |
| 2 eggs, beaten          | 1 tsp vanilla     |
| 2 pkg. dry yeast        | 7 plus cups flour |
| ½ cup water (for yeast) |                   |

Scald the milk; dissolve the ½ cup butter in the milk. When cool, add eggs and beat well. Dissolve yeast in water. Add yeast, sugar, and salt to milk mixture. Again, beat well. Gradually add flour using dough hooks or knead for 15 minutes on floured surface with remaining flour; add as little as necessary to keep dough from sticking. Place in greased bowl, cover and raise until doubled.

- Filling:
- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1½ lb. walnuts ground | 1½ cup evaporated milk |
| 1 cup honey           | 3 eggs, separated      |
| ¾ cup sugar           | 1 stick butter, melted |
| ⅓ cup butter          | (for stretching dough) |

Combine ground walnuts, honey, sugar, and butter in heavy pan. Add half the milk. On medium heat, cook the mixture. When warm, add butter, beaten egg yolks, and remaining milk. Stir continuously for 10 minutes to ‘toast’ the nut mixture. Beat egg whites and fold into the filling.

Heat oven to 350°. Grease baking pans. Cover table with a well-floured (colored design) cloth. Having a design allows stretching the dough to a uniform thickness. Turn rectangular dough out on the center of the cloth, long side of dough corresponding with long side of table. Begin rolling dough with a rolling pin. Using your hands with knuckles up, stretch dough from underneath to 30 x 48 inches. If needed, brush with warm, melted butter to keep it pliable.

Spread filling on stretched dough. On wide side, roll up potica like a jelly roll, starting the first several inches by hand. Raise the cloth gently so that the dough rolls itself over and over. With the edge of a small plate, cut the loaves to the sizes that fit your pans and pinch edges to further seal the dough. Place in greased pans. Let rest in pans 15 minutes. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes, and 325° for 15 minutes or until deeply browned.

Mary Lou Deyak Voelk  
President, Slovenian Union of America



# *Farmers, Miners and Refugees: Slovenian Immigration in Minnesota since 1855*

## **Chapter III:**

### *Ely-Winton Historical Society Ely, Minnesota*

Planning and preparation for Taste of Slovenia II, had been completed, the recipes selected, and the room(s) set up in the church hall of St. Anthony de Padua Church. Weeks prior to the event, the annual noodle making marathon took place in the St. Anthony kitchen. 70 bags of noodles would be for sale.

*Farmers, Miners and Refugees: Slovenian Immigration in Minnesota Since 1855*, consisting of 15 pull-up banners arrived from Duluth where they had been on exhibit at the St. Louis County Historical Museum. Members of Branch 23 and the staff of the Ely-Winton Historical Society, headed by Margaret Sweet, set up the banners at the museum housed at Vermilion Community College in Ely. John and Joanna Pucel, members of the Twin Cities Branch 109, also assisted in the set up of the banners.

Word had spread far and wide after the 2016 Taste of



Slovenia II event. On August 5, 2017 people came from out of state and from across the Iron Range to sample tantalizing, traditional Slovenian foods. There were places to sit and visit. Kifeljci and three types of sausage were served. Flancati (Angel Wings), strudel, and potica were

demonstrated and served. Easter egg decorating was a fun activity. *Zarja* magazines, the Gornik Family Sausage Making, *The Slovenian-American Table*, noodles, jellies and cleaning clothes were selling. A video on making blood and potato sausage could be viewed. ‘Tasting tickets’ were selling, 12 tastes for \$10. Here was the event’s menu:

- Pogača (Slovenian Welcoming Bread)*
- Kruh in sol (Bread and Salt)*
- Goveja juha z rezanci (Beef Noodle Soup)*
- Kislo meso (Beef Vinaigrette)*
- Krofi (Raised Donuts)*
- Gobova juha (Mushroom Soup)*
- Flancati (Angel Wings)*
- Žlinkrofi (Meat Filled Dumplings)*
- Potica (Nut Sweet Bread)*
- Jabolčni zavitek (Apple Strudel)*
- Pehtranova Potica (Tarragon Potica)*
- Medenjaki (Honey Ginger Cookies)*
- Kisle kumarice (Sour Cucumbers)*

Those attending a Taste of Slovenia II received a free pass to view the Farmers, Miners and Refugee exhibit. Of the approximately 500 visitors to the Ely-Winton Historical Museum during July and August, 300 attended specifically to see the Slovenian exhibit. One woman came back to the museum three times saying “*there was so much to read and internalize, I had to do it in stages.*” Certainly, this museum was the ideal place to showcase the banners, fitting them in among a backdrop of related themes exhibited in the museum. To complete the day, Creek Ridge Lodge featured live Slovenian music.

Several weeks following the event, branch members met to discuss the traffic, finances, sponsors, advertising, quantity and quality of food, food preparation, serving facilities, and the DVD recording of the event.

A toplar is pictured on the cover of the DVD. This story comes from Jim Lah of Branch 23. In the 1990s, the Lah family were in Sveta Trojica, Slovenia in search of the



*Photos by Nancy McReady, Branch 23*



church where Jim's grandfather was born. They had found the family homestead in dilapidated condition. The man across the street greeted them and introduced himself as Božidar Strman (nicknamed Mišo). He gave them village information and also several pieces of his art work, one of which was the drawing of the toplar now pictured on the DVD. It became known that Mišo is a well known artist in Slovenia! On a second visit to Slovenia, Jim arranged to have Mišo paint his grandfather's church, a gift for his father's 80th birthday.



FYI: An add for Taste of Slovenia II was placed on Facebook. Within 3 days 1,907 people had logged on. One person commented, "Is this an annual event? If so I am documenting this date on my 2018 calendar." Branch 23 agrees. A Taste of Slovenia II and *Farmers, Miners and Refugees* were a perfect pairing for this Slovenian event. Add Saturday, August 4, 2018 to your calendar! Taste of Slovenia III! See you there.

Here is an explanation from Helena Janežič, Head of Slovenian Press Office for The National and University Library (NUK): *A toplar is a double kozolec. While a single and double are called kozolec, a double also has another name, toplar.*

Chapter V of: *Farmers, Miners and Refugees: Slovenian Immigration in Minnesota Since 1855* is coming soon to St. Cyril Church in New York City.

- Mary Lou Deyak Voelk

**Chapter IV:  
Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, D.C.**

On Thursday evening, October 12, the Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, D.C. sponsored the annual workshop, Slovenian Science & Education Showcase. Being exhibited in the hall were the banners, *Farmers, Miners and Refugees: Slovenian Immigration in Minnesota Since 1855*.

Opening remarks at the workshop were given by the Ambassador of Slovenia Mr. Stanislav Vidovič and greetings by the Slovenian Minister of Finance Mrs. Mateja Vraničar Erman. The workshop presentations were hosted by President of Association VTIS Mr. Igor Cesarec and featured the following presentations:



*Dr. Margaret Pryately announcing opening of exhibition.*

- Dr. Urška Petrovčič, Senior Consultant at Criterion Economics, L.L.C., DC.
- Prof. Urška Velikonja teaches Securities Regulation, Contracts and Securities and Enforcement Seminar Georgetown University, DC.
- Dr. Urška Zrinski, Public Sector Specialist at the PEFA Secretariat, the World Bank, DC.



**Bernadette K. Fitzsimmons, Branch 108 President, Dr. Margaret Pryately, and Chris Bohince, KSKJ Lodge 257 President.**

- Prof. Barbara Kendra investigates the history and theory of architecture as well as current and future issues of our global built environment and health at the Virginia Tech.

- Dr. Peter Kramar Fulbright researcher of Biomedical Engineering, Assistant Professor at Frank Reidy Research Center for Bio-electrics, Norfolk, VA.
- Dr. Noah Charney professor of art history and researcher on architect Jože Plečnik at the University of Ljubljana.
- Presentation of Slovenian Language Courses at the Cleveland State University by Prof. Luka Zibelnik.

Following the workshops there was an opening of the exhibition *Slovenian Immigration in Minnesota since 1855* by Dr. Margaret Pryately. A reception hosted by the Ambassador of Slovenia Mr. Stanislav Vidovič followed.

# **SUA Announces the 2019 National Convention**

## ***Let's Sing in Beautiful Cleveland, Ohio!***

### ***Thursday, June 13 to Sunday, June 16, 2019***



*The skyline of beautiful Cleveland, Ohio - the Slovenian capital outside of Slovenia!*

The SUA 2019 National Convention will take place from Thursday, June 13 to Sunday, June 16, 2019 in Cleveland, Ohio - the Slovenian Capital outside of Slovenia! The 2019 convention will highlight the musical history of Slovenians under the theme "Let's Sing." The weekend will offer social gatherings, educational sessions, Cleveland tours, and, most importantly, opportunities to connect with SUA sisters and brothers.

Cleveland is the ideal place for this gathering as it is home to the largest population of Slovenians outside of Slovenia. Cleveland's Slovenian roots can be seen throughout the city. St. Vitus and St. Mary's churches, founded in 1894 and 1906 respectively, stand as reminders of the perseverance of the Slovenian immigrants. Slovenian sausages and culinary delights can be found in the remarkable West Side Market and other area shops.

You can't go to a summer festival in Cleveland without hearing the button box, and the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame is in nearby Euclid.

Cleveland is home to the 2016 NBA Champions Cleveland Cavaliers, and the city still has the afterglow of a national title. From the glittering nightlife of the revitalized downtown Flats East Bank, to the cultural gems of University Circle, the beauty of nearby lakefront vineyards, and the international draw of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Cleveland is not to be missed. Convention attendees will have easy access to all Cleveland has to offer from the comfort of the Marriott Cleveland East in Warrensville Heights which will host the convention events and will offer guest rooms at a discounted convention rate.

**A weekend filled with music, dancing, learning, wining, dining, and exploring magnificent Cleveland... all this event needs is YOU!**

**Mark your calendars for Thursday, June 13 - Sunday, June 16, 2019.**

## **Slovenian Union of America 2019 National Convention Fund-Raiser**

**The Slovenian *Ljubljanske Butarice*  
as those found in the Ljubljana Market Place.**

The Slovenian tradition of making *butare* for Palm Sunday dates back hundreds of years when real palms were not available. Using Slovenian ingenuity, wood shavings dyed in various colors became popular when greens were not available. To this day, *Ljubljanske Butarice*, has remained a very important part of the Slovenian culture. Today *butare* are being made in the United States in crafting as exact as those found in the Ljubljana marketplace. Even the dyes are from Slovenia.



Samples can be viewed at the Home Office/Heritage Museum/Library in Joliet, IL.

Call 815.727.1926

## Slovenian Union of America 2019 National Convention Fund-Raiser



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Thank you!

*Kathleen Ferrante*

2019 National Convention Chairperson

Convention Comments/Questions?

Contact me: [kjferrante@gmail.com](mailto:kjferrante@gmail.com)

## SUA's National Board Election/Proposed Bylaw Amendment

Recently the SUA Branch Member Representatives were tasked with voting on filling National Board positions and on a proposed SUA Bylaw amendment regarding the National Treasurer position responsibilities. (Only Branches' chosen Member Representatives are authorized to vote per our SUA Corporate Bylaws.) The tellers, both SUA members of Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI, counted the votes in Milwaukee on October 25, 2017. Thank you to Lynda Broucek and Ellen Shiflet for their precise work. Here are the results:

**Vice President of Outreach** - No candidates were nominated by the October 24, 2017 deadline. SUA's Corporate Bylaws authorize the National Board to fill vacancies.

**Both incumbent candidates below were re-elected.**

**Vice President of Culture & Heritage - Beverly Kochmann of Branch 109 - Twin Cities, MN**

**National Treasurer - Robert J. Kuhel of Branch 16 - South Chicago, IL**

Both candidates will be serving four (4) year terms, ending in 2021.

**Thank you for your service to SUA!**

**Proposed Amendment - Approved**

(New verbiage in **bold** below)

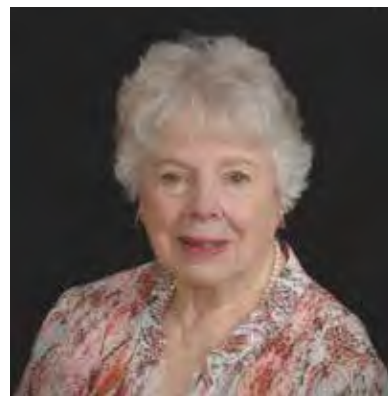
**ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS, SECTION 4.8 - National Treasurer**

**“The National Treasurer shall be an authorized signer to all bank accounts and prepare or supervise the recording of all receipts and disbursements, monthly Balance Sheet, and Profit & Loss Statement in an automated accounting system following generally accepted accounting principles. The National Treasurer shall prepare or supervise the preparation of the annual IRS Form 990EZ and state of Illinois form AG990-IL for review by a CPA firm as determined or chosen by the National Board.”**

October 16, 2017

Dear Members of the Slovenian Union of America:

The Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation held its annual board meeting on September 12, 2017 in Cleveland, Ohio. At that meeting I announced that my tenure serving as president of the organization was completed. Serving



in this position for the past twenty-one years was a lot of work but also rewarding. With the impressive, dedicated help of Marge Church, retired Vice President and Treasurer, we were able to establish a tax-exempt status for our organization, gather funding from you, our generous supporters, able to award over \$65,000 to Slovenian Union college students, perform annual fund raisers, do extensive promotional work, and write educational articles for the *Zarja* and *Slovenian American Times*.

Frankly, the most rewarding of all was following the achievements of young high school seniors as they studied and worked their ways through college. We are grateful to have found many wonderful friends that we met personally through the Slovenian Union. For those who we have not met but received annual donations, please know that your names and the names of those you memorialized are not only written in our scholarship book, but also remain with us, as past officers. May all who have been so kind and generous to our young people be rewarded in many ways.

The newly elected Board of Directors of the Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation is highly qualified, dedicated, and will lead our program's mission on to a bright future.

With sincere best wishes to each of you,  
*Mary Turvey*, Past President  
Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation

---

**All correspondence, contributions, and comments are to be directed to:**  
**Stan Kuhar, President Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation (or SWUSF)**  
**6019 Lausche Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44103 or**  
**[skuhar@hotmail.com](mailto:skuhar@hotmail.com)**

*Zarja - The Dawn*



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## New Member #2

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Branch Affiliation Number (if known)/Location \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## New Member #3

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_

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Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Branch Affiliation Number (if known)/Location \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

### **Signed up by:**

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## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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# *The Development of Slovenian Music II*

By Charles F. Debevec  
and Rich Terselic

*The first article in this series, which appeared in the Fall 2017 Zarja, described the role of music in Slovenian culture. Part II will describe the early commercial appearances of Slovenian music in both Europe and America, non-commercial musical activities in America, and the Americanization of Slovenian music.*

*A qualification is necessary before proceeding: When the term “Slovenia” is applied to a period before the coming of statehood in the 1990s, it is simply used for convenience. For example, when the Hapsburgs controlled the lands in which Slovenians lived prior to World War I, there was no “Slovenia” and a longer description would be needed.*

*The photo of the Slovenian folk musicians group used with this article has been authorized for use by the authors from the collection of the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum Picture Library for exclusive use in this publication. Our thanks to Miha Špiček.*

## **Slovenians and Their Early Involvement in Commercial Music**

Slovenians, a small group in Europe, were under the political control, in part or whole, of their larger neighbors. This made them subject to the choices and vested interests of those in control. The legal and educational systems and commerce were controlled and had a great influence on Slovenian life and culture. Notwithstanding, the Slovenians spoke their own language, had a distinct culture and identity, and could express their ethnicity within limits.

In the case of music, there was a strong Austrian-German and Italian influence, but this didn't prevent the existence of a distinctly Slovenian musical culture. Rich Terselic recalls growing up listening to “Heinie” Martin Antoncic’s radio program in Cleveland during the 1940s-60s. He presumed the music Antoncic played to be Slovenian music, including marches such as “Under the Double Eagle.” This particular song was written by Josef Franz Wagner,

an Austrian military bandmaster, and Slovenian orchestras adopted it for their performances, making it Slovenian, as best Rich knew. A similar situation occurred with polkas and waltzes that had Austrian-German, Czech, and Italian origins.

In larger cities in Slovenia, plays and classical musical performances were in the Slovenian language. Silent films arrived once the media was well established. The borders from Slovenian “lands” to adjoining areas were open to travel by Slovenian musicians and singers both to perform and to seek further training. Artists such as Anton Schubel and Jozip Povhe were invited to perform for audiences outside of Slovenia. On the farms and small villages, folk music was the mainstay. However, it would take many years before professionally trained musicologists would study and record such music using the instruments on which it was played.



The demand for performances in America by artists from Europe grew as the size of the Slovenian immigrant population increased, particularly in large cities such as New York, Cleveland, and Chicago. Anton Schubel arrived in New York and became involved in both performing and directing singing and theatrical productions, including productions at the New York Metropolitan Opera. Schubel went from New York to other cities to teach and direct American-Slovenian theatrical and choral groups. As was mentioned in the first article in this series, in outlying locations such as northern Minnesota, local performing groups were organized.

In the early 1900s, with the rapid development of commercially recorded music, opportunities developed in both Europe and America for Slovenian performers. Initially, recordings made in Europe as early as 1907 were brought to America and reissued on domestic labels. Some of the early artists who recorded in Slovenia were opera singers Ludovik Bajde, Josip Križaj, and Jozip Povhe; male quartets of selected singers from the Glasbena Matica Ljubljana and Glasbeno Društvo Ljubljana choruses; and monologists Anton “Danilo” Cerar and Anton Verovšek. During World War I, the European sources were not available, and the record companies had to rely on artists who lived in America, such as vocalists Rudolf Trošt, Augusta Danilova, and Milka Polancer Schneid.

The cost of phonograph playback equipment (e.g. Victrolas) and recording cylinders and discs were within the financial reach of many of the immigrants. Their wish was strong to have access to music that reminded them of home. In fact, large recording firms such as the Columbia Graphophone Company, the Victor Talking Machine Company, and the General Phonograph Corporation (OKeh and Odeon labels) had this wish as a basis in their business plans. Production and sale of playback equipment and recordings grew rapidly. The playback equipment initially required hand cranking to wind up a spring, but later devices were electrified.

Recording technology advanced rapidly. The first recordings were made acoustically without the benefit of electronic amplification. The process allowed for a few singers and accompaniment by a single instrument or a small group of musicians. The sound quality of early recordings was barely adequate. With the introduction of electronic technology in 1925, the use of microphones, electromagnetic recording heads, and vacuum-tube amplifiers resulted in a significant improvement in fidelity and the ability to record larger groups. In recordings done by the singers Josephine Lausche and Mary Udovich, the sounds of an entire studio orchestra could be clearly heard in the background. These two singers were greatly aided by Josephine’s brother, Dr. William Lausche, a dentist who possessed great talent as

a composer, arranger, and pianist. Dr. Lausche’s compositions and arrangements included elements of jazz, ragtime, and Broadway genres of the American popular music of the time. His compositions and arrangements appealed not only to fellow Slovenians, but to other ethnic groups as well - even to fans of popular music. Dr. Lausche’s influence on the Americanization of Slovenian music was such that he is considered one of the fathers of the “Cleveland style” of polka music - along with Matt Arko.

While the music of other nationalities also underwent an Americanization process, the influence on Slovenian music was the most dramatic. Victor Greene, in his book *A Passion for Polka* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), wrote “The single group that did the most by far to alter Old World music to make it more palatable not only for their own group in America but for Americans in general was the Slovenes.”

In the Fall 2017 edition of *Zarja*, a review appeared of the book, *Music from Both Sides*. The book describes the career of Matija Arko as well as the development of early 1900s phonograph recording and playback technology. Advances in the latter had an important influence on Arko’s success. Arko and his Hoyer Trio recorded more than fifty 78-rpm phonograph records, some of which sold thousands of copies.

Elsewhere in America, other American-Slovenian musical performers were active. For example, John Foys achieved popularity in the Joliet, Illinois and area. As a young man he began performing as a street musician. He progressed, forming a band that performed in the family tavern and at local events, including weddings and picnics. Like Arko, his band produced phonograph recordings. John Germ owned a dry goods store in Pueblo, Colorado, and served as supreme president of the KSKJ for several years. A singer and accordionist, he recorded for the Columbia label in 1931. Readers may recall other performing groups in the communities in which they grew up.

### **Other Early Musical Performing Groups**

Taverns, picnics, and weddings provided opportunities for American-Slovenian performers and bands to demonstrate their skills. In addition, performing groups formed such as church choirs, singing societies, and theatrical groups. The Zarja Singing Society was an early group in Cleveland. Glasbena Matica, an offshoot of the Zarja group, formed in Cleveland in 1930 under a different name. Differences within the Zarja Society influenced the separation. Groups such as these presented concerts, sang classical and Slovenian folk melodies, and presented operas and operettas. Church choirs in Chicago and New York became accomplished performers and made recordings. A church choir that received early recognition was that of St. Stephen

parish in Chicago. In the late 1920s, under the name Adria Singers, selected members of the choir made recordings. Some of their recordings were accompanied by the Hoyer Trio, others by the Deichman Brothers Orchestra, still others by the Račič-Foys Orchestra. In New York, the Domovina chorus was the church choir of St. Nicholas, and later, St. Cyril's church in Manhattan. After a schism in 1930, the Domovina chorus became a secular society. The chorus made recordings in 1929 and 1931 - before and after the schism. Other choral groups that made 78-rpm recordings include Jadran and Slovan of Cleveland, Slavec of New York, and France Prešeren of Chicago.

In the case of American-Slovenian parishes, if they also had a school with an auditorium, it provided a venue for musical performances - as in the case of St. Vitus parish in Cleveland and St. Stephen parish in Chicago. Some of the numerous other venues were the Slovenian National Home and the Slovenian Workmen's Home in Cleveland and Mozart Hall in New York.

In communities with immigrants of other nationalities, there were opportunities for affiliation and participation in musical and theatrical events. Music brought together people of differing ethnic backgrounds. For example, American-Slovenians living in communities with numbers of Croatians learned to dance the kolo and to sing to songs played on tamburas. In an effort to unite people of Slavic backgrounds, the First All-Slavic Singing Festival was organized in Chicago in 1934. The concert, with a total of 1,500 singers, was held at the Chicago Civic Opera Hall on December 9 of that year. Featured were performances by Polish, Serbian, Croatian, Ukrainian, Slovak, Russian, Bohemian, and Slovenian choral groups. The Slovenian group was made up of the Lira, Slovan, and Adrija choruses of Chicago.

### **Music in the Post-World War II Period**

The Americanization process begun by Dr. Lausche was carried further by Frankie Yankovic, who developed a polka band with instrumentation and arrangements designed to appeal to all ethnic groups as well as to popular music fans. Yankovic's music was especially popular in the late 1940s, when he produced two million-selling records, and in the early 1950s, when he made appearances in Hollywood and recorded with Doris Day. Other Slovenian style polka bands performed in the "Cleveland style" with piano, accordion, banjo, and saxophone prominent. Several of them, namely Georgie Cook, Eddie Habat, Johnny Vadnal, Johnny Pecon, and Kenny Bass, recorded for major labels. Interestingly, Kenny Bass was of Croatian heritage.

A particularly important influence on Slovenian music in America was the arrival of large numbers of Slovenians following World War II with the Communist takeover of Yugoslavia. They brought skills and interest in a wide

variety of "things musical" that enriched the communities in which they settled. For example, in Cleveland, groups such as the Kres dancers and the Korotan singing group were formed by Slovenians arriving in the post-World War II period.

In the meantime, two new musical styles were developing in Europe. In 1954, the Avsenik Brothers Ensemble, with its emphasis on piano, accordion, and brass instruments, took the notice of Munich radio broadcaster Fred Rauch. So impressed was he that he began featuring their recordings on his program. Over the following years, the group achieved extraordinary success, introducing hundreds of new compositions and selling over 30 million records. While travel from Slovenia to northern Europe was difficult during this period, Avsenik's popularity provided justification to the government of Yugoslavia for free movement of his group.

Dušan "Duke" Marsič brought the Avsenik style to America in 1963 with the formation of his own orchestra, the Happy Slovenians. Its members were post-World War II immigrants.

Lojze Slak of Slovenia formed an instrumental trio in 1963. Instead of the Avsenik band's instrumentation, Slak used folk instruments - button accordion, guitar or clarinet, and string bass. The following year he added a vocal quintet. The ensemble's repertoire consisted mostly of Slak's own compositions, which emulated folk songs. Their first LP recording, *Kadar pa mim'hiš'ce grem*, made in 1966, was a bestseller. In 1970, they went on a concert tour of the United States, which proved highly influential in popularizing Slak's folk style. The result was that the button box accordion, forgotten for many years in America, regained a popularity which continued throughout the decades that followed. Established polka bands added button box numbers to their repertoires, button boxes were imported, button box lessons were offered, and button box clubs were organized. Cecelia Dolgan's Slovenian National Directory, Second Edition, lists 41 such clubs throughout the United States in 1991. Like the choral societies of the early years, the clubs had the effect of uniting people of Slovenian heritage by providing opportunities for socializing as well as entertaining.

Both Avsenik and Slak's music became extremely popular in America. American-Slovenian polka bands and the aforementioned button box clubs made extensive use of their compositions, as well as those of other, similar-sounding European-Slovenian bands. European-Slovenian music thus began to influence the American variety.

Part III of this series will focus on some of the more successful and influential American-Slovenian musical performers.



# Luckier than Most



by David Sodac, Staff Writer  
Branch 89 Oglesby, IL  
[bdsodac@gmail.com](mailto:bdsodac@gmail.com)

Marija Vlasic Kranjec, of Green Bay, Wisconsin and an SUA Branch 99 member of Lemont, Illinois, called the author after the article, “God’s Own Garden” appeared in the Spring 2017 issue of *Zarja*. She wanted to share that her family also had a history in the same southeastern area of Slovenia. They may have even known some of our relatives, she said, including the Piltaver surname. Her family was from the village of Kraška vas, not too far from the area mentioned in the article. Her family’s surname was Vlasic, “like in pickles,” she laughed but quickly pointed out those are not her Vlasics. Her family held an amazing story of forced evacuation from their home in Kraška vas and resettlement in Germany during World War II. Marija was just five years of age when the German SS soldiers came knocking at their door, but the memory of those frantic moments and the years that would ensue, from work farms to too many holding camps, are as clear as ever.

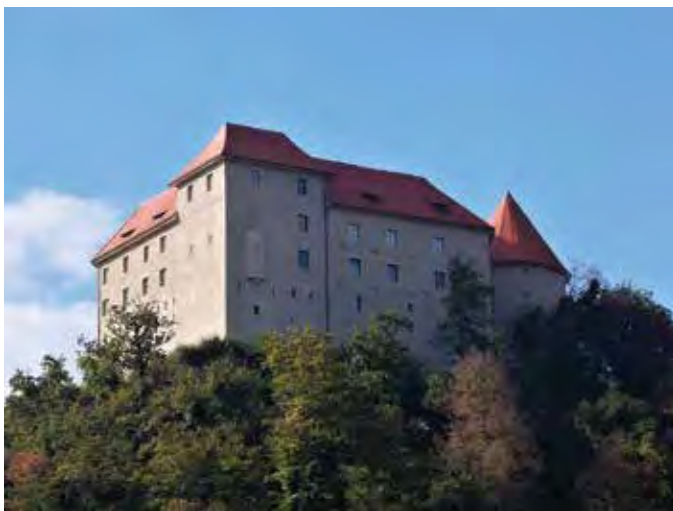
The German Waffen-SS (SS stands for Schutzstaffel which generally translates to “Protective Squadron”) came to their door in Kraška vas, and resolutely informed them that they were to gather their things and evacuate their home. Marija’s father was overwhelmed with what to do; it was just so unexpected. They had no idea of what could be awaiting them or what horrific conditions they would experience. So he thought first about the need to feed his family and slaughtered as many chickens that he could fit into a large burlap bag. To this day she remembers vividly her father slaughtering their farm chickens, cutting off their heads, and stuffing them into the bag. At least they would eat. The family was taken by lorry and brought to the camp at the castle Rajhenburg near Krško and eventually herded into open-top cattle cars on a train headed into northern Germany. Marija remembers the train’s cars being filled with strewn

straw. The cattle cars were packed with Slovenians being evacuated out of their homes, communities, and their beloved country. It was a long, difficult ride. As a young girl, it seemed to her like it was twenty-four hours to get to the destination.

The necessity of evacuating native Slovenian citizens from their homes came out of the need to relocate over 12,000 German-speaking residents that had been inhabiting the duchy of Gottschee. Shortly after WWII began, the countries of Italy, Germany, and Hungary invaded the Slovenian state, carving out three new territorial boundaries. All three occupational forces began a process of Slovene ethnocide, purging the occupied territories of their inhabitants. Since Italy now occupied the part of Slovenia that included the early German settlement of Gottschee, which lies in the south central part of Slovenia, its residents would need to be relocated quickly by the German government. Gottschee, once the former crown land of the Habsburg Empire, was founded at the end of the 13th century, carved out of the uninhabited mountain forests in what is today the south central part of Slovenia. Its land encompassed 176 villages and covered about 331 square miles. Since there was a need to find housing for these 12,000 German-speaking Gottscheers being displaced, as well as to deal with the resident Slovenes now living in the German-occupied territory they would be replacing, a plan needed to be made. The Germans had already been planning to either “Germanize” the area by evacuating entire Slovenian provinces in the northern border and southeastern borders. The German government assigned the responsibility for the solution to various offices under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler. The proposed plan prepared four waves of removing the Slovene residents from their homes and the newly German-occupied land. They were expected to com-

plete the relocation of the Gottscheers from their 650-year homeland between December 1941 and January 1942 into the emptied Slovenian villages of Brežice and surrounding farm villages (referred to as the Rann Triangle) that became occupied by the German Reich during the war. Brežice is near the Slovenian-Croatian border where the Krka, Sava, and Sotla rivers join. Some 17,000 Slovene residents of those villages were to be evacuated to make room for the resettlement of the Gottscheers.

It was a tumultuous time of chaos, confusion, and eventual rebellion amongst those Slovene residents. In the beginning, the Nazis tried to recruit Slovenians on a voluntary basis to work in Germany. But just a few decided to go, so little by little the village people were ordered to relocate. When villagers continued to still resist eviction, the controlling Germans rationed their food; people feared eventual starvation. Ultimately, leaving became the only option. Fearing possible brutality and eventual torture, Slovenian citizens reluctantly gathered their possessions and abandoned their homes and land. The evacuees would then be carted off to Rajhenburg Castle, on a high hill near Krško, which the Germans had evicted the contemplative resident order of Trappist monks and transformed the castle into the central camp for



***Castle Rajhenburg that had been taken over by the Germans and used as the holding center in the evacuation of native Slovenes.***

deporting Slovenes. Around 45,000 Slovenes were sent into exile from Rajhenburg Castle. Most were transported from there by train to internment camps in Germany, Croatia, and Serbia. Not all the Slovenes were cooperating as expected. Many of those remain-

ing began to organize and actively fight back. Rebellious groups staged effective uprisings and resistance that impacted the German resettlement plan. In late October 1941, the Brežice partisan unit was organized with the purpose of preventing continued forced extraction of Slovenes from their villages. In addition to the resistance movement by the partisans, there was also the overwhelming management of transporting the sheer number of evacuees and establishing holding



***Matija Vlastic and his daughter Angela standing in front of their damaged former home in Kraška vas upon a return trip to visit relatives in 1955.***

camps. Carrying out the evacuation plan became a logistical nightmare for the Germans.

Records indicate that the Germans expelled 17,259 people from the municipality of Brežice. Some 12,000 grumbling Gottscheer Germans were deposited into those relinquished homes and farms. The Matija Vlastic family, of Kraška vas within the municipality of Brežice in eastern Slovenia, was one of those Slovene families forced to turn over their home and leave their country for these resettled Gottscheers. Matija was born in 1903 in Kraška vas. He married Angela Kozar (b. 1906) of Dolna Pirosc. At the time of their evacuation, the Vlastic family consisted of Matija and Angela and their four children Franc (b. 1928), Stanko (b. 1930), Terezija (b. 1932), and Marija (b. 1936). Some Slovenes were considered as desirable candidates for conceivably being processed for conversion to the German ideology. If their appearance was fairer in skin tone, eye color, and hair coloring, often those individuals were fortunate to be placed in German communities and assigned to work farms and factories. The Vlastic family was perhaps one of those



that could become “able to be Germanized“ (Eindeutschungsfähige) with the idea that they would become familiar and comfortable with life in the Third Reich. Marija Vlastic recalls her family traveled from Kraška vas to Müddersheim, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany where they were assigned to work on a farm during the war. The farmer gave them a small house to live in. Life was somewhat comfortable compared to what other Slovenians faced in work camps. Her parents, older sister, and brother all were put to work on the farm. Marija was enrolled in a German school for the next four years. Two additional children were born during this displacement period: Angela (1943) in a DP camp and Vincent (1945) in Münster, Germany. In a recent interview for this article, Marija shared that, all things considered, she felt her family was luckier than most. She still remembers the warning sirens and running for her life to reach shelter in nearby bunkers. In 1945, the Americans finally arrived at the end of the

MANIFEST OF IN-BOUND PASSENGERS (ALIENS)									
Arrival at Port of New York, N.Y., APR 15, 1950									
No.	NAME	AGE	SEX	HT	WT	HAIR	EYES	PLACE OF BIRTH	DATE OF BIRTH
1	MARIJA Vlastic	24	F	5' 11"	125	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1926
2	FRANC Vlastic	27	M	5' 10"	140	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1923
3	ANGELA Vlastic	14	F	4' 11"	85	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1943
4	VINCENT Vlastic	5	M	3' 11"	45	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1945
5	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
6	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
7	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
8	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
9	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
10	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
11	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
12	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
13	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
14	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
15	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
16	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
17	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
18	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
19	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932
20	FRANCO Vlastic	18	M	5' 10"	135	BRN	BLU	SLOVENIA	1932

**Vlastic Family Passenger Manifest 1950.**

to leave for America. Marija stated that her family had been transferred to so many different camps during this waiting period that she can't even remember how many or the names of the camps. Due to all the transfers from place to place, they lost most of their family possessions, including photos, but they always had each other. Finally, Don Bosco College in New Haven, New Jersey, committed to sponsoring her entire family. Sadly, Marija's older brother, Franc, had to remain in Germany while he recovered from treatment for TB. He would join them in April of 1957. Gathering their meager belongings,

the Vlastic family departed Germany through the Port of Bremerhaven on November 14, 1950. Eleven days later they arrived in the port of New York and were processed through customs. Fr. Fortunat Zorman met them there and arranged to have the family brought to St. Cyril Parish in downtown New York City. This Slovenian parish has had a mission for decades of welcoming Slovenian immigrant families and helping them get a good start in America. From there, a parish family brought them to their home for a couple of days, providing them with food, sleeping accommodations and support. They left New York and began their new journey, heading for the campus of Don Bosco College in New Jersey. Don Bosco College was home to a Roman Catholic seminary located on the



**USAT General C.C. Ballou that brought the Vlastic family to Ellis Island.**

war. DPs, including the Vlastic family, were gathered and then transported to various holding camps while arrangements were made to find sponsors and send them to America. They had no home left in Kraška vas. It was a long, emotional, five-year waiting period before they finally received word that they were going



**Don Bosco College in New Jersey that sponsored the Vlastic family in coming to America.**

outskirts of Newton in Sussex County, New Jersey. It opened in 1928, and was operated by the Salesian religious order. The grounds of the school consisted of 180 acres, which provided ample opportunity for



*St. Cyril Slovenian Church, Brooklyn NY.*

the seminary to grow its own food. Since the school sponsored the Vlastic family, they had to work off the money that had enabled them to come to America. After six months of working the college's farm land, the sponsor debt was paid back, and the Vlastic family moved on to Chicago's ethnic Pilsen neighborhood in the lower West Side. This neighborhood was home to Polish, Lithuanian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Croatian, and Austrian immigrants who flooded the area to work in nearby factories and the stockyards. Marija's father and brother began employment as steelworkers with the American Forge Company. The family lived on Cermak Road, across the street from St. Stephen's Slovenian church.

The Vlastic family continued to flourish in the Chicago area, working hard and long hours all contributing to a better America, their new, adoptive homeland. Marija, now known as Mary, worked as a salesgirl and would eventually meet and fall in love with Bogomil Kranjec. Bogomil had immigrated from Kobarid, Goroza, Slovenia in 1955. They married two years later in Chicago at St. Stephen's Church. The young Kranjec family lived in Indiana for a few years as they established their motel business but would return to the Chicago area where they raised their children, Cynthia and John, in nearby Berwyn, Illinois. It was important to Marija that her children appreciate their heritage, so she enrolled them in Slovenian language classes offered at her former family church at St. Stephen's. After Bogomil and Marija retired, they relocated to Green Bay, Wisconsin. Their love for their Slovenian

homeland became their main vacation destination for years. Bogomil passed away January 1, 2010.

Marija's parents, Matija and Angela, successfully raised their six children in America, overcoming all of the adversity they faced from the Nazi Germans during WWII. Her father, Matija Vlastic, passed away in February, 1980. Her mother, Angela Vlastic, died in March 1990. Their legacy of six children also was blessed with 18 grandchildren, and 8 great grandchildren. In addition to Marija and her family, she has four other surviving siblings. Teresa Marcic lives in the nearby Chicago suburb of Palatine. Her sister Angela (Vince) Balaker and brother Vince (Polly) Vlastic reside in California. Her brother Frank Vlastic resides in Missouri. Her second oldest brother, Stanko "Stanley", passed away in March 2017.

When Nazi Germany was finally defeated in 1945, over 11 million "displaced persons" living in camps throughout German-controlled territories were finally freed to seek relocation or return home. Of those 11 million, 270,000 were from the Yugoslavian states, of which Slovenia had been a member since the end of WWI. The Matija Vlastic family was just one of those eighty thousand ethnic Slovenes that were a part of that total number. For more than 50 years there was a German silence on the treatment of the displaced citizens from these Yugoslavian states. It wasn't until 1999 that the former German President Johannes Rau finally tried to apologize by expressing these words: "In the name of the German people, I ask for your forgiveness in remembrance of all that had to suffer on enslaved and forced labor under the rule of Germany. We will not forget your suffering."



*Kranjec Family: (left to right) Marija's two grandsons, Mike Ketter (son-in-law), Teresa Kranjec (daughter-in-law), John Kranjec son, Marija Vlastic Kranjec, and Cynthia Ketter (daughter).*





# Slovenian Union of America

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## Across America - Branch Reports

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### **BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin**

Contact information: Mary Ann Schellinger  
920.457.7946/[rhmas@yahoo.com](mailto:rhmas@yahoo.com)

On September 12, the members of Branch 1 met at Bourbon Street Pub & Grill for a chicken buffet dinner. A business meeting was held prior to the dinner. Jackie Smith, our Regional President, joined us for the evening. She shared information with us regarding her visit to the SUA branch in Willard, Wisconsin. Two of our officer positions were up for election this year: Vice President and Treasurer. Denise Schueffner and Betty Repenshek, respectively, currently held these positions. Both were nominated to serve another two-year term and both accepted the nominations. Installation of these officers was also done at the meeting. All had another good time as Mary Sandwick, President, had everyone participate in Slovenian Bingo.

MARY ANN SCHELLINGER

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### **BRANCH 2 - Chicago, Illinois**

Contact Information: Judy Stoll  
708.479.2864/[judithstoll@att.net](mailto:judithstoll@att.net)

Where did the summer go? It's hard to think that we'll be looking for our gloves and bundling up in just a short time, especially since our last meeting was held on one of the hottest days of summer. We met at Portillo's on September 21, a Thursday afternoon. There were eight members present and every one of us enjoyed a wonderful lunch before the meeting. Portillos has many items to select from, but salads or hot dogs were the top choices.

Discussions centered on our yearly charitable donations, which will be sent out before Christmas. If you know of a worthy organization that can use our help, please contact me so we can include it on our list. Some of our members mentioned that they would be attending Father Metod Ugorevc's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary to the priesthood. The celebration was held at the Slovenian Cultural Center in Lemont. We also decided to have our Christmas party at Ignatz Restaurant this holiday season on Thursday, December 7 at 1:00 p.m. Please contact me if you need information about this event.

Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Ceferin on their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary!!!

Winter 2017

Happy Thanksgiving and a Blessed and Merry Christmas to all of our members and friends.

JUDY STOLL

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### **BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado**

Contact Information:

719.569.7125/[amtcharron@yahoo.com](mailto:amtcharron@yahoo.com)

Branch 3 celebrated the fall season with a bus trip on October 1 to the casinos in Cripple Creek. The weather was perfect, and the participants were treated to beautiful views of golden-leaved aspen trees against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountains. Since the Denver Broncos were playing the Raiders that day, some people were decked out in their Broncos attire. The bus was nearly full with



*Branch 3 member Mitzi Drobnick, decked out in her Broncos attire including special shoes, on the trip to Cripple Creek.*

49 passengers. Branch 3 member Norma Becco organized the bus trip and donated snacks and bottled water for the hopeful gamblers.

October 3 was the first branch meeting since taking a break for the summer months. Branch Chaplain Marie Mutz opened and closed the business portion of the meeting with group prayers. Angela Mock was the hostess and served a delicious cake. Linda Secora donated the mystery gift, which was won by Marie Mutz. Members voted to donate funds in support of the annual Slovenian Heritage Dinner, scheduled for November 4, and the paving project at St. Mary's Church. The November branch meeting was held at St. Mary's Church hall on November 7.

The December meeting will feature the annual branch Christmas luncheon on Tuesday, December 5, at 12:30 p.m. at Park East Restaurant. Contact Annette Charron if you are interested in attending!

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON &  
BARBARA KARLINGER

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### BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana

Traditions are history that is personal to each of us, but in today's changing world, it's up to you to carry them into the future or to leave them behind. Some traditions such as Sunday dinner at grandma's house and baking lessons at the neighborhood church are perhaps a thing of the past because grandma doesn't live around the corner anymore, and the neighborhood church has closed. Daily text messages and Face Time have replaced weekly phone calls or handwritten letters. Change is never easy, but sharing new ideas with people makes traditions fresh and exciting, and involving new people helps to strengthen and broaden traditions through many generations.

Since our Slovenian Holy Trinity Catholic Church closed, many parishioners now attend Sacred Heart Church in Indianapolis, feeling a close connection with the Slovenian priest there. Several of the statues from the inte-



*Chief cook, Katie Poole, serving at the 2017 TASTE OF SLOVENIA dinner.*

rior of Holy Trinity are now out at St. Malachy church in Brownsburg, including the Christmas crèche. The beautiful carved altars and pews are at St. Joseph Church. We can't change the closing of our Slovenian parish, but perhaps by visiting one of these churches, and remembering the history behind these pieces and the wonderful Slovenian people who worked so hard to build and maintain Holy Trinity as a Slovenian Catholic parish for over 100 years, the traditions will not be forgotten.

Thank you to all who attended the Taste of Slovenia dinner, benefiting St Mary Children Center! The cooks provided a wonderful dinner of homemade noodle soup and roast pork, and all had a wonderful time!

Mark your calendars! The annual SAUSAGE FEST is Saturday, January 20, 2018 featuring your choice of fresh, smoked, or blood sausage dinner. Look on the Slovenian National Home or KSKJ websites for times and cost. This event sells out quickly, so get your reservations now!!



*Entrance to GOSTECNIK FARM in Texas.*



*Steve Fon, Gary Gostecnik, and Fr. Christian Gostecnik visit at the Gostecnik family farm in Texas.*



Many Slovenians came to the United States in the early 1900s, spreading out all over the country, finding jobs in mining, factories, and farming. When cousins Father Christian Gostecnik, from Ljubljana, Slovenia and Steve Fon, from Brownsburg, Indiana decided to visit Gary Gostecnik at the Gostecnik farm in Texas this past August, little did anyone know how short the visit was going to be. After a wonderful evening enjoying a BBQ with family and friends, the following morning came with dire warnings about a hurricane named Harvey, and the visit was cut short as Texas was not the safest place to be right then! After saying a few prayers for the safety of all involved, Father Christian flew out of Dallas to Chicago for a three week stay in Lemont, and Steve drove north through Kansas, stopping in Lawrence at the wonderful apple orchard of Dave and Wendy Vertacnik, bringing home an array of tasty fruit for many pies and strudels!



*Steve Fon picking apples at VERTACNIK ORCHARD in Lawrence, Kansas.*

Please keep all those people who have suffered from 2017 tragedies, especially those who have lost loved ones or who have hardship from the hurricanes and wildfires, in your thoughts and prayers throughout 2018.

MARY, KAREN & PHYLLIS

## **BRANCH 13 - San Francisco, California**

Contact Information: Michele Twers

[michele.twers@comcast.net](mailto:michele.twers@comcast.net)

Greetings from "hot" San Francisco. In September we experienced heat-breaking records and tremendous fires due to the heavy winds and heat.

At our October meeting we celebrated Halloween. It is wonderful to see this holiday bring joy to the children who dress up and go trick-or-treating. On a sad note, our faithful member, Jackie, and her husband Jerry Lowe told us they were leaving San Francisco and moving to Carmel. Jackie, we will miss you very much, and we wish you and Jerry much happiness. Also, earlier this year another longtime member and Branch 13 former President Louise Petrusich, who is 95 years young and born and raised in San Francisco, has moved to Folsom to be near her daughter, Janet Nagel.

We have so much to be thankful for this year - our families and friends, and especially the ladies who attend and support our branch. One of these ladies is Virginia Sustarich. She has been a dedicated member for 73 years and our longtime auditor. On November 1, Virginia celebrated her 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. We send Happy Birthday wishes and much love to you, Virginia.

President Doreen's nephew, Kenneth, and his wife, Bernadette Spencer live in Rochester, New York. Their son, Donald, started kindergarten and travels on a school bus. After a few days of school, Donald thanked his parents for letting him go to school "because he just loves school." Little brother Frankie started pre-school the following week.

Birthday wishes and get-well wishes are being sent to all our members who are celebrating birthdays or are under the weather.

Mark your calendar. One of our favorite dinners will be on the weekend before Lent, where the San Francisco Bay Area Slovenians enjoy a Blood Sausage PUST celebration sponsored by the SNPJ Lodge 304 at the Slovenian Hall.

Branch 13 would like to wish everyone a very blessed Christmas and a wonderful New Year 2018 with good health.

MICHELE TWERS

## **BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois**

Contact Information: Georgene Agnich

773.205.1326/[jim@tmbpublishing.com](mailto:jim@tmbpublishing.com)

We offer our condolences to members Mary Kay Demick, mother-in-law, and Mary Lee Strahanoski, sister-in-law, in the loss of their loved one, Jen Demick. We also offer our sympathy to the family of member Dolores Plut.

We purchased twelve Christmas wreaths for veterans' graves in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood through the annual "Wreaths Across America" program. We also collected trial-size toiletries, notepads, CDs, DVDs, greeting cards, and other items to send to our troops at home and abroad.

Slovenian archivists Alenka Starman Alič and Maja Povalej stayed in SUA's Heritage Museum apartment from October 1 to 6 to evaluate and catalogue the archives of SUA, the Ancel Museum of St. Joseph Church, and the KSKJ in



*Slovenian archivists Alenka Starman Alič and Maja Povalej at work in SUA's Heritage Museum in Joliet.*



*Slovenian archivists Maja Povalej and Alenka Starman Alič pose in SUA's Heritage Museum basement before driving to Cleveland.*

Joliet, as well as the archives at the Slovenian mission and cultural center in Lemont. They also examined and photographed Lucija Dragovan's ten Slovenian murals painted on the railroad trestle near St. Joseph Church. Branch 20 treated Alenka and Maja to dinner at Merichka's Restaurant on October 2. National Vice President Diane Hohenwater worked long hours each day to assist National President Mary Lou Voelk, Alenka, and Maja. Carol Terlep and Carol Novak presented their ongoing project of scanning SUA's burial insurance records, and Georgene Agnich gave a tour of the murals and of the Ancel Center, plus a talk on Irene Odorizzi's videotape collection of Slovenian immigrant interviews. Alenka and Maja left Joliet early on October 7 for Cleveland.

Diane Hohenwater, Mike Vidmar, and Georgene Agnich

participated in the Joliet Public Library's "Family History Day" on October 7. Diane and Georgene represented SUA and offered help with Slovenian genealogy research, while Mike represented the Will-Grundy Genealogical Society and its large collection of resources for genealogical searches in Will and Grundy Counties.



*Diane Hohenwater and Georgene Agnich offer help with Slovenian genealogy research at Joliet Public Library's "Family History Day."*

At our October meeting, we gave Sister Nancy, from the Sisters of St. Francis of the Sacred Heart in Frankfort, a check and cash donations for her missionary work in Brazil. We also discussed plans and appointed committees for Branch 20's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2018.

Our December 17 Christmas Party at Merichka's will be a time to share the warm Christmas spirit with each other while enjoying the delicious food and a gift exchange, with hope and optimism for the New Year.

Georgene Agnich was incorrectly referred to as "Georgene Agnich Larson" on page 1 of the Fall 2017 *Zarja*.

GEORGENE AGNICH

### **BRANCH 23 - Ely, Minnesota**

*Taste Of Slovenia 2* was held on Saturday August 5 from 11 to 3 at St. Anthony's Catholic Church Hall. People were lined up to get in!!! There were 15 tables with Slovenian foods for people to taste. Hank Thurnander entertained with accordion music. Door prizes were given away. Many Slovenian artifacts were on display. Videos were in the classrooms for viewing. Our sales table had homemade noodles, jellies, cookbooks, scrubbies, cleaning cloths, and Slovenian Christmas ornaments that could be purchased. Two demonstrations were held showing how to make potica and strudel. The Slovenian banners *Miners, Farmers and Refugees* were on display at The Historical Society at the Vermilion College, and admission was free to those who

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went to view them. A very good number of people went to see them. *Taste of Slovenia II* was a smashing success and plans are for number 3 on Saturday, August 4, 2018.

The Ely Branch 23 of the Slovenian Union of America celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Grand Ely Lodge on Sunday, September 17. Thirty-two members gathered for lunch



**Al & Bina Medved, Miro Medved, Father Bill Sharich, and Pat Koski.**



and dessert. The tables were beautifully set with Slovenian colors - red and blue napkins shaped like flowers on white tablecloths. Birthday cupcakes made by Paulette Gilbert were also decorated with Slovenian colors and arranged to form 90 in honor of the special occasion. Jim Lah and Bina Medved provided a special Slovenian dessert. Father Skarich gave a blessing before the meal. Our President, Pat Koski, introduced Miro Medved, Honorary Consul of Slovenia, who presented a certificate granted by the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians abroad. Many stories were shared about members' Slovenian heritage. Adolph Levar provided music on his button box, and members sang along. Adolph played "Happy Birthday" to past President Gerry Petrich, and we all sang along.

CHOTSIE HARRI

## **BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois**

Contact Information: Diane Data

[diane3121@comcast.net](mailto:diane3121@comcast.net)

Zivijo! Our first meeting after our summer break was held at the home of Debbie Pohar. We had a very large turnout of members. The main topic of the night was our Roadside Chapel. Everyone was excited to hear the dollar amount of donations we have received to date. The interest in this project is heartwarming indeed! The chapel should be ready in the spring of 2018 for a dedication around the Feast of Maria Pomagaj. It is not too late to make a donation to SUA BR24, P.O. Box 1571, LaSalle, IL 61301.

Plans were finalized for our annual All Souls Day Cemetery Walk at St. Vincent's Cemetery in LaSalle. We will have a new President in 2018 – Shirley Eide and a new Treasurer – Michelle Cinotte. A big thank you to Debbie Pohar, Bonnie Prokup and Lois Hollerich for their time as officers. Members shared their favorite fall recipes. Barb Pohar and her daughters, Debbie and Cathy, served a delicious ham and bean soup along with bread and dessert.

Our member, Bill Prokup, husband of Bonnie Pohar Prokup, passed away unexpectedly on October 7. He was a quiet, fun-loving man who will be missed by his wife and daughters, Bekki and Barbi, his grandson, Johnny, his son-in-law, as well as his entire family. Bill was a big part of Branch 24 and the local community. We offer our sincere sympathy to the Prokup and Pohar families on their loss.

On a personal note, my mother, Rose (Dusak) Kellett, passed away on September 28 at age 92. She was a member of SUA Branch 89 in Oglesby. A few years ago, while visiting our Joliet museum, Jonita Ruth gave me a copy of my mother's SWUA application for membership dated March 3, 1940. She was 15 at the time, making her a 77-year member of the SUA. I know she was very proud to be 100% Slovenian.

Greetings for a blessed holiday season! Dober Dan!

DIANE DATA

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## **BRANCH 33 - Duluth, Minnesota**

We lost one of our members, Winifred Ellena, who passed away peacefully on Thursday morning, August 31. She was 90, soon to turn 91 on September 24. A Mass of Christian Burial was held for her on September 9 in St. Elizabeth Church of which she was a devoted member. Winifred was involved in many activities helping to keep our church active. The ladies of our branch prayed a rosary for her and had a special send-off prayer before the closing of Mass. Our pallbearers were Althea Tverberg, Kathy Schiltz, Polly Stojevich, Sharon Bucar, and Renee Doble. Winifred was a very active and longtime member of Branch 33, and we will all miss her; may she rest in peace. A white carnation was presented to her oldest son, John, to show our sympathy. It was a beautiful funeral and a great way to say good-bye to our dear sister till we meet again.

ANN MENART

## **BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

Contact Information: Jan Gehm

[414.321.1413/twogames@wi.rr.com](mailto:414.321.1413/twogames@wi.rr.com)

After a summer break, many members turned out for a delicious lunch, which preceded our meeting. We opened our meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a short prayer in Slovenian, led by Helen Frohna, for all the victims of the hurricanes that devastated many southern cities.

Sincere condolences are sent to the family of Rosalie Dovnik, a longtime member, who passed away in September. May she rest in peace.



Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control, our Martinovanje that was scheduled for November 2017 had to be cancelled. We are hoping to start planning a grander event for November 2018. Watch for more news of this event in coming issues of *Zarja*.

Plan on attending our Christmas Party on December 2, 2017 at Aliota's at noon. There will be a gift exchange, raffles and a time to meet with fellow members and enjoy a delicious dinner together.

Look for news of the Wisconsin State Convention, which will be hosted by Branch 1 of Sheboygan in 2018, and the State Convention, which will be hosted by our branch in 2019.

On a sad note: I just received word that the husband of Bonnie Prokup passed away very suddenly. The officers and members of our branch extend our deepest sympathy to Bonnie and her family.

MARY "MICI" BREGANT

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## **BRANCH 47 - Garfield Heights, Ohio**

Contact Information: Debbie Duris

[330.467.2281/dcduris@gmail.com](mailto:330.467.2281/dcduris@gmail.com)

On September 22, Debbie Duris and I had the honor of attending a reception at the Slovenian National Home on St. Clair Avenue. We met His Excellency, Dr. Miro Cerar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia. Dr. Cerar spoke of his involvement during the negotiations for Slovenia's independence, his involvement with the United Nations, and his recent visit to the White House.

The Consul General of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr. Andrej G. Rode, arranged his visit. Mr. Rode also addressed the audience along with Slovenian Ambassador to the U.S., Stanislav Vidovic.

You can imagine the travel schedule of a dignitary. Dr. Cerar's original itinerary did not have him scheduled to travel to Cleveland. However, seeing that Cleveland has

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the highest concentration of Slovenians in the country, his schedule was adjusted to visit here. Makes you proud to be a Slovenian living in Cleveland!



*Reception with Dr. Cerar, Prime Minister of Slovenia.*

Our branch members enjoyed a Christmas celebration on Saturday, December 2, 2017 at the Ho Wah Restaurant. It was a unique experience celebrating the Slovenian American Christmas in a Chinese restaurant. A big thank you to all those members who came and shared in our fellowship and the spirit of the season.

Our first meeting for 2018 will be Saturday, May 5. Contact Debbie Duris for the time and location.

I will gladly share any of our members' activities. Just call me on my cell 330.730.8951 or e-mail me at [kjferrante@gmail.com](mailto:kjferrante@gmail.com), and I will include it in the next branch report.

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy 2018!

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### **BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois**

Contact Information: Barbara Bruch  
815.339.2714/[barbarabruch@yahoo.com](mailto:barbarabruch@yahoo.com)

We had a good time at our October meeting. Barbara Bruch made *čevapčiči* using the recipe in our new cookbook. They turned out great and were accompanied by onions, tomatoes, and a jar of Ajvar, the red pepper sauce brought back from Slovenia. We have a cooking program every year using traditional Slovenian recipes. Nancy Henkel and Cynthia Carus told us about their recent trip to Slovenia. They got lost at night in their car in Ljubljana and asked a cab driver how to get back to the Grand Union Hotel. He tried to tell them, but it was a lot of turns since they were on the backside of the castle. Finally, he said for them to follow him, and he guided them to the hotel.

Winter 2017

It was cheap at twice the price they said.

We want to wish our members Alice and Jim Ebner a Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. They celebrated with an open house at the American Legion hall. A lot of us were able



*Members enjoying čevapčiči, potica, and strudel.*



*Alice and Jim Ebner celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary.*

to attend, and it was a lovely event.

Our Bakeless Bake Sale is going on now, so if any members would like to donate, please send donations to our Treasurer Terry Kamnikar, 533 North Kenosha Avenue, Oglesby, Illinois 61348. This is our only fundraiser and supports our community donations. As always, don't hesitate to call or email with any questions or suggestions.

BARBARA BRUCH

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### **BRANCH 93 - New York, New York**

Contact Information: Kathleen Simmonds  
917.780.9412/[kathleensimmo@gmail.com](mailto:kathleensimmo@gmail.com)

“Otrok. Otroci. Otroka.” (“One Child. Children. Two children.”) Many of you will know that the Slovene language has a rare linguistic characteristic called “Dual Form” which means that unlike the English language (made up of singular and plural words), Slovene also has “dual” words which refer to exactly two of a thing or person. This is just one of the many challenging concepts that the participants of our “Pogovorna slovenščina preko spleta” (“Slovenian Conversation Online”) 2017 program are facing. This incredible program is funded through a grant from the Republic of Slovenia’s Office for Slovenians Abroad and organized by some of our dedicated Branch 93 members. Our teachers are Maria J. Rode (Senior Librarian Emerita, Stanford University) and Joan Walker, M.A., with assistance from Maria Polajner Whitmire, LMSW. Mia Rode and Ria Whitmire are native Slovenes, and Joan Walker teaches English as a Second Language on the Internet at Live American English. This project is developed and implemented using an online platform so teachers and students can interact in a virtual classroom. Hvala to our funders and to all our participants and volunteers.

KATHLEEN SIMMONDS

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### **BRANCH 99 - Lemont, Illinois**

Contact Information: Jana Hlade  
[jmhlade@hotmail.com](mailto:jmhlade@hotmail.com)

Blessings to you and your families! We hope you had a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Bakers needed! The annual Cookie Sale will be held on Sunday, December 10, from 12-1 p.m. in the SCC lobby. Cookies should be dropped off by 11 a.m. Filled cookie tins are \$5 each and make a great Christmas gift for friends and co-workers.

This year, all proceeds from the cookie sale will benefit the St. Mary’s Retreat House in Lemont. We thank all bakers in advance and hope everyone can come out to support this cause.

We would like to send Corinne Leskovar get-well wishes after her surgery. Get well soon, Corinne! And we were very saddened to hear that Bonnie Prokup’s husband passed away unexpectedly. Bonnie is the *Zarja* Editor and former SUA President. Our deepest sympathy to Bonnie and her family.

Our branch would like to thank Bill Zerial for his informational e-mails and birthday greetings every month. Thanks for keeping us updated Bill! Also, Bill will be displaying his Christmas Village collection again this year at the SCC. If you would like to help him set up the village on December 2, please contact him at [billzer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:billzer@sbcglobal.net) or 312.208.5683.



We will keep you posted of any new events that our branch will be hosting, so watch your e-mail for future announcements.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

JANA HLADE

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### **BRANCH 100 - Southern California**

Contact Information: Jean Koci  
949.495.0097/[ajkoci@cox.net](mailto:ajkoci@cox.net)

It is 80 degrees and sunny in Southern California as I write this report for the next issue of *Zarja*, the magazine that SUA members near and far look forward to receiving several times each year. It is a publication that is the pride of our organization. We give thanks every time we receive our issue to Bonnie and Debbie who put so much into producing this beautiful journal of interest to our members.

By the time you read this, winter will be upon us, and in many places snow and rain will have taken over the sunny fall days. During the past few weeks many neighbors, families and friends have suffered through hurricanes, floods, and fires. We pray that those affected will survive the losses and will get through the traumas in the best possible way. In addition, a special note to Bonnie and family. Please know that your Southern California friends send their heartfelt sympathy to you on Bill’s sudden death. A few of us had the opportunity to meet most of your family in May at the graduation party that was so beautifully featured by the photo in the last *Zarja*.

Many of our Branch 100 members attended the Vinska Trgatev sponsored by the California SNPJ Federation on November 5. Fred Mlakar who organizes the pageant and

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then leads the band for dancing afterwards heads this event. It has been held at the Slovene Hall in Fontana for many years and is always a fun-filled afternoon and evening. Most Branch 100 members are also active in SNPJ and are hard workers in both, mainly because of their love for the Slovenian culture, music, food, and travel. Occasionally, we have guests from Slovenia attending. They always seem to have a great time and enjoy the traditional music played by the Mlakar band.

Two more of our grandchildren were able to visit Slovenia this June. So that makes six of our total of ten who have had the experience of a visit to the birthplace of their great-grandparents. Unfortunately, they only had two days there, so the visit was limited to Ljubljana and the area around Lake Bled and a day with cousins on my mother's side of the family. Both grandchildren are in grad school, so their time was limited.

We are sending our prayers and best wishes to our dear friends who have been ill or not able to get out as often as they would like. Hoping to see many of you at the Branch 100 Christmas Lunch which I believe will be on Saturday, December 9 at Napoli's in Loma Linda. Watch for a notice with more details. Na svidenje!

JEAN KOCI

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**BRANCH 102 - Willard, Wisconsin**

Contact Information: Candy Johnson  
[candyjohnson1718@gmail.com](mailto:candyjohnson1718@gmail.com)

A sure sign of the end of summer in Willard, Wisconsin is the annual Holy Family Parish bazaar and chicken dinner. The bazaar includes a raffle, bake sale, rummage sale, dinner, and music. The dinner was wonderful as usual and was topped off by delicious, homemade potica!



The fall Branch 102 meeting started off with a prayer and potluck lunch. Two lunch items, barley soup and creamed cucumbers, were recipes from SUA's *The Slovenian-American Table* cookbook. Thank you, Ruth Zwiig, for bringing authentic Slovenian dishes for our lunch! We were honored





to have State President Jackie Smith as our guest at the meeting. The highlight of the meeting was the program celebrating Jack Trunkel as our 2017 Member of the Year.



Candy Johnson and her husband, Steve, traveled to Colorado and Utah in September to visit their daughter, Megan. Candy's paternal grandparents lived in Utah and her maternal great-grandparents lived in Colorado before moving to Willard, Wisconsin. That may explain why the Johnsons seem to be in love with the Southwest. It's beautiful country, and it is very, very different from central Wisconsin.



Ruth Zwieg and her husband, Darwin, traveled on a European river cruise tour in late August beginning at Prague in the Czech Republic and ending at Paris, France, traveling through four countries. They floated on three rivers:

Main, Rhine, and Moselle. Prague with its medieval castles reminded Ruth of some of the ancient towns of Slovenia, her last overseas journey taken three years ago. The ethnic food and wines they encountered were delightful. The graceful architecture, vibrant cultural scenes, vineyard-clad hillsides, and historical landmarks were breathtaking.

Candy, Sarah, and Ruth took a Segway tour of historic Stillwater, Minnesota in July. Their three-hour tour included travel through beautiful wooded pathways along a river and a little bit of downtown Stillwater. Fun!

Junior members, Mike and Sandy Brierton, recently completed a school assignment on their family tree. They enjoyed researching their Slovenian ancestors. One of their best research sources was the "Spominska Zgodovina" (Historical Memories), which was compiled by the Slovenska Druzba of Willard in 1982. They shared stories with their classmates of great grandparents immigrating to America, working in iron mines, and settling in Willard, which was the largest Slovenian settlement in America in the 1920s.

CANDY JOHNSON

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### BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

Contact Information: Bernadette Fitzsimmons  
[bettekfitz@verizon.net](mailto:bettekfitz@verizon.net)

In October, Branch members met at the Embassy of Slovenia for the Slovenian Science & Education Showcase and reception. In November Branch 108 celebrated its 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a luncheon meeting with homemade desserts. Our next meeting will be on Sunday, February 11 in celebration of Pust and Cultural Day. A warm Slovenian welcome is extended to new members Gary and Cassie Sever from the Baltimore, Maryland area.

Branch 108 member Charlie Koiner celebrated his 97th birthday in mid-November. He enjoys being a member of SUA and appreciated the wishes for his special day. It is always a pleasure for him to have visitors at the Koiner Farm.

In last year's *Washington Post*, I read about *Family Circle's* The First Lady Cookie Contest and saved Melania Trump's Star Cookie recipe, which looked simple and traditional. In August 2016, Melania said "Star cookies are my favorite because they're simple yet delicious. I decorate them with colorful frosting or eat them with chocolate ice cream or whipped cream. They pair perfectly with fruits and complement your coffee and tea." I plan to try this cookie recipe during the Christmas season, and hope all *Zarja* readers enjoy the simplicity of making and serving Melania Trump's Star Cookies. Go to page 30 for the Star Cookie recipe.

Since Melania is now known as First Lady Melania Trump, it seems Slovenia, its foods, and culture have become more interesting to people in the United States than ever before. For example, during the meeting at the Vatican in May, Pope Francis and First Lady Melania Trump

*Zarja - The Dawn*



spoke about potica, the Slovenian baked specialty nut role cake. Reporters jumped at the opportunity to write about something new, and it was about potica. I even received a telephone call to interview with the *Washington Post*

article published on May 24, 2017 entitled, “The Pope and Melania Trump had an awkward exchange about nut bread and now we all want to try it,” go to [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/food/wp/2017/05/24/the-pope-and-melania-trump-had-an-awkward-exchange-about-nut-bread-and-now-we-all-want-to-try-it/?utm\\_term=.c2a335b2678b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/food/wp/2017/05/24/the-pope-and-melania-trump-had-an-awkward-exchange-about-nut-bread-and-now-we-all-want-to-try-it/?utm_term=.c2a335b2678b)



**Koiner Farm: Lynn Koiner, Bernadette K. Fitzsimmons, and Charlie Koiner.**

It was this meeting at the Vatican which promoted The Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry to ask the EU to register potica as a Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) product. So far only the following three Slovenian dishes have been awarded Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) status: Idrijski žlikrofi, prekmurska gibanica, and belokranjska pogača. I certainly hope the application is successful to protect the potica recipe, ingredients and the production process. The Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry are seeking Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) status for five types of potica filling: walnut, raisin, and walnut with raisins, tarragon, and tarragon with cheese. There is also discussion about poppy seed-filled potica being added as the sixth to the list of fillings. The Ministry of Agriculture is currently awaiting receipt of the official application.

Once Slovenia approves the application, the Ministry of Agriculture forwards it to the European Commission. Upon completion of the application, the process will continue for many more months of red tape and debate in hopes of an agreement being made on the fate of potica. Let’s hope that in 2018 potica will be awarded TSG status.

Blagoslovljene božične praznike in srečno novo leto to all our members and friends throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe!

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Understanding Slovenian sayings by Bernadette:  
*Luč in tema se ne moreta zediniti.*  
 Light and dark cannot come to an agreement.

BERNADETTE FITZSIMMONS

Food Editor about potica. I was asked about how often I make it and for what holidays. They included a photo of my Christmas 2016 potica for the on-line article. Although I offered the SUA cookbook version recipe for potica, I was told that one of the staff writers had already decided on a different potica recipe. To my dismay when I read the article in the *Washington Post*, the potica nut role recipe printed included chopped pitted dates; it was missing raisins and rum and didn’t appear to be an authentic Slovenian recipe, nor did the photos from the recipe they used in their test kitchen resemble a Slovenian potica. To read the ar-



**Branch 108 members meeting Ambassador Stanislav Vidovič for the first time. Pictured to the right of Ambassador Vidovič are Bernadette K. Fitzsimmons, Angela Krulc, and Nika Kovačič. To the left of Ambassador Vidovič is pictured Professor Urška Velikonja, one of the speakers of the 4th Scientific and Educational Showcase of the Embassy of Slovenia.**

## Melania Trump's Star Cookies

### Ingredients:

2 cups flour  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened  
1 cup confectioners' sugar  
2 eggs yolks, 1 egg white  
2 tablespoons sour cream

Combine flour and baking soda. Set aside. Beat butter and sugar until blended. Add egg yolks, egg white and sour cream. Beat until smooth. Beat in flour mixture until dough just comes together.

Form into two disks, wrap in plastic and refrigerate at least 30 minutes.

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Roll out one disk on liberally floured wax paper with a floured rolling pin to 1/8-inch thickness. Using a 2½-inch star cutter, cut out star shapes and place on a wax paper-lined baking sheet. Repeat with second disk.

Gather up scraps, form into a disk and refrigerate.

Bake 10 minutes per batch, until lightly golden. Slide cookies onto a cooling rack and cool.

Reroll chilled scraps, cut out additional stars and bake.

*If using a 2½ - inch star cookie cutter, the recipe will yield approximately 40 cookies.*

## BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities (TC) of Minnesota

Contact Information: Elaine Barthelemy  
[elaineab@yahoo.com](mailto:elaineab@yahoo.com)

The sun shone on us all as Miro and Karen Medved generously hosted our Branch 109 picnic at their home on August 19. Thanks to many members who worked hard to make the day memorable. The seventy-five attendees enjoyed kranjske klobase from the Iron Range in northern Minnesota, delicious beverages, and several kinds of potica and strudel. Hank Thunander, Silvester Vicic, and Viktor Zupanc provided accordion music for singing and dancing. Forty members played in the balinanje tournament organized by Rick Pisa and Bob Grahek.



*Tournament organizers Bob Grahek and Rick Pisa, first place winners Sig and Karna Brewer and Bina and Al Medved.*



*Bob and Rick with second place winners Silvester and Sharon Vicic and John Medved, (Not pictured: Tomaz Vrabc).*

At our September member meeting, Mary Anne Palmer led us in the enthusiastic singing of “Moja kosa je križavna” and “Če študent na rajžo gre.” Then, Rick Pisa talked about *Out of the Way Slovenia*, mapping out a western route toward the Soča River, one of the most beautiful rivers in Europe and an eastern route toward Maribor (which has the oldest grapevine in the world), and Ptuj (home of a huge Lenten festival). I took notes of the many places I plan to visit someday soon, including Olimje to sample goods from the Chocolate Factory, the Soča River Valley to witness the breathtaking scenery Rick shared on his PowerPoint and a multitude of wineries and restaurants with pastries and wonderful meals. Rick is a great ambassador for Slovenia. Available for purchase at the September meeting were the

*Zarja - The Dawn*



2017-2018 Lepa Slovenija (Beautiful Slovenia) calendars, a fundraiser for Branch 109. As he has done for the past six years, Rick Pisa gathered photos from members and

bers and is growing. Online learning is a new feature for the class that meets twice a month from October through April to hone Slovenian language skills.



*Accordion players Hank Thunander, Silvester Vicic, and Viktor Zupanc.*

friends. From the dozens submitted by twenty-one entrants, the board chose thirteen for the calendar. Each winner received a framed photo of his or her entry. Thanks to Rick for his dedication to this project.

On September 30, Frank Medved, John Zakalj, Miro Medved, and Frank Bucar participated in a forum held in Duluth about the journey of Slovenian children to Minnesota and America after WWII. We are fortunate to have so many members willing to share their experiences and expertise.

Our Slovenian language study group led by Frank Medved, John Perhay, and John Zakelj boasts twenty- six mem-



*Bina Medved, Norm Setnicker, Karen Medved, Maks Medved, and Matt Barthelemy.*

At our October meeting, Norm Setnicker and Kendra Kauppi shared the history of Slovenian immigration to various parts of Minnesota including the Iron Range. November found us back at the home of Miro and Karen Medved on Martinovanje (St. Martin's Day) to celebrate the completion of this year's wine harvest. We Branch 109 members know how to party, Slovenian style.

ELAINE BARTHELEMY



*Balinanje tournament in action.*



# Ohio Regional Convention

Twelve members of the Ohio Region, representing three branches, met at Brewster's Restaurant on Saturday, October 7. We enjoyed good food and great friendships. Topics of conversation included the SWUSF, items to be voted on by the member representatives, an update on the plans for the 2019 National Convention, and how to make the Cleveland branches stronger. There were many door prizes, so everyone went home with something wonderful!



I would like to thank the members that attended the meeting. I tried something different by scheduling the meeting on a Saturday. I realize the attendance could be larger if the planned event is on a Sunday, including a Mass and a brunch. You don't know until you try.

*Kathleen Ferrante, Ohio Regional President*

## Branch 26 Member Claire Staresinic has been Awarded an Educational Grant from SUA

From Diane Hohenwater, National VP of Home Office: We are proud to announce that Branch 26 member Claire Staresinic has been awarded an educational grant from SUA. I had the pleasure of meeting Claire Staresinic, her mother, and brother when they visited our Heritage Museum while on a college visit to Chicago last year. Claire is a lovely young woman and appears very deserving of this grant. She is a credit to our organization.

Slavic Studies Department who has connected her with a graduate student fluent in Slovenian for one-on-one tutoring.

Congratulations to Claire Staresinic!

*Mary Lou Deyak Voelk*

Claire Staresinic graduated from Mars Area High School, Mars, Pennsylvania as valedictorian in June 2017 with a GPA of 4.8. Her impressive academic achievement and accomplishments in community service and extracurricular activities are examples of her leadership both inside and outside of the classroom.

In 2015 Claire took first place in the Female Cadet Recurve Bow competition at the Pennsylvania State Archery Association Indoor Championship and placed 10th in the United States in the Junior Olympic Archery Development team (JOAD). She has had four exceptional years of German.

Claire will attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and has been invited to join Honors Carolina, the university's premier academic program for exceptional undergraduate students. She plans to major in pre-med.

Claire has grown up in the "warm embrace of her Slovenian heritage," but laments the language has been lost. While Slovenian is not explicitly offered at UNC, Claire has been in contact with the head of the Germanic and





# ZarjaFest 2018

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## **DAY 01: Wednesday, May 30**

Depart from the United States to Ljubljana.

## **DAY 02: Thursday, May 31 - BLED**

Upon arrival to Ljubljana airport, meet our tour director and drive to Bled. Time permitting a stop in Brezje. This evening we gather for our Welcome to Slovenia dinner party. Enjoy the evening getting to know our fellow travelers as we begin this amazing excursion to the homeland. (D)

## **DAY 03: Friday, June 1 - BOHINJ - BLED**

Following breakfast we dedicate our morning to the Wild Flower Festival in Bohinj to enjoy the food, market, folklore dancing, and other activities. Later we visit a local farm to participate and learn how to make cheese and butter with the family. Our visit includes tasting of homemade products along with drinks and music. The evening is free in Bled. (B, S)

## **DAY 04: Saturday, June 2 - BLED - JEZERŠEK**

After breakfast enjoy your morning at leisure and take in all that fairytale Bled has to offer. Try a walk around the lake, shop in many of the unique stores, swim, or enjoy a spa treatment. In the afternoon we travel to Jezeršek Restaurant and enjoy a cooking class prepared by the well-known Jezeršek family. (B, D)

## **DAY 05: Sunday, June 3 - BLED - KOMEN - KOBJEGLAVA**

In the morning after breakfast we say goodbye to beautiful Bled and drive to Komen, located in the Karst region. Our first stop is a local lavender producer who will welcome us with a tasting of juices and sweets made of lavender, followed by a presentation of the factory and their products. We continue to the small village of Kobjeglava to visit an old prosciutto house and have lunch. The next stop is the Herb Farm Belajevi to enjoy their presentation with traditional Slovenian dinner and folklore performance. This evening we drive to Portorož on the Adriatic Sea. (B, S, L, D)

## **DAY 06: Monday, June 4 - PORTOROŽ - LIPICA - PIRAN**

After breakfast we drive to Lipica to arrive just in time to participate in the morning release of Lipizzaners at Lipica Stud Farm. Feel the energy and joy of hundreds of horses running towards the green fields of Lipica. This is followed by a short sightseeing of Lipica. The day gets more spectacular when we enjoy a picnic at their estate; lunch will be served in the refreshing shadows of the trees. Drive to Piran and have time to stroll around or have a drink at one of the seaside cafes. Dinner will be served on the sea in Piran. (B, L, D)

## **DAY 07: Tuesday, June 5 - ŽALEC - TABOR - PTUJ**

This morning we enjoy breakfast on the coast before we travel to the eastern part of Slovenia. Our first stop will be in Žalec, where a local guide will tell us the story of the "Green Gold" (hops) and the brewery tradition. After we will visit the first world beer foun-

tain and taste various local beers. Then travel to the village of Tabor (near Vransko) and have lunch in the charming surroundings of the Lisjak Restaurant. Continue towards the Ptuj area and visit a local family who produces the Kurent costume. This family will present us the history and manufacturing of the costume. We then continue with a short walking tour of this charming small town and visit a local wine producer for a wine tasting. (B, L)

## **DAY 08: Wednesday, June 6 - SEVNICA - ZUZEMBERK**

Following breakfast we visit Sevnica, the charming home of the First Lady of the USA. There we will have a guided tour of the beautiful Sevnica Castle which was built on top of a hill overlooking Sevnica, providing the best view of the town and conclude our castle experience by enjoying a glass of Blaufränkisch wine from the castle wine cellar. Continue towards Mastnak wine cellar for wine tasting with snacks. In the afternoon, enjoy a picnic-style dinner at Žužemberk Castle with accordion player and folklore performance. Drive to Ljubljana for overnight. (B, S, D)

## **DAY 09: Thursday, June 7 - LJUBLJANA**

Our morning begins with breakfast followed by an orientation tour of the city with our guide. There is free time for lunch and personal activities in the old town. Dinner will be on the outskirts of Ljubljana in a local gostilna. (B, D)

## **DAY 10: Friday, June 8 - NOVO MESTO**

Visit the old city core of Novo mesto with its impressive and magnificent Main Square, with arcade hallways fronting the ground floors of old town houses and the dominant Town Hall. Take a ride down the River Krka on a traditional Rudolf's raft and see the old town centre from the river. On this unique ride, you will also be served the typical drink and a symbol of the Dolenjska region, the Cviček wine, which is protected with the mark of a recognized traditional denomination. Have lunch on the wooden raft. Visit the Pleterje Charterhouse open-air museum and sample their brandy. On our way back to Ljubljana visit an open-air museum in Šentrupert and tour some Kozolci (hayracks). They are especially prominent in Dolenjska. We will see all types of hayracks when travelling in the region, with the most beautiful ensembles of hayracks found in the villages of Veliki Orehek and Vinja Vas in the Podgorje area. (B, L)

## **DAY 11: Saturday, June 9 - LJUBLJANA**

Enjoy breakfast at leisure and the whole day free to explore the capital of Slovenia. Start the day with the market, followed by a visit to the castle or a boat ride on the Ljubljanca river or just people watch in one of the many establishments on the river. Or join some optional trips. Farewell dinner in Ljubljana with accordion player. (B, D)

**DAY 12: Sunday, June 10** - This morning we say farewell to Slovenia, following breakfast we transfer to Ljubljana airport. (B)

Join the  
Editors from Zarja of the  
Slovenian Union of America  
May 30 - June 10, 2018  
See details on inside cover!

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