



# OUR STORY

## NAŠA ZGODOVINA

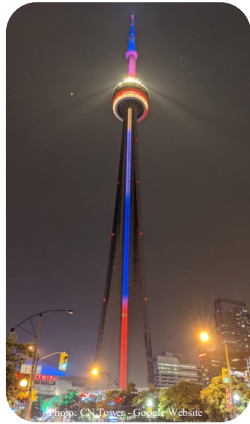


Canadian Slovenian Historical Society ~ Vol. 11 ~ Autumn 2021

**Dear friends and members,**

The hope was that by now we would be back to “normal” and living our lives as before that fateful month - March 2020. Hesitantly, we are now beginning to venture out, slowly dipping our toes into café patios, open air sports events, and encountering friends that we had not visited or seen except for the occasional Zoom meeting. Our bubbles are still encircling us and only slowly connecting to others. We look to see if there is a friend underneath the masked faces and we avoid close encounters as we practice social distancing. This is now the new normal. Thankfully, most of us have opted to do what is best for society and have gotten doubly vaccinated.

The doors of CSHS offices have been closed. However, we have not been idle attending our regular virtual monthly meetings and continuing with the work that we could accomplish remotely. We were not able to collect artifacts, articles and archival material for *Kdo smo?* nor continue interviewing for our *Povejte nam kaj*. Over these 19 months, some of our members and friends have left us and others have celebrated and attained special happenings in their lives. In June, with Slovenia, we celebrated 30 years of independence and watched from afar as the Slovenian flag was raised over City Hall and in the evening the colours of the flag were on view at the CN Tower.



Our gala, Remembering May 1945, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Slovenian Exodus, was postponed and several new dates have been proposed. Many of you have already purchased and reserved your tickets. We promise that we will hold this event at some later date. And we will let you know the new date as soon as we are able to host this event. Thank you to all who have supported us in this endeavour.

This winter, we are wishfully looking forward to being able to meet in person and to continue our work in the archives. We hope that we hear from you too. Please keep in touch by following us on Facebook, Instagram and our website, [www.slovenianhistorical.ca](http://www.slovenianhistorical.ca)

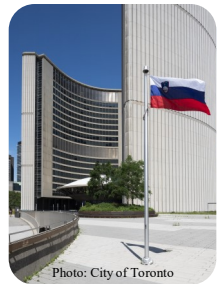


Photo: City of Toronto

Stay healthy, stay safe! *Na zdravje, Miriam Čekuta*

### Reflection on Slovenian Independence by Anne Žagar

Here in Canada, Slovenia does not receive much media coverage as the country is very small and few people are aware of its existence. When I am asked about my background, many people look at me strangely, because they had never heard of Slovenia, and I need to provide a brief geography and history lesson.

When Slovenia declared its independence in June 1991, there was a sense of euphoria, and also some fear, among Canadian Slovenians. Euphoria, because finally Slovenia would stand as a country on its own, and fear because of the real possibility of war with others within Yugoslavia who opposed Slovenia's departure from the federation. There was also disappointment when many countries, including Canada, did not initially support the idea of an independent Slovenia, as that area of Europe had a history of instability and the consensus was that maintaining a unified Yugoslavia would ensure peace.

I recall a phone conversation that my husband had with his parents a few days after Slovenia declared its independence. His parents were working in their garden, when suddenly, several fighter planes flew over them at a very low altitude. They were very frightened, dropped to the ground and lay there motionless. It was a relief when the attacks on Slovenia were over in 10 days.

In time, the idea of Slovenian independence prevailed, and Canadian Slovenians were very proud when Canada finally recognized Slovenia's independence in January, 1992, ahead of the US and many other countries.

As a Slovenian born outside of that country, I am proud to say that I am of Slovenian background. I have visited the country many times, and each trip provided special memories. Before

independence, my experiences and impressions of the country itself were unfortunately not always positive. My first trip to Slovenia was in 1976. I recall that there were shortages in the stores, coffee was scarce and in restaurants, most of the tastier menu items were not available. Many of the homes were only partially built as it could take many, many years for people to earn enough money to finish construction. Also, the towns and villages looked run-down and not well-maintained. Driving from Ljubljana to anywhere else in the country took a long time, because of the single-lane roads, oftentimes blocked by “tovornjaki” which moved very slowly along the hilly and winding roads. But what I found most surprising and intimidating was that we had to be very careful about being seen around a certain house, and in other situations, we had to whisper and not talk about certain things so as not to be overheard by neighbours.

My impressions of the country during my first trip to Slovenia after independence in 1995 was totally different. There was an optimism everywhere we went and the overall economic situation had vastly improved. Each subsequent trip was better than the last! In 2019, my teenage grandchildren visited Slovenia for the first time; they absolutely loved everything about it and look forward to visiting again.

Many things about Slovenia are inspiring. The stunning scenery - *mountains, rivers, valleys, underground caves, castles* - is breathtaking and calming. People are friendly and hospitable, and the food is always delicious. Even though my family continues to provide geography and history lessons to people here in Canada who had never heard of Slovenia, we, including my children and grandchildren, are very proud to be Slovenian.

## Making (Baking) New Traditions by Anne Urbančič

Many of us have treasured recipes in our own personal archives. Mine are limited because I am a terrible baker. This statement is not made from false modesty. For health reasons I do not eat sweets and that perhaps explains my appalling lack of skills where cakes and cookies are concerned. When my girls were in elementary school, teachers gently suggested I could contribute to classroom fundraiser bake sales with bought baked goods from the local bakery. On my classroom baking debut (and one and only attempt), everyone eventually realized that my hockey pucks on a plate were actually muffins, flat ugly disks amidst the pink and white icing frou frou of treats offered by the other mothers. I nudged my husband to buy them so that my plate would not be the only unsold donation. As a kindness, he not only bought them, but also ate them (he said they tasted good despite their looks).

I have secretly been ashamed of the fact that I will never make the beautiful Slovenian traditional sweets that my mother prepared when my siblings and I were growing up. I especially mourned for *potica*. As a child, I knew that Easter and Christmas, and special occasions, included the invitingly golden-brown loaves or rings; beautiful to look at and when opened, rolled perfectly around layers of sweet tasting walnut and raisin filling, all lovingly coaxed into soft slices of deliciousness by my mother. Helping her grind nuts; I watched her expert movements as she mixed, rolled, and tantalized us with promises of the first slice. As we grew older, she was willing to share her recipe and to instruct. Her recipe, of course, was never written down for she knew exactly what "a little bit of this" or "more of that" or "that will be too much" meant. One after another, my sisters learned. I did not. So, it seemed that the tradition of *potica* would be lost in my own family. Did it matter? Not really, I concluded, since there were two delicatessens within walking distance that sold excellent *potice* (but of course, not as good as my mother used to make). But then, one delicatessen closed. And the other stopped selling baked goods.

My husband who is not Slovenian but whose Slovenian-ness is most revealed in his love for traditional foods, including *potica*, decided to remedy this quasi-disaster. He took a lesson from my mother. After almost a full day's work, the results were surprisingly admirable: *potica* loaves that looked delicious and did not disappoint in taste. The slices, evenly cut and offered to friends and relatives at a family gathering, disappeared very quickly. But as my mother grew older, she could no longer engage in hands-on mentoring. I despaired again that it would be my family who would not carry on the tradition.

Last Christmas, however, Covid-19 brought an imposed lockdown. People started baking in their homes. I did not join in. Cookies, pastries, cakes, these all elude me. And, of course, *potica* too. Undaunted, however, my husband decided he would forge ahead in his *potica* project with his grown-up daughters helping him.

There followed several consultations about ingredients; they made phone calls to my mother and asked for advice from my sister. Because of the lockdown restrictions, they shopped online: flour, yeast, butter, nuts, raisins, sugar, cinnamon and rum. No, insisted my husband: brandy was better. Absolutely not said the girls: Noni (my mother) said rum. But in the end, on baking day, they used brandy.

One of the aspects of *potica*-making is that it takes time. Time to gather ingredients. Time to mix, to knead, to let the soft dough rest and rise. Time to roll the dough, making ever thinner, ever wider circles. Time to gently place the filling and spread it so that there will be no gaps or holes in the final result. And, of course, it takes time to bake.

Something special happened in these hours that father and daughters spent together in the kitchen. There was laughter. There was friendly bickering when someone made a mistake. There was much conversation. There were pictures taken on cellphones so Noni could see how they were doing. There was a phone call from my sister to prevent a mistake-about-to-happen. There was also a palpable excited anticipation of how the warmth of the oven would work its magic on the *potice* as they baked.

I am still secretly embarrassed that I, the only member of our household who has a Slovenian background, am not the one to carry on a family *potica* tradition. But I am also relieved that this wonderful custom will continue through my daughters. And I accept that in all matters of baking they will turn to their father for advice, not to me.

My mother's recipe is now written down and kept carefully in the respective homes of my children. This is as it should be, because their *potice* were beautifully baked, and scrumptious to eat.

If you have favourite recipes, make sure you record them and pass them on. Your children and grandchildren will cherish them. If, like me, they are not prize chefs or bakers, the videos of Michelle Pušič Ryall of Mississauga, Ontario are a good place to start their Slovenian cooking and baking lessons:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWbwkIUV3xSPnjgxTksThWg>



### Ivan Plut 1943 - 2021

V Kanado je prišel že leta 1967 in se takoj priključil rojakom na Niagarskem polotoku, v širšem kanadsko slovenskem kulturnem prostoru pa se je vidno pojavil šele leta 1996, ko je bil izvoljen za podpredsednika Vseslovenskega kulturnega odbora. Mnogi so ga občudovali, ker je s svojim neomajnim optimizmom in veliko delavno vneto pogosto presegal njihova pričakovanja. Njegova zasluga je, da je leta 1997 začela izhajati publikacija Glasilo kanadskih Slovencev in tudi predstavitev radijske ure Glas kanadskih Slovencev na najbolj znano multinacionalno postajo CHIN v Torontu je sad njegove odločitve. Veliko svojega časa je posvetil organiziranju raznih srečanj ob obiskih rojakov iz Slovenije, od pevskih zborov, gospodarstvenikov, politikov do Flipovih akrobatk in udeležencev posebne olimpiade. Za svoje nesebično in požrtvovalno delo je prejel priznanje in zahvalo Urada Vlade Republike Slovenije

Njegov sorojak g. Jože Slobodnik, s katerim je bil tdn povezan že iz mladih let, visoko ceni njegova prizadevanja v prid slovenske skupnosti, še posebno njegovo pomoč pri postopkih za samostojno Slovenijo, saj je bil verziran v politiki kot v vojaških krogih. Bil je velik Slovenec, ki je velikodušno ljubil svojo domovino, še posebno rodno Metliko. Odšel je, a zapustil je vidne sledi v življu slovenske diaspore v Kanadi. Hvaležni smo mu za vse to.

Milena Soršak

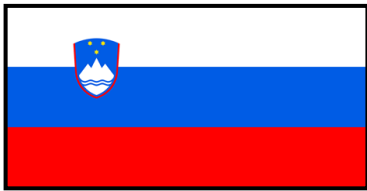
## Anica Resnik - 100 letnica

Naša sorojakinja Anica Resnik je 24. julija praznovala svoj stoti rojstni dan. Jesen življenja preživlja v Domu Lipa, za katerega je tudi sama veliko doprinesla. Dolga leta je bila na odboru in vestno urejala zapisnike in druga knjigovodska dela, do svojega 95. leta pa tudi fizično sodelovala pri walk-a-thonu.

V Kanado je prišla skupno z mnogimi povojnimi begunci že leta 1948. Z Rudijem sta si ustvarila družino s šestimi otroki, ki sta jo že od vsega začetka vključevala v slovensko skupnost. Resnikova družina je postala ena od stebrov župnije Marije Pomagaj. Anica je kot članica Ženske Katoliške Lige nesebično in radodarno razdajala svoje moči za vse dobro, najbolj pa vseskozi izstopajo njene pisarske veščine, ki si jih je izurila pri ljubljanskih uršulinkah, kjer je končala meščansko šolo. Kar kmalu je začela objavljati članke o dogodkih v naši skupnosti tudi v javnih občilih kot Slovenska država in Ameriška domovina. Čutila je z naravo in srcem in to se je izražalo v njenem stilu pisanja. Že od samega začetka je bila tudi članica Slovenskega gledališča in Slovenske igralske skupine v Torontu. Ni je bilo igre, da se ne bi našla vloga za njo. Vsako je odigrala doživeto, najbolj pa je zabavala publiko v vlogah vaških klepetulj. In kdo se ne spominja njenih občutenih recitacij pred križem v Midlandu, v katere je zljila vsa svoja čustva. Dolga leta je bila tudi odbornica Slovenskega letovišča pri Boltonu, kateremu je pravtako posvetila veliko svojega časa in truda. V prijetni senci hrastov sta si z Rudijem uredila poletno hišico, ki so jo zdaj nasledili otroci. Anica je imela izreden čut za lepo okolje, kar se še vedno odraža v tamšnih zasaditvah, pa tudi gredica pri Baragovem spomeniku je bila skozi mnoga leta deležna njene pozornosti.

V imenu slovenske skupnosti v Torontu ji pošiljamo srčne čestitke in najlepše želje za visoki jubilej, obenem pa iskrena hvala za vse doprinose in neizbrisne sledi, ki jih je deležno tudi Slovensko kanadsko zgodovinsko društvo.

*Milena Soršak*



## Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence, Slovenia!

*by Stephanie Schaeffer*



Celebrating our Slovenian Independence is always met with great enthusiasm. When news broke out that Slovenia declared independence on June 25, 1991 it was met with shock. Advocates from large states claimed that Slovenia was 'too small' to be an independent country and if they wanted to be separate from Yugoslavia they could, instead, join Austria or Hungary. Hostilities broke out, and what followed was a battle to prove recognition and independence.

From June 27, 1991 to July 7, 1991, the conflict between the Slovenian Territorial Defence and the Yugoslav's People's Army fought for control of Slovenia. The Ten-Day War seemed as if history was repeating itself in Slovenia. In World War II, two different parties fought for control of Slovenia. The Domobranci, Home Guard, wanted a democratic and independent Slovenia, while the Yugoslav Partisans, the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, wanted Slovenia to remain part of Yugoslavia. This time, the outcome was different, and favoured an independent liberal democratic Slovenia.

The Ten-Day War formally ended with the Brioni Accord. The European Community demanded a ceasefire and insisted on the postponement of Slovenia independence for three months. They believed that the consideration of independence and the future of Yugoslavia should be an agreement between all Republics. However, the terms were still favourable to Slovenia, in that all Yugoslav military were to leave Slovenia and the Yugoslav government would end officially on October 26, 1991.

In April 7, 1848, a German flag was raised on top of Ljubljana castle. A group of students, led by activist and poet Lovro Toman, responded by raising a white-blue-red flag at 8 Wolfova Street in Ljubljana. From then on the tri-colour became a symbol of Slovenian unity under the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. It continued to be used as the symbol for Slovenia, even after Slovenia became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1918.

In 1991 when Slovenia declared its independence, a new flag was needed. The white-blue-red colours remained integral to the colours of the new flag. On June 27, 1991 the red star, that had been placed in the middle of the tri-colour flag by the Socialist Republic of Slovenia in 1945 was officially removed, and replaced by a coat-of-arms designed by Marko Pogačnik featuring the three peaks of Triglav, two wavy stripes representing the Adriatic Sea and Slovenia's local rivers (the Soča, the Sava, and the Drava), and the three yellow stars from the coat-of-arms of the Counts of Celje, a historically renown Slovenian dynasty in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Today the new coat-of-arms and the tri-colours highlight the history of Slovenia and its important landmarks.

Despite all the skepticism and doubt of Slovenia being able to maintain its independence and sovereignty, it was the sheer will and determination of Slovenians that proved them wrong. Our independence and our flag, signify the strength and nationalist pride we Slovenians have for our country and for each other.

## OUR VISION and MISSION STATEMENT

### VISION:

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

### MISSION:

**Canadian Slovenian Historical Society** will:

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

## UP COMING EVENTS

### Remembering May 1945 - Slovenian Exodus Banquet

This event has been postponed from the September 26th, 2021 date to a later day yet to be determined.  
We will keep you informed.

### AGM

Our **Annual General Meeting** will be held sometime in February 2022.  
*(day to be confirmed)*

### SUMMER 2022

we will be participating in various events at Slovenian Summer Camps.

### POVEJTE NAM KAJ

We welcome the opportunity to interview individuals who wish to share their life experiences and stories. All interviews are recorded. Please contact Our Story to submit your name if you wish to be interviewed.

### OUR STORY

Our Story always welcomes articles for publication in our newsletter. Articles could include personal experiences and adventures, as well as new events and celebrations from clubs and organizations.

### HVALA ~ THANK YOU

CSHS appreciates everyone's support.  
Your generous donations assist in the preservation of Canadian Slovenian heritage.

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