

# Zarja

The background of the cover is a photograph of a two-story white house with a stone fence in the foreground. The house has several windows with dark shutters and a balcony with red flowers. The sky is blue with some clouds. The title 'Zarja' is written in a large, purple, stylized font across the top. Below the title, there is text in Slovenian and English. The English text 'The Dawn' is written in a purple, serif font on the right side. At the bottom, the location 'Komen, Slovenia' is written in a purple, serif font.

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The Dawn

Komen, Slovenia



# Slovenian Union of America

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## *Front Cover: Karst Region*



*Most people think of Provence, France when they imagine fields of lavender blooming. Lavender also grows well in the Karst region of Slovenia. Ivanji Gard near Komen holds an annual Karst Lavender Festival each summer, attracting many visitors to view this beautiful flower.*

## *Zarja - The Dawn*

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**PUBLISHER: Slovenian Union of America**

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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 Summer issue must be received by April 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

Greetings!

We have ushered in a new decade... 2020 is speaking of TIME. We are all aware; TIME marches on. This march forward cannot be changed.

Today we find ourselves in a world filled with social media. Technology has moved faster than what we can comprehend. It threatens and disrupts what we know. Newspapers and magazines are folding, church membership is down, and organizations see falling memberships.

How is it possible for a heritage organization such as the SUA to survive in these rapidly changing times? What can we do to preserve and protect both our tangible and intangible heritage in the United States?

Most important is the family, but sadly it is the institution most under threat today. It is family that brings about groups of people celebrating traditions together. Slovenian Americans are fortunate to have such an institution such as the SUA whose mission is “dedicated to honoring and preserving our **Slovenian** legacy and to promote its ideals and to ensure its longevity for future generations.”

The initial members of SUA have all passed away, but they bequeathed to us the Slovenian Union of America! From the tiny country of Slovenia came immigrants who established cultural clubs, published newspapers and magazines (one of which was *Zarja*), and built national homes, giving themselves tools for

creating a new life while treasuring their homeland’s ancestry. Our Slovenian ancestors were excellent teachers; they taught us well. The Slovenian Union of America will be celebrating its 95th Anniversary!

This gives us reason to reminisce about the good old days; nostalgia is permissible. After all, our lives have been given purpose and reason because of those good old days. Raised in Slovenian spirit, family memories and traditions have been kept alive allowing each generation to have an idea of who we are and where we came from.

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*Remember, it is holy to cherish family traditions.*

*Remember, that iconic potica, that holy bread that was served at your baptism, at your wedding and will be served at your funeral.*

*Remember, it is holy to know who you are and where you came from.*

---

Believe in the Slovenian Union of America! Your membership is the card-carrying passport for the future of our families and this organization. Finally, each of us needs to ask ourselves, “What can I do? How can we reach younger generations? What can I do to keep the SUA vibrant?”

Thank you for reading this,  
Mary Lou Deyak Voelk, President  
Slovenian Union of America

## **Member Representatives; April 23-25, 2020**

The National Board will be meeting in Joliet, April 23-25. The Member Rep meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 25 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time. Mark your calendars!

### **Polish National Alliance Home Assoc. of Minneapolis**

In November 2019, the Executive Committee of the Polish National Alliance Home Association of Minneapolis contributed a onetime donation of \$15,000 to the SUA Educational Grant program. The PNA Home Association had recently dissolved, and board members had voted to make a charitable contribution to the SUA. Carol Rutkiewicz had been a long time PNA Home Association board member, and the PNA Executive Committee chose to honor her by contributing to the SUA, the organization she is passionate about. Carol is a member of Branch 109. Carol has become the newest member of the SUA Educational Grant committee.

Thank you to Mike Koski, Branch 109 president, who assisted in the transfer of the donation. Receiving notice of such a generous gift has been an overwhelming experience. The fact that a Polish heritage organization gifted such a donation to a Slovenian heritage organization makes it all the more noteworthy.

### **April Showers 2020**

The 2020 April's Showers of Dollars Drawing is in full swing. Be sure to read the enclosed flyer for all the details; send any amount of entries in today. These make great gifts! Who knows? You may be one of three top sellers and receive a prize! The proceeds from this fundraiser will go toward our 2023 National Convention to be held in Pueblo, Colorado. Thank you for your support!

### **SUA Website and Facebook Page**

Please document the official SUA website and home office phone number on your smartphone. [slovenianunion.org](http://slovenianunion.org) 815.727.1926. When giving out such information it must be correct.

Have you checked out the new SUA website? VP of Outreach, Annette Charron, has been working with freelance webmaster, Michelle Vigil. It has been a diligent work in progress, beginning with rebuilding the obsolete platform. Applications, documents, dates, and postings need a keen eye. An outdated website is a turn off. With a click of a mouse, the user removes the site from the screen, never to return again.

Mary Glaize, SUA Facebook Editor has done it! Her knowledge and skills are obvious. She plays many roles: managing, editing, creating responding, and promoting our Slovenian heritage and culture on the Internet. It has been said that social media helps reach specific audiences, allowing an organization to target and retarget ideal customers. Read Mary's reports. She has made SUA Facebook a study in human traits and behaviors. Oh, what power giveth the word Potica!

**From Mary Glaize:** Facebook insights provide the following Page Summary information for selectable time periods (Today, Yesterday, Last 7 days or Last 28 Days): Actions on Page, Page Views, Page Previews, Page Likes, Post Reach, Story Reach (not used), Recommendations (insufficient data), Post Engagement, Videos, Page Followers, Orders (not used). Of note for December 13 - January 9, our posts have reached 16,176 with post engagement of 9,739. Fifty-six more people have "liked" our page.

Slovenian Union of America is a public page, not a private group. The manager/editor is the only person(s) who can post on the page. Anyone can comment or add a photo to a post. A visitor can do a "Visitor Post" that the editor may share publicly on the page, or he/she can send a message with question or information to post. To date (January 10, 2020), there are 2200 who have "liked" our page. We have been lucky; all comments have been positive and informative. No one has been banned from the page.

Notes section has been added and include Slovenian Language Resources, Slovenian Music Collection, Accessing *Zarja - The Dawn* Issues, Travel Talk Basics, DNA Presentation from the SUA National Convention 2019, and Conversion Chart. The advantage is that posts do not need to be searched to find information.

Month	Number of posts	
November	84	Thanksgiving
December	140	Traditions, Giving Tuesday

### **Peak post days - November 4-13, 2019:**

November 4 post at 12:10: "Christmas is coming, and we have "potica" on our minds! Here's a short-cut..." reached 25,628 people, 2120 engagements, with 544 reactions, comments & shares. There were 93 shares on this post. It featured the recipe "Short-Cut Walnut Potica" from *The Slovenian-American Table*. Comments ranged from "sacrilegious" to "best post ever!"

Reactions	On Post		On Shares
Like	189	75	114
Love	38	16	22
HaHa	1	0	0
Wow	19	9	10
Sad	2	2	0
Comments	202	45	157
Shares	93	93	0

1576 Post Clicks

684 Photo Views

### **What attracts people and responses:**

Type of Post	Avg. Reach	Avg. Engagement
Photos	975	73 /58
Status	802	4/24
Link	705	58/35
Shared Video	455	14/14



Slovenian Union of America Facebook fans are from 40 countries – most are from USA, Slovenia, Canada, Australia, Germany, Italy, Austria, the UK, Argentina, Croatia, and Brazil. The fans speak 15 languages. We reach people in 48 countries where 46 languages are spoken. People are engaged in 26 countries and speak 13 languages. People who live in cities who view the page are in Ohio, Minnesota, Colorado, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, and Indiana.

**These are averages for current reporting period as kept by Facebook Insights:**

		Ages						
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
Fans (2,200)	Women	71%	1%	7%	11%	15%	21%	
	Men	27%	.6%	4%	5%	6%	7%	
Reached 17K	Women	65%	2%	7%	11%	15%	16%	
	Men	34%	1%	5%	6%	7%	7%	
Engaged 800	Women	75%	.8%	2%	7%	13%	33%	
	Men	23%	.3%	2%	3%	4%	9%	

SUA post for the week ending January 10, 2020 reached 6.9K and had 1.7K engagements. We average almost 2K each day with prime hours from 3AM to 9PM Pacific time.

Information about Slovenian Union of America and our presence is getting known. I need the help of SUA members to ensure continued success and growth of this page. Your personal involvement is needed. I continue to hope for more viewers and reactions to this page.

To je to, (this is it)  
Mary Lou Deyak Voelk  
SUA President



Spring 2020

# Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation

## Applications for School Year 2020-2021

Applications for school year 2020-2021 will be available on Palm Sunday, April 5, 2020 in St. Vitus Parish Auditorium, 6111 Lausche Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44103. Preference is given to incoming college freshmen with most grants/scholarships awarded on a one-time basis, based on available funding.

For those not living in the vicinity, **2020** applications will be available by submitting a request here: Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation, c/o President, 6019 Lausche Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44103. A completed application with **all requested documentation must be returned to the same address no later than April 26, 2020.** Interested individuals may contact Stane Kuhar, President, SWUSF, at (216) 361-1444 during normal business hours, Monday to Friday for additional information.

### Scholarship Requirements:

Approved applicants of the SWUSF program must be attending (or will attend) an accredited college, university, or technical institution in the USA as a full-time student in good standing. The following are required:

1. A complete transcript with aggregate grade point average to date; if incoming college freshmen, also need ACT/SAT test scores.
2. One, prefer, two letters of recommendation from teacher, counselor, parish pastor, branch officer, etc.
3. Completed application (a one-page application).
4. Concise essay to consist of no more than 150 words; goals, etc.
5. Evidence of being a member of SUA or in process of applying to a branch of SUA.
6. Committed to performing community service hours as directed by SWUSF.
7. Approved applicants must be of Slovenian descent but be an American citizen.

# Donations

*Thank you! - Hvala lepa!*

## **\$500 Donation**

ANONYMOUS, Educational Grant  
ANONYMOUS, Cultural Grant

## **\$200 Donation**

Barbara M. Louthan, 093, SUA  
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William Zerial, 099, Building Improvements

## **\$173 Donation**

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# *Cvetna nedelja*

## **Palm Sunday**

*From The Slovenian-American Table*



*Rose Chepeck and June Znidorka, Branch 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of the Christian Holy Week, commemorating the triumphant day that Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey and was warmly greeted by crowds wildly waving palm branches. In churches across Slovenia, Palm Sunday processions reenact this celebration in much the same way, but since you won't find many palm trees growing in the hillside slopes, local greenery is substituted. The custom of using locally grown evergreen sprigs and shaping them into ornate beautiful bundles or butare is a resplendent substitute, unique to Slovenia.

In creating these traditional ornaments, sprigs and branches of local greenery are bound up with vibrant colored ribbons. The adornments seem to vary somewhat dependent on regions, but many are embellished with added greenery, such as box, twigs of heather,

honeysuckle, spring flowers, and brightly colored strips of wood shavings. Some butare are sprays easily held in one's hands; others are 5-6 feet in length.

The plaited bundles of spring greenery are taken to the church to be blessed, used in the Palm Sunday procession, and then taken home to hang on the wall for the coming year. The ancient pagan and later Christian beliefs were that these blessed butare were used to protect the homes, family, livestock, and crops. The butare are displayed in the home all year long, and then replaced the following Palm Sunday.

The crafting of these beautiful bundles is an enduring tradition that continues to be preserved in Slovenian homes today.





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- ✓ Educational Grant and Cultural Grant Opportunities
- ✓ Research both of SUA’s historical and genealogical resources – the *Ivana Project* and the *Matti Register*, both long-term scanning projects of member documents since 1926.
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# Slovenian Organizations All Around the World:

## *Keeping the Slovenian Spirit Alive in So Many Ways*

by Dejan Valentinčič  
[dejan.valentincic@asef.net](mailto:dejan.valentincic@asef.net)

**Dejan Valentinčič**, PhD is an Assistant Professor of constitutional law and political science at European Faculty of Law and School of Advanced Social Studies, Nova Gorica, Slovenia. He also serves as the head of the research group of the Institute ASEF for education and research and is an advisor to the minister for Slovenians abroad in the government of the Republic of Slovenia.

As a teenager growing up in Slovenia, I became very much interested in Slovenians living around the world. During my high school years, I decided I would like to visit all large Slovenian communities around the world. This decision took me almost fifteen years, but by the time I turned 30, I had spent some time in Argentina, Australia, Canada, USA, and many European countries. Visiting and researching Slovenians around the world became my hobby, research interest, and eventually also my part-time job. Over time, I developed a special interest in Slovenian organizations and the ways in which thousands of volunteers try their best to keep the Slovenian traditions and culture alive.

In 2015, I spent a semester as a visiting researcher at Cleveland State University in Ohio. During that time, I got to know the Slovenian Union of America (SUA). During SUA's Chicago national convention in 2015, I was visiting the city, and just by chance, I attended the Saturday evening celebration at the convention. I knew it right away: SUA is very important for the history and for the future of American Slovenians, so I must learn more about it. When a friend sent me the information about this year's convention in Cleveland, a very strong desire came over me to attend and see all the programs firsthand. I am very grateful to the SUA leadership (especially Mary Lou Voelk, Kathleen Ferrante, Bernadette Fitzsimmons,



*Argentina: Children in “narodne noše” (traditional outfit) in the pilgrimage center Lujan. Every year in May Slovenians from Argentina gather in Lujan. (Note: Dejan in the middle.)*



and Robert Kuhel) for making my visit possible and also for awarding me a cultural grant. After coming home, I wrote articles about SUA and its convention for various Slovenian newspapers.

### **Slovenian Communities in Different Countries Couldn't Be More Varied**

When I visited Slovenians in Argentina, I was amazed by all of the organizations sponsored by Slovenians in the country. Just in Buenos Aires alone, six different Slovenian national homes and one joint Slovenska hiša (Slovenian house) for common events exist. Five out of six homes still have schools for children every Saturday. The big difference in Argentina when compared to other Slovenian diaspora communities is that the Slovenian language is still very important there. Slovenian communities in Argentina put a lot of effort into keeping the language alive with the youngest generation. They are very active also in other fields. In the last 75 years, they have published more than 70 different newspapers and magazines in the Slovenian language.

The story of the Slovenian community in the province of Entre Rios, Argentina couldn't be more different from the rest of the country. About 50 big Slovenian families moved there in the decade after 1879. Every family received a lot of land for farming. But the value of preserving the Slovenian culture brought from their homeland was not recognized at that time. As a result, within one generation the Slovenian immigrants were completely assimilated into the Argentinian culture. Only a distant memory that their ancestors came from the Austrian Empire remained. One hundred years later in the 1990's, one individual discovered that he and his fellow immigrants were not Austrian, but Slovenian. He started writing books and informing people of their history. Today there is a large Slovenian community in Entre Rios. They have two associations, many monuments, regular Slovenian events, various streets that are named for the Republic of Slovenia, and the children in schools have pen pals from Slovenia. After one hundred years of being completely assimilated, they became very proud Slovenians.



*Argentina: A monument in Parana, Entre Rios. They put all Slovenian family names there so that people who don't know that they are of Slovenian origin would see it.*

There is a large Slovenian community also in Australia. Between 1960 and 1980 they built an impressive infrastructure with many clubs, churches, and other organizations. Unfortunately, today the first generation is dying out while the second and third generations don't come to the clubs often enough to keep them alive. Some organizations were considering selling buildings; however, since they are registered as non-profit, the proceeds from any sale would go to the state. These complications have caused them to seek different solutions. In Adelaide, a Slovenian organization got a new president a couple of years ago. She figured out that the youngsters prefer to



*Argentina: Every Saturday there are five schools in Slovenian language in Buenos Aires. Before the classes start they raise the Slovenian flag and sing the Slovenian anthem.*



*Australia: Young girls serving coffee and sweets after Slovenian Mass in Sydney.*

come to the club if there are events for them only. So one Sunday every month she organizes “Catch up Sunday,” and the club is fuller again.



*Australia: Slovenian theater play in Melbourne.*



*Australia: Slovenian club Planinka in Brisbane went for sale just in days when I was writing this article. Not having enough volunteers was the reason why members decided to sell it.*

In Europe, most Slovenians live in Germany. They haven't built much mostly because the German Catholic Church preferred for them to attend German churches instead of forming Slovenian churches. Both sides were satisfied with this kind of solution.

### **Modern trends**

In the last decade, Slovenia is facing larger emigration again. Just last year, 9.000 citizens, most of them young, left the country. The fact that the world is becoming more and more mobile with globalization is one reason, and the changing economic situation is not helping either. Young people who are looking for better-paying jobs mostly move to Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. The most educated ones, those who look for their positions at the best universities, institutes, and companies mostly move to USA, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

In any case, the interest of these young people to connect on an ethnic basis is very different today. They know the

language of the country where they move, and they get all the information on the Internet before moving; furthermore, young immigrants can talk to their family and friends on a daily basis using modern technology. As a consequence, some modern immigrants are not interested in connecting with their compatriots at all. Others just don't have the time and interest to spend all of their weekends in the company of other Slovenians. They all agree that occasional meetings, maybe a couple of times a year, are enough.

Slovenian groups that do form are not interested in investing in real estate. They see this as too big of a responsibility and an unnecessary cost. They would rather just meet in parks for picnics or in restaurants. But even this might change. When I was visiting Australia in 2017, a Slovenian group organized a morning of Slovenian language for children in Brisbane for the first time. The event was supposed to take place in the city's park. An unexpected heavy rain appeared that morning, and they had to cancel the event. There is an old Slovenian club in Brisbane. “The old Slovenians” would very much like to hand it to a younger generation because they are too old and there aren't enough of them to keep it running. Will both groups be able to join the forces in the future? Who knows?

### **ASEF**

An innovative way to connect old and new Slovenian diaspora is through the American Slovenian Education Foundation – ASEF. I am very proud to be part of it. We connect 47 professors of Slovenian origin who teach at universities all around the world. They are all willing to accept students from Slovenian or other diaspora communities for ten weeks and to work together with them. We hope that through this program, not only will students receive the knowledge from the best universities and bring it to Slovenia, but also that they will get to know Slovenians around the world and benefit from these connections in their future careers. The diaspora is a big opportunity as a “soft power” for the development of Slovenia.

At the same time we offer fellowships also for young Slovenians from all over the world to spend ten weeks in Slovenia. We hope they will make important professional ties that will last throughout their lives and keep them connected to Slovenia. The fellows get to know the country, their relatives, and other young Slovenians during their stays.

We are very happy that in the last two years some of our fellows were also members of SUA. This shows very clearly that the function of both organizations is very much complementary. Many other opportunities for future cooperation exist as well with the goal of keeping the Slovenian spirit alive by tightening the connections between Slovenians and Slovenian-Americans.





Slovenian Union of America  
**“April’s Showers of Dollars” Drawing**  
*April 2020 Fund-Raiser*



The monies received will benefit the SUA National Convention in June 2023. How the fund-raiser works: Each day in the month of April 2020, one (1) winner will be chosen to win the cash prize for that day - \$65 or \$200. In addition, the person who sold that day’s winning ticket will win \$10. The daily winner and the seller can be the same person and win both prizes.

The winners chosen on April 1 (“April No Fool’s Day”), April 12 (“Easter”), and April 30 (“Here Come May Flowers”), will win \$200 each. In addition, the top sellers (1st, 2nd, and 3rd places) will win \$150, \$100, and \$50 respectively. A minimum of 300 entries must be sold. This is a WINNING opportunity for everyone!


**Good Luck!**



**Top Seller Prizes**

1st Place: \$150  
 2nd Place: \$100  
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APRIL 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> \$200 Prize	<b>2</b> \$65 Prize	<b>3</b> \$65 Prize	<b>4</b> \$65 Prize
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**\$10.00 per entry**

Cash prizes totaling **\$2,955**

Your “April’s Showers of Dollars” entry will be eligible for all daily drawings in the month of April 2020. Sellers of the winning entries will receive \$10 as an award for their selling efforts. The daily drawing amount and the seller’s \$10 prize will be mailed to the winners of record. A complete list of winners will appear in a future issue of *Zarja—The Dawn*.

If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Duris at (330) 467-2281 or dcduris@gmail.com.

**Thank you for your support!**

**Entry Form (Copies Accepted)**  
**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

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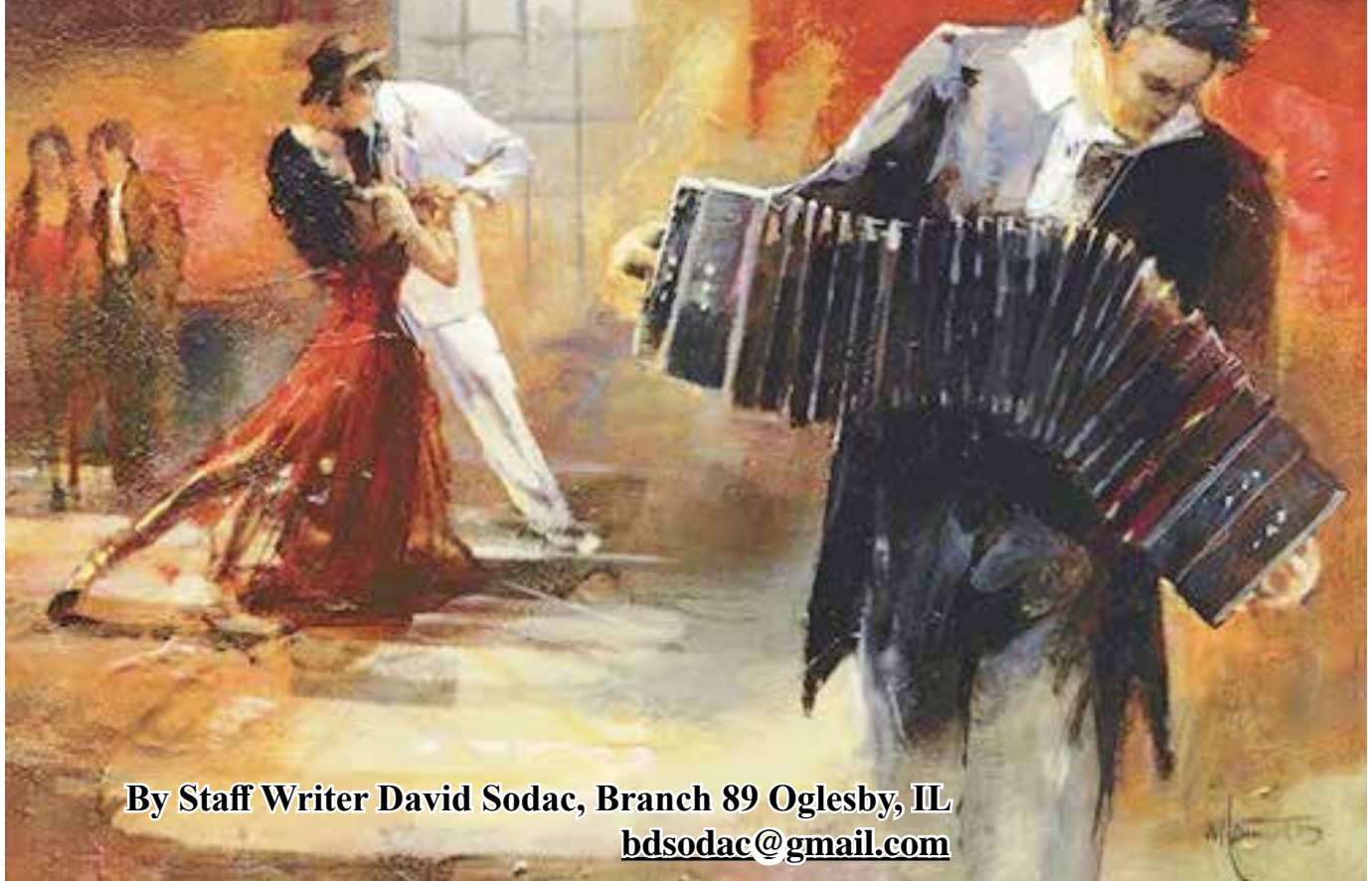
**Seller’s Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Branch Number and Location:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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Please complete form and mail with your check in the amount of \$10 **payable to SUA**.  
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# Polka Takes on Tango

## The South American Slovenes



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

Two musical instruments, the Argentinian bandoneon and the Slovenian concertina, are the essential instruments for the Argentine tango and the Slovenian polka. They both are synonymous with creating the sounds and heart of the tango and the polka. These instruments are played by holding the instrument between both hands and pushing in or pulling out while pressing on the buttons with the fingers. There does seem to be a logical connection of the sounds between these two folk dance traditions. The connection may be the decades of immigrants arriving in Argentina from the Eastern European nations living side by side with the native Argentinians. Together they helped forge new Argentine traditions, perhaps like the lively tango. The tango originated in the 1880s in Argentina about the same time as the first wave of Slovenians were arriving in South America. Could it be that it was this mixing of cultures that created the Argentine tango? After all, the tango has been referred to as “the music of immigrants.”

Slovenian-Americans have generally taken for granted that America was the dream destination for many of our arriving ancestors. U.S. Census reports showed almost

200,000 ethnic Slovenes had immigrated to North America. South America holds the second highest influx of Slovene immigrants. South America became a very attractive destination for thousands escaping homeland situations and seeking new beginnings. Sometimes I wonder how ethnic Slovenians in the late 19th century had the money and the means to be able to relocate to places like North and South America! Most emigrants lived scantily off their lands. They definitely had the motives under varied decades of Fascist, Nazi, and Communist persecution. It's important to understand that the world was transforming around them. Industrialization and urbanization were impacting the landscape of the world and its needs. There was increased mobility through the expansion of railroads. By 1870, the Austro-Hungarian Empire had already established an extensive rail system. Then in 1895, additional train routes had been constructed which established Ljubljana as a major transportation hub to shipping ports in Bremen, Hamburg, Le Havre, Liverpool, and Trieste. The train station area on Kolodvorska Street became a swarm of travel agents operating from store-front offices. In the early immigration years of the late 1800s, Brazil and Ar-



gentina began heavily recruiting Slovenes with offers of free travel transportation and guaranteed jobs with good pay. Land was cheap and plentiful. Early ethnic Slovenian settlers in both the North and South America continents had strong work ethics and proved themselves to be culturally adaptable and extremely dependable.



Greatly contributing to the migration to South America were the needs to fulfill the employment demands of the continent's emerging industries. While South America was undergoing important political transformations, its export market was rapidly expanding worldwide. The growth was particularly evident in Argentina, where the increased expansion of raising commercial livestock and agricultural products stimulated the developing market. Companies were in dire need of laborers to meet the export demands. Argentina was also a country offering an abundance of fertile agricultural land with a soothing, warm climate. Moreover, the Argentinian government was very welcoming to immigrants. Temporary housing in hostels was arranged for the weary arrivals. Government-organized programs helped dispatch new arrivals to areas of the country needing workers. Argentina emerged as the new migration destination in South America.

The Slovenes arrived in South America in distinct waves starting at the end of the 19th century into the mid-20th century. The first waves were immigrants from the Prekmurje region and the Hungarian Slovenes. "Brazilian Fever" had hit the Littoral region on the Adriatic coast after the phylloxera epidemic destroyed most of the vineyards used for the making of wine, causing an economic decline. Recruitment pamphlets advertising cheap land for sale in Brazil attracted thousands of Italians and Slovenians to take advantage of the offers.

The second migrant wave were the Slovenes in the 1920's escaping Italian fascist persecution. The Kingdom of Italy took hold of the region after World War I in accordance

with the agreement of the Treaty of London. The fascist government expanded its borders into the dismantled Austro-Hungarian Empire and began an ethnic cleansing as a process of "italianizing" the residents. The fascists removed all political and cultural rights of the resident Slovenians. The slightest incidents of discontent observed by the fascist gendarme warranted the arrest, mistreatment, and imprisonment of the residents for months. People were dragged from their homes for rumors. Any persons who served in the Austro-Hungarian army were considered prisoners of war and hauled off to concentration camps. The Austrian Littoral county regions of Gorizia, Gradisca, Trieste, and Istria were impacted the most. It was estimated that around 30,000 Slovenes sought migration to Argentina as an escape from the harsh conditions in their homeland.

The third wave was comprised of Slovenes who were politically conscious immigrants that settled in Argentina after 1945 to escape Communist persecution. Thousands of refugee families had fled the Communist takeover of Slovenia in 1945. They were meagerly making an existence in temporary camps throughout Austria and Germany. Franc Pernišek, one of those residents in the refugee camps, maintained a personal diary of his harrowing experiences awaiting the end of WWII. His diary was included in a manuscript entitled *The Slovenian Phoenix*, written by John Corsellis and published in 2009. In January 1947, Franc entered into his diary that in the New Year "a tiny, tiny, shining warm ray of hope lit up the cold darkness today." The refugee camp





*“What no one can rob us of is our faith, the Slovene culture, and our eternally beautiful Slovene songs... this is our whole wealth.”*

director had shared that he received news from an émigré Slovene priest living in Buenos Aires. A mass emigration plan to Argentina may put an end to the displaced Slovenes' current misery. The émigré priest was Fr. Janez Hladnik. He wrote that he had an audience with the President of Argentina, General Peron, about the settlement of Slovene refugees into his country, and the President has promised to receive all of the Slovene refugees. The priest added, “Tell the people not to become discouraged... There are people in the world who want to help us, not with words, but doing something practical to rescue us.” The Argentinean Government issued permission for the settlement of 10,000 Slovenes into Argentina. The cities of Buenos Aires, Greater Buenos Aires, San Carlos de Bariloche, and Mendoza, along with the smaller communities of Rosario, San Miguel de Tucumán, and Paraná became the concentrated areas for the arriving Slovenians. Franc Pernišek, with his wife and two small children, was one of those who found a welcome in Argentina. While living in Argentina for over forty years, Franc continued to make entries into his diary concluding, “What no one can rob us of is our faith, the Slovene culture, and our eternally beautiful Slovene songs... this is our whole wealth.”

As in most North American cities where the Slovenes settled, the newly arriving immigrants in South America clustered together in small neighborhoods, supporting each other and relying on the comfort of familiar culture, customs, and language. The earlier arriving immigrants helped the newer arrivals with locating housing, banking, and understanding cultural differences. Most of these Slovene communities built social clubs or “doms” where they would gather regularly. Just as they did throughout America, these clubs served as cultural, social, sporting, and religious centers. The Slovenes in Argentina not only maintained their native language but helped each other learn to speak Spanish. In 2014, Slovenian author Brina Svit wrote a tribute to the Slovenians from Argentina in her novel *Slovenski obraz (The Slovenian Face)*. It included life stories of Slovenians living in Argentina. One of the thoughts from the book refers to the concept of being a victim. Those that had emigrated from Slovenia strived to preserve everything Slovenian. Nonetheless, Ms. Svit expressed that the next generation of their descendants found themselves in a vacuum. They had no understanding of Slovenia and its struggles. Yet, they also were not Argentinians. The young descendants were expected to agree with their fathers' perceptions of the Slovene history, often reflecting the experiences their fathers encountered under

the Fascist, Communist, Nazi or Nationalist struggles. Brina Svit emphasized, “It had to be the whole package, everything or nothing!”

Eventually, associations were created to help organize and provide a sense of structure to the scattered Slovenes. One such organization was The Zedinjena Slovenija (United Slovenia). It was originally established in 1948 with the intent of focusing all of its efforts on receiving and helping new immigrants. It continues to operate and has evolved into what became the umbrella organization promoting numerous cultural, social, and religious organizations. Zedinjena Slovenija publishes weekly newsletters in the Slovene language called *Svobodna Slovenija (Free Slovenia)* in which news from the Slovene communities in Argentina, Slovenia, and the Slovenian diaspora around the world is published.

Most of Slovenian-Argentiniens live in or around Buenos Aires, a city with 15 million inhabitants. The Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia is located in Buenos Aires. Argentina has the services of several established Slovenian societies and Slovenian Houses (Slovenski dom) offering support and services. Most of the Slovenian homes offer Saturday Slovenian language classes, choirs, theatre groups, sports activities, and folklore groups. Holy Masses are offered in the Slovenian language. Mariana Poznič, a descendant of a Slovenian refugee, is extremely active in the Slovenian community. She is a lawyer and a legal interpreter in Buenos Aires. Mariana is a committee member of the umbrella organization United Slovenia (Zedinjena Slovenija) that brings together all the Slovenian societies and associations in Argentina. Most of the work done by this organization is pro bono and performed after the volunteers'



*Mariana Poznič in Slovene Choir.*



*Slomšek dom.*

day jobs or on weekends. She also is actively involved as a volunteer at the Slomšek Society (Slomškov dom) in Ramos Mejia. The Slomšek Society (Slomškov dom) was founded in 1961. It offers a place where old and young can strengthen their “Slovenianness.” The Slomšek Society is named after

Blessed Anton Martin Slomšek, who was beatified by Pope John Paul II. He was the first ever beatified Slovene. The Slomšek Society’s overarching goals are to educate their members in caring for the preservation and strengthening of the Slovenian national consciousness and to raise their cultural understanding of the Slovenian spirit. Several



*Young adults learning to make potica.*

language course, the students have an opportunity to travel to Slovenia where they attend to a two-week course of language and become familiar with their ancestors’ homeland.



*Blessed Anton Martin Slomšek.*

centers offer a Saturday secondary school for youths of ages ranging from 13 to 18. The programs are all held in the Slovene language. The majority of the youth involved can surprisingly speak Slovene quite fluently, in spite of normally speaking Spanish among themselves. At the end of the



The plights, adjustments, and needs of the South American Slovene immigrants all closely paralleled their brothers and sisters in North America. They held onto their motherland’s ideals, customs, morals, and faith. They helped each other make adjustments in their new surroundings. They continually hung onto old traditions, with the older generations reminding the younger generations to socialize and educate each other on the ways of their new culture, while not forgetting their old culture. They strived for the best out of both worlds. There is a haunting song from Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice’s musical *Evita*. The song title is “Don’t Cry for Me Argentina,” and one of the refrains is “The truth is I never left you.” This controversial Broadway and movie musical was set in Argentina and portrayed the rise of Juan Peron’s wife, Evita. Imagine, though, with a substitution of just one word, it could have easily applied to the Slovenians in Argentina and be re-titled as “*Don’t Cry for Me Slovenia!*”... “*The truth is I never left you.*”

All Slovenian immigrants hold memories of their homeland dear in their hearts. The Slovenian/Argentinian lawyer Mariana Poznič discussed earlier was quoted in the May 2016 edition of the e-magazine *Slovenci.si*, expressing: “Life is much richer when you feel that you have two homelands that are your real home. That there is a place in another part of the world that has always been known to you in your heart. Where you can go from home, to home.”





# Slovenian Union of America

## Across America - Branch Reports

### BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

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

On December 10, Branch 1 gathered together for their annual Christmas party held at the KC Hall in Sheboygan. The weather cooperated, and with mild temperatures and no snow to deal with, it was the largest attendance we ever had - over 50 people. There was a short meeting, during which time elections were held for the new officers and “memory angels” were presented to family members who had a loved one pass in 2019.



The dinner was catered by a local establishment, and the dessert table consisted of homemade cookies brought in by the officers along with the “pink tea” to warm up the tummies. Not even a crumb was left on any of the holiday plates for Santa.

We had a few guests from Branch 43 in attendance - Jackie Smith and Barbara and Jeff Martinka. They were gracious enough to share their lyrical talents and sang a few Slovenian songs and then asked members from the SSC&M church choir to join them. What a wonderful treat!

For the last year or so we have been trying to incorporate a little “learn some Slovenian words” during our meetings. At this year’s event, our President, Mary Sandwick, read the poem “Twas the Night Before Christmas” with



a different take on the words. Twenty-eight words were chosen from the poem, and as each English specific word was read, one of the Board members (who were dressed in traditional Slovenian costumes) held up a paper paddle with the Slovenian word printed on it. The word was pronounced and then the group repeated it. Lots of smiles and laughter was found throughout the hall. Whoever thought that learning a new language could be such fun?

Also, in keeping with a tradition we started a few years ago, many bags of personal hygiene products were collected along with hats, scarves, and mittens (totaling 92 and most handmade). The items were taken to a local food





pantry to be distributed to those in need. The holidays are the time to be grateful for what we have and to share with others, and we are to be an example of this as we “Let our Slovenian heritage shine” for all the world to see.



The evening ended with some traditional Christmas carols and the beautiful “Silent Night” sung in Slovenian for the last song.

MARY ANN SCHELLINGER

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### BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information:

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

Branch 3 met on November 5; Andrea DeGarbo was the hostess and served apple and pumpkin pie. Mary Frances Kelley brought the mystery gift which was won by Andrea DeGarbo.

On November 16, a Branch 3 lunch was held at Mangiano’s Little Italy in the Denver Tech Center. Of the approximately 140 members in Branch 3, around 40 live

in Northern Colorado, so this was our first northern outreach for those members. Eleven individuals attended the lunch, but many other Denver-area members sent emails expressing interest in future Denver area gatherings. Members attending the lunch had a lot of fun discussing their Slovenian heritage and preliminary plans for the SUA National Convention to be held in Pueblo in 2023. We exchanged email addresses and talked about meeting again in Denver in 2020.

The annual Slovenian Heritage Dinner was held at St. Mary’s church hall on Saturday, November 2. As usual, the 300 tickets were sold out weeks before the dinner. Slovenian specialties that were served included *Jesperen* (bean and barley soup), *Kislo zelje* (sauerkraut), *Sarma* (stuffed cabbage rolls), *Krajnska klobasa* (klobase), *Krvava klobasa* (blood sausage), *Bojon kisli krompir* (Bojon potato salad), and rolls. Dessert included apple, cheese, and cottage cheese and pineapple strudels. Blake Fontenay, the Opinion Editor of the *Pueblo Chieftain*, wrote an interesting piece about Slovenians in Pueblo; the article can be accessed here: <https://www.chieftain.com/opinion/20191110/good-sarma-taste-of-slovenian-culture>.

The Christmas luncheon was held on Tuesday, December 3 at Park East Restaurant with over 30 attendees. Eileen Kaplan gave a presentation about St. Nick, and everyone went home with a Santa surprise from the gift exchange. Madeleine Khosla provided goody bags filled with small bottles of wine, candy, toiletries, and other treats at each table setting.

Regular branch monthly meetings are scheduled for February 4, March 3, and April 7. The Member of the year luncheon will be held on May 5.

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON  
& BARBARA KARLINGER



**Branch 3’s lunch in Denver: (from left) John Finn, Maureen Crocker, Cherryl Andrews, MT Karlinger, Jeanne Finn, Mary Lou Egan, Annette Charron, Cheryl Holland, Sara Kihn, Terry Tomsick, and Bridget Cunningham.**

## BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana

Greetings all Branch 5 Members! As I write this, the temperature is falling, snow is in the forecast, and my tulips and daffodils are peeking through the soil! I have a pot of soup simmering on the stove, with ribana kasa drying on a cloth, waiting to be added to the broth. My freezer is full of Fon's homemade klobase, and pans of sarma... Let it snow, snow, snow!!!

Here's a little update on a couple of SWU Scholarship Winners - Martina Dragan Schuett and Betsy Fon Walker. Martina is a Sales Representative, mother of two, and enjoys weightlifting in her spare time. She holds the Indiana USPA State Record for deadlift and bench, benching 181 lbs. and deadlifting 402 lbs.! Martina's next goal is to compete nationally and inspire women to powerlift.



*Martina Schuett with her USPA Powerlifting Medals.*

Betsy is the Owner/Designer of KITCHEN and INTERIORS, specializing in kitchen and bath designs, and storage solutions for closets, offices, and garages, with design offices in Indianapolis and Terre Haute. She is also on the



*Betsy Walker, owner of KITCHENS and INTERIORS Design Studio.*

Interior Architecture Design Profession Advisory Board at Indiana State University. Where are some of your Branch's SWU Scholarship recipients today?

We had a wonderful turnout for our Christmas Dinner and for Sausage Feast! Last year, Branch 5 members cooked struklji, pork roasts, and lasagna at Friday night dinners at the Slovenian National Home, volunteered at the Annual Nash Picnic, and helped out at several funeral dinners held at the Nash. Thank you to all who have helped through donations of food or money, especially those who donated to the New Roof Fund for the Nash. We need all of you to keep our Haughville Slovenian roots strong and growing!

Please keep our members in your thoughts and prayers, especially those going through health issues or loss of family.

Have a Blessed Easter and Spring!

MARY, KAREN & PHYLLIS

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**SUA Cultural Grant:** *For historical research; for sponsoring heritage activities.*  
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*Pat Schager, Pat Figurowski and Marla Lustik converse at December 15 Christmas party, as Jeanne Warsaw tends the gift table.*

**BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois**

Contact Information: Georgene Agnich  
 773.205.1326/[jameschaible1469@att.net](mailto:jameschaible1469@att.net)

We started the New Year with the Installation of Officers ceremony conducted by our Spiritual Advisor Fr. Tom Paul on a very cold January 19 at St. Joseph Parish Hall. Members enjoyed the buffet dinner prepared by our 2020 officers: President Charlene Kobe, Vice-President Jeanne Warsaw, Treasurer Robyn Coyne, Secretary and *Zarja* reporter Georgene Agnich, Auditor Jo Lustik, Auditor Jean Herbst, Auditor Mary Kay Demick, and Sergeants-At-Arms Sandy Kehring and Nancy Horwath. We then held our business meeting.

Some 35 members attended our December 15 Christmas Party at Merichka’s Restaurant and shared the Christmas spirit with delicious food and a gift exchange. Each member received a holiday mug, while a few lucky members won the table poinsettias in our raffle.

Florida member Jonita Ruth was delighted to see photos of fellow branch members taken by Pat Figurowski at our November 19 meeting. Pat thoughtfully took cellphone photos of us before the meeting and during refreshments, then sent the photos to Rosanne Ruth to share with Jonita. Our guest speaker that night, Foluke Akanni of the Citizens Utility Board, told us how to protect ourselves from telephone scams and “robot calls.”

Nominations for Member of the Year are underway. Our St. Joseph Table will be held on March 10, and our annual

Bakery Sale will be Saturday and Sunday, March 28 and 29, at St. Joseph Church after all the Masses.

Three lucky winners of our Fall Raffle were chosen at our October 15 meeting: Judy Hann (\$300), Jeanne Buzinski (\$200), and Claire Posega (\$100).

GEORGENE AGNICH

**BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois**

Zivijo! Happy New Year from Branch 24! As I type this report, I’m thinking back one year when most of the Midwest was experiencing a polar vortex. This winter, so far, not so much. What a difference a year makes.

We had a nice turnout for our annual All Soul’s Day Cemetery Walk in St. Vincent’s Cemetery. The brickwork and landscaping were finished in time and looked so nice. This completes the project.



*Wilson Landscaping, Mary Mecum, and Debbie Pohar.*



In early December our branch met for our annual Christmas party. The weather cooperated for a beautiful evening of dinner and friendship in front of a warm fireplace and beautiful holiday decorations. A few members of Branch 89 joined in our celebration. Officers for the coming year will remain the same as last year. Thank you, ladies. We are ready for a new year. Please provide our president, Mary Mecum, with your email address so that you can be kept up-to-date on meeting dates and times.



*Shirley Eide and Guest, Linda Bokus.*

Our dear member, Paula Illman, passed away unexpectedly on December 12. She had worked part-time at Letterkraft Printers where the *Zarja* is printed and also volunteered at Lily Pads resale shop. Paula was a member of St. Hyacinth's Choir. She is survived by 2 sons, 3 grandchildren,



*Branch 89 guests, Barbara Bruch, Nancy Henkel, and Mitzi Banich.*

and her brother, Ken, and sister-in-law, Barb Krogulski who is also a member of Branch 24. Our members honored Paula with prayers and the traditional red carnation at her memorial visitation. Keep her family in your prayers.

DIANE DATA



*Branch 24 Christmas Party.*



## BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Contact Person: Jan Gehm

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

Where did 2019 go? 2020 really crept up on us, and I hope it will be a wonderful year for all of you.

Martinovanje was another success in 2019, thanks to the efforts of Betty Ann Kolesari and Helen Frohna and their committee. Everyone had a great time. The music was toe tapping and the dinner delicious. We look forward to another one in 2020. Many thanks to KSKJ for awarding us a Cultural Grant for this event. It was most appreciated.

It is with a sad note that we inform you of the death of June Znidorka. June was a very dedicated member of our branch and was a willing hand. She was very proud of her Slovenian heritage and was pictured wearing her Slovenian Costume in *The Slovenian-American Table* cookbook (see page 8 of this issue). She will be missed by all of us as well as her two children, Jean and Jerry.



Another dedicated member of our branch and husband of our President, Jan Gehm, passed away after an automobile accident. Tom was Jan's right hand at all of our meetings and events. He was a very quiet man and always eager to help in any way he could. In addition to his wife, Jan, Tom is survived by his brother, Bob, brother-in-law, Jim Luzar, and many other dear relatives and friends. Rest in peace, Tom.

Election of officers took place at our October meeting and all officers consented to remain in their respective positions. Remember that our meetings are held each month on the fourth Wednesday at the West Allis Library at noon. We are in the process of working on the calendar for 2020, so please refer to it for special events. We hope to see you there!

MICI BREGANT





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

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

On the arts front, we have been incredibly lucky in New York this winter. In November, our resident artist Eva Petric was invited to perform in the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season of the United Solo Festival (the world's largest solo theatre festival). She transported us to another universe in her award-winning piece "Eden, Transplanted," which was the winner of the Best Performance Art Award in 2017. We are so incredibly proud of Eva and her ability to continually create extraordinary art. Follow her artistic journey at [evapetric.com](http://evapetric.com).



We are also celebrating American-Slovenian conductor Karen Kamenšek's debut at New York's Metropolitan Opera in Philip Glass' *Akhmaten*. Born to Slovenian parents from Maribor, Karen Kamenšek will have been the only female orchestral and opera conductor in the 2019/20 season at the Met. This is an incredible achievement, and one we hope our members were able to witness.

Our December gathering was a wonderful success! We had 3 panelists this time around - Ana Kobal (former Slovenian alpine skier Olympian and Investment Banking Analyst at Goldman Sachs), Sarah Marn (neuroscience major at NYU), and Katja Lumbar (Senior Director at Teva Pharmaceuticals) - who discussed their paths and experiences in the US. The discussion was moderated by Andrej Košmrlj (Assistant Professor, Princeton). There was a networking reception afterwards.

On the news front, we are excited to announce that our Slovenian language classes resume again in February. If you are interested in participating, please contact Stephanie Owens at [nycslovenianunion@gmail.com](mailto:nycslovenianunion@gmail.com) for information and details.

KATHLEEN SIMMONDS

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

Branch 100 in Southern California had a delightful Christmas luncheon at Fratello's Italian Restaurant in San Clemente in December. The nicely attended event included all ages from children to seniors in their 80s and 90s. It's wonderful to have this type of participation where different generations take part and all come together to enjoy an afternoon together.



*Branch 100 (front to back): Christmas luncheon - Ana Lorenzo, Norbert Bernhardt, Connie Gorenz, Dorothy Jerneycic, and Arnold Koci.*

We look forward to having another gathering in the spring. It is the event you have all been so patiently waiting for... a Slovenian sausage demonstration. Bring your aprons on Saturday, March 21 at 10:00 a.m. at the Fontana Slovene Hall at 8425 Cypress Avenue in Fontana. Dinner will be \$22/adult. This adult fee includes 5 pounds of sausage for you to take home and for the provided lunch of sausage, sauerkraut, potato salad, and potica. Water and coffee will be provided. Beverages will be available for purchase at the bar. Child's lunch will be available for \$6/child.

What an unbelievable deal! Please RSVP for this luncheon by Saturday, March 14 to Teresa Koci at 949.246.1983 or [tkoci@cox.net](mailto:tkoci@cox.net). A huge THANK YOU to ERIC WOOD for putting his efforts into making this a special event! Also thanks to Branch President, Teresa Koci, for keeping us together so faithfully.

JEAN KOCI



*Fred Mlakar entertaining Branch 100 at our Christmas gathering.*

## BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

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

Several members met up at KSKJ 's Washington, DC Miklavževanje (St. Nicholas) event in December to catch up on news and SUA plans for 2020. It was a pleasure to meet Jonna Sanders and her family. Jonna is of Slovenian descent, and we look forward to welcoming her to join SUA and be a guest speaker this year. She is passionate about beekeeping and is President and COO of AZ Hives of North America LLC, and would love to discuss the impact of fighting climate change, one apiary at a time.

Member Tony Flaynik drove out from PA, and it was great conversing with him and being introduced to Jonna. Member Katja Delak has been busy traveling for work in the last year, so it was great to see her back. Nika, Bernadette and Tony are SUA members, also active with the local KSKJ Lodge 257, and welcoming these opportunities to gather for special events.

Congratulations to Tanja Nelson on the birth of her first child this past fall. We'd all enjoy meeting the baby boy and wish Tanja and her husband lots of fun adventures in parenting in years to come.

Lynn Koiner traveled to Europe, including Slovenia, late in 2019 and will tell us about some of her jaunts. The Fitzsimmons family recently returned from a wonderful short pilgrimage/trip to Rome to visit Thomas, who completed

an internship. One of the highlights of their trip was the New Year's Day Mass inside St. Peter's Basilica with Pope Francis. Sunny, warm winter days were spent visiting the Vatican Museum, the Coliseum, the Roman Forum, and side trips to Orvieto and Subiaco, learning about its history and impact on Catholicism. They regret time didn't permit to include a visit to Slovenia in winter but still hope and dream to make a separate trip during a warmer season.

We closed the year 2019 with the sad news of member John Klansek's passing. John was a charter member of Branch 108 who just happened to live in Bernadette's zip code area and had a Slovenian last name. He was delighted to join the new branch in MD and shared the last 15 years of his life with us as an active member. He frequently baked Slovenian pastries and served as treasurer for 12 years. He will be greatly missed; may he rest in the peace and grace of our Lord always.

*Vesele velikonočne praznike - Vesela aleluja z željami za veliko pirhov in potic!* Happy Easter - Alleluia, with wishes for lots of Easter eggs and potica!

Understanding **Slovenian Sayings by Bernadette:**  
**Vsaka ptica ljubi svojo gnezdo.**

Every bird loves its nest.

**Mnogim so uči bolj lačne kot želodec**

For many, their eyes are hungrier than their stomachs.

BERNADETTE FITZSIMMONS



*Standing (left to right): Nika Kovacic, Tony Flaynik, Bernadette Fitzsimmons, Jonna Sanders, unidentified.  
Front center Katja Delak.*



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

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

As I write this, the weather app on my phone claims the temperature in the Twin Cities is zero but “feels like” 17 below. Fitting for us that Miro Medved has been teaching us the song “Pozimo pa Rožico ne Cveto” (“In Winter the Flowers Don’t Bloom”). That is certainly true in Minnesota! As you read this, we can only hope that spring has sprung.



Our annual *Martinovanje* celebration in November at the home of Honorary Consul of the Republic of Slovenia Miro Medved and his wife, Karen, proved to be another resounding success. The many musical attendees sang “Živijo, oj živijo, oj živijo na svet” and “Majolka bod’ pozdravljena” as we toasted with the fruit of the vine. My mouth waters remembering the *vino*, *klobase*, and the huge potluck spread we enjoyed. Talented Hank Thunander entertained us with his accordion.



At our December member meeting, Tea Rozman Clark and her daughters Sofia (9) and Izabela (11) offered a PowerPoint presentation titled *Slovenian Summer Through Children’s Eyes* telling about their experiences attending a Slovenian grade school for a week last June. They also shared with us the poster they had made to help their



Slovenian classmates understand life in Minnesota. Later in the summer, they attended Slovenian World Congress Camps, mainly for Slovenians living abroad, but open to anyone between the ages of eight and fifteen. Along with children from all over the world with varying degrees of proficiency in the Slovenian language, they learned about Slovenian culture and about survival in the woods.

After that presentation, Tea shared information about **Green Card Voices**, a nonprofit she founded in 2013 to “build a bridge between immigrants, non-immigrants, and advocates from across the country by sharing the first-hand immigration stories of foreign-born Americans.” Immigrant stories that are shared via videos, books, exhibits, and speeches help promote understanding in the community.

Our January member meeting was cancelled due to a snowstorm, proving we live in Minnesota.

**Attention:** Finally, Twin Cities Slovenians are pleased to invite you to a special afternoon of polka music and more by Bill Koncar and the Boys on Saturday, May 16 at the Gulden’s Restaurant and Bar in Maplewood, Minnesota. The doors open at noon with the fun continuing until 3:30. If you enjoyed the event last year, do come back. If you have questions, write to Twin Cities Slovenians at [president@twincitiesslovenians.org](mailto:president@twincitiesslovenians.org).

ELAINE BARTHELEMY

### BRANCH 111 - NORTHEAST OHIO

Contact Information: Rick Tomsick 440.655.6735

Greetings to all! Our Christmas luncheon at Dubrovnik Garden was a joyous and fun event enjoyed by 34 members and guests. Rose Mary Toth flew up from Florida to join us! Joey Tomsick entertained us with his button box, and we had a surprise visit by Santa Claus! Our thanks to Cookie Maxin for providing table favors, additional presents for







door prizes, and a very tasty cake for all of us to enjoy.

Please mark your calendars for our 2020 branch meetings: Saturday, May 16; Wednesday, July 15; Saturday, October 17; and Saturday, December 12. Meetings will be at 1:00 p.m. We're researching meeting locations. These locations will be communicated by email. If you wish to be called please let Rose Mary Toth know, and she'll put you on her call list. Rose Mary's phone number is 941.655.8341. Alternatively, you may contact Debbie Duris, 330.467.2281, [dcduris@gmail.com](mailto:dcduris@gmail.com).

Our next scheduled branch activity is a Mother's Day Dance on May 8, 2020, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., at the Croatian Lodge in Eastlake Ohio. Entertainment will be provided by Jeff Pecon. This event is sponsored by the Polka Hall of Fame. We have reserved a table of 10. We have three seats available, and if necessary, we can reserve another table. The cost for the dance is \$12 in advance. If you wish to enjoy a buffet dinner prior to the dance that cost, approximately \$8, will be paid at the door. Dubrovnik Gardens will provide the dinner of two meats, potato, vegetable, and dessert. This time, Debbie Duris, Cookie Maxin, Lynn McKittrick, Kathy Ferrante, Ginger Kemmerling, and Kathy and Beth Wallace are planning to attend. Treat yourself to a fun evening. Contact Debbie Duris to add your name to our table!

We'd love to hear news from our branch members and their families. Contact Rick Tomsick, 440.655.6735, [rick-tomsick@gmail.com](mailto:rick-tomsick@gmail.com), to have your news published in our branch report for the next *Zarja*.

*Vesele velikonočne praznike!*  
*Happy Easter!*

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- Sunset boat cruise on the Adriatic Sea
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- Walking tour of Ljubljana
- Meeting with genealogy expert Peter Hawlina and visit to the Archives
- Honey tasting & visit with a beekeeper
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