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Zarja

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The Dawn

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Chestnuts

Celebrating
80 Years
Zarja

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Zarja - The Dawn

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Communications for the next issue of publication:
Do you have something SWUA-related you would like to share with readers, like an event you want to let people know about or an idea for an article? We would love to hear from you! Please e-mail the editor at pohar4@aol.com. We reserve the right to edit any article submitted. It is preferable that you submit your idea for discussion prior to writing an article. Articles must be related to SWUA events or members. The deadline for articles is the 15 day of the month, 2 months preceding the issue. For example, articles for the March/April issue must be received by January 15th. Thank you.

LECTOVO SRCE

The Embassy of Slovenia participated in this year's National Flower Mart at the Washington National Cathedral. As the centerpiece of the Embassy's exhibition, they invited me to prepare a flower arrangement that depicted the culture and beauty of the "sunny side of the Alps." Nearly twenty embassies from around the world presented floral displays at the show, and the challenge was to create an arrangement that was readily identifiable as Slovenian. Designers were encouraged to use their national flowers to show a piece of their culture.

Looking into the rich history of Slovene culture, we decided to make "lectovo srce" (honey-bread heart) out of carnations. Although I have been a floral designer for many years now, making "lectovo srce" from flowers was something very special and I was grateful the Embassy gave me this opportunity. I was worried, though, because it was nearly impossible to estimate how many flowers would be required, but luckily my calculations were right. In the end, I used more than 300 carnations and the 22" heart weighed almost fifty pounds. Every ounce was worth it to see Slovenia's traditional symbol of love come alive with flowers.



The original "Lectovo srce" used to be the preferred way for young Slovenes to express their love for each other. In fact, shy young men would give the decorative honey-bread heart to their sweethearts before going to the army. The soldier would eagerly wait to see if the girl

accepted it. If she did, (often after checking herself in the mirror on the heart!) it meant that she would wait for him. The heart is still being made out of special honey-bread and decorated with colorful sugar flowers and small mirrors. Each heart carries a special message and these phrases are often taken from the Slovene national anthem or a line from a romantic poem in old Slovene language. Some of the hearts are quite amusing, such as one that reads: "Ce me noces, povej, da potrkam drugoj - If you don't want me, let me know, so I can knock on someone else's door."

"Lectovo srce" is a precious part of Slovene culture and it was a wonderful experience to present that to Americans and Slovenes living in the US, only this time with flowers.

- Valentina Gatej Webb, Branch 103

From the Editor

Throughout Slovenia, chestnuts are cooked in many dishes and roasted on the street corners in the cool months of fall and winter. Although they are time consuming to prepare, their nutty, creamy taste provides a hearty base to any dish. Chestnuts are most often served with a glass of wine



and even today Slovenians believe chestnuts will “clear wine from the head” if you drink a little too much. On our recent 10-day fact finding trip to Slovenia, we were fortunate to have chestnuts several times and yes we were served wine with our chestnuts.

Our mission was to go to Slovenia to gather as much information on Slovenian culinary, customs and crafts including traditional recipes and folklore but, also with some modern twists on old favorites. We have a dedicated team of seven that paid their own way to Slovenia and is committed to presenting our experiences and new knowledge to our readers of *Zarja* throughout our 80th anniversary year.

Another benefit of our recent trip was that we were able to visit many of the sites that are featured on the upcoming *Secrets of Slovenia* tour celebrating our 80th anniversary in May. You will not be disappointed on this trip, you will experience and see places in Slovenia that are not typically visited with large tour groups. We have made special arrangements just for you. This is a tour that should not be missed. Contact Kollander World Travel 800.800.5981 to reserve your spot.

This is such an exciting year for me, because I have so much material to share with you – pictures, recipes, articles, traditions, local folklore, etc. We are fortunate to have many friends in Slovenia that opened their doors and graciously welcomed our group, we are forever thankful to them.

- Debbie Pohar, Editor



Letter to the Editor

On October 19, 2008, Branch 20 of the Slovenian Women's Union of America celebrated their 80th anniversary in Joliet, Illinois at St. Joseph's Church. A polka mass and a banquet highlighted the festivities.



Bertha Hofer

Branch 20 members, in the spirit of SWUA, have always promoted the Slovene ideals of family values and a good citizenship. It was fitting that one of their own, Bertha Planinsek-Hofer, was honored by the Troy School District on September 23, 2008. The Board of Education dedicated their new school named Troy Hofer Elementary School in honor of Bertha and her husband Fred.

Mrs. Bertha Hofer served ten years as Mayor of the Village of Shorewood. She established quarterly luncheons with school and community officials to promote cooperation and understanding. She loved Youth-in-Government Day and established the anti-drug DARE Program. She began the CHAMPS Program to combat gang activity. In 1995 the Joliet Junior College presented her with its Prestigious Citizen's Award.

Mr. Fred Hofer (deceased in 1996) served on the Troy School Board from 1957 to 1969 and was school custodian in the 70's and 80's. The Hofers were founding members of the Troy Band Boosters. Their five children all attended Troy schools as did their grandchildren and now great-grandchildren.

Bertha Hofer has been an active member of Branch 20. She was born in Auburn, Illinois, to Slovene immigrants, Frank and Emma Matko-Planinsek. The Planinsek Family eventually settled in Joliet, Illinois where mother Emma and daughters Bertha and Irene became life-long members of Branch 20. Both girls were members of the Cadet Drill Team, founded in 1938 by their mother and Josephine Erjavec. Emma Planinsek served as Branch 20 president from 1935 to 1982. In 1975, her daughter Irene Odorizzi became the first Heritage Director and wrote the "Immigrant" column in *Zarja* for 20 years. Bertha and Irene both exemplify the Slovene-American woman.

Branch 20 can take pride in the wonderful example of citizenship lived by Bertha Hofer. She is a credit to the many SWUA members who nurture and promote their Slovenian Heritage and contribute to their communities. May the spirit of Bertha Planinsek-Hofer continue to inspire us all. - Helen Lukancic-Valerugo

National President's Message

Let's talk about 2009

Welcome to 2009, can you believe another year is upon us? What I like best about ringing in the New Year is thinking about what lies ahead and every year in SWUA-Land I feel like there is always something exciting. It's amazing when other organizations are struggling we seem to keep reinventing ourselves. Now don't get me wrong, we still have a long way to go to perfection and we do have financial struggles that need to be addressed, but I strongly believe we are on the right track for "Keeping the Slovenian Spirit Alive".

Let's talk about 2009. Does everyone realize this marks two special anniversaries for SWUA? We will be celebrating 60 years of Scholarship and then 80 years of Zarja, amazing! And to think that we were the first in both areas for Slovenian organizations. In addition, we will have another tour of authors from the Forget-me-nots Series introducing the newest book, *Anton's Circus* by Peter Svetina, in the fall.

Because of my dual role with Zarja I can tell you that the Zarja Team has been working hard on an exciting line up. We are expanding our culinary section and in the planning stages of a special celebration for Zarja with a surprise guest from Slovenia (more details to follow at a later date) and an anniversary tour to Slovenia in May.

Just recently seven of us traveled to Slovenia at our own expense to look for new stories, pictures and to work on the culinary side. We spent most of our time in kitchens throughout Slovenia, it was inspiring! I for one gained 10 pounds even though we walked daily. The food was outstanding and we learned so much. Be assured that in the issues throughout 2009 you will learn how to make these same dishes. We also had appointments with various people including the Office for Slovenes Abroad, Slovenian World Kongress, The Forget-me-nots Series group, Delo Newspaper, Moja Slovenija Magazine, and the local radio and TV station. During these visits we fascinated our

hosts with a presentation highlighting our mission to Slovenia and gave each of them a background of our organization and what we are trying to accomplish. They were very impressed with our preservation effort on the culture of Slovenia.

The people in Slovenia were wonderful and everyone wanted to help us. Because of some great friends in Slovenia, they helped make this trip possible, especially Mojca Sosteric from Kompas Travel and her husband Janez, Evald and Jana Flisar, Marija Bauer, Tatjana and Marko Kokalj, Majda and Bogdan Koren and her Aunt Annie and Brane Vidmar. These people opened their homes to us and taught us many valuable lessons about the Slovenian culture, language, people and all about kindness.

The trip to Slovenia was important to SWUA. Let's go back 80 years and talk about why we were founded. Remember at one time SWUA was only for women and it was made up of Slovenian immigrants all over the United



(Left to Right) Bonnie Pohar Prokup, Franci Feltrin from the Slovenian World Congress and Jean Ficek

States. These were ladies who left their homeland and came to America where they did not know the language or this new way of life. I remember one immigrant lady from Oglesby who did not know what a banana was, just imagine how strange everything else would be. So the organization was founded to help these immigrants become more accustomed to their new life, to fit into the American society and it also gave them a burial insurance policy, which was offered until 2000. Over time these ladies adjusted very well to their new way of life. They found shortcuts for making meals, many learned to speak English and slowly the Slovenian way of life became less and less. Then their children married non-Slovenians; they moved away from their Slovenian neighborhood and before you knew our branch meetings consisted of bingo games. How much more American can you get than that? Now, 80 years later we need to go back to our homeland to reintroduce to our members the traditions of our ancestors. Remember many of our members are no longer immigrants, many are only one quarter Slovenian. Can you imagine what 20 years will be like? As you can see, the time is now and we need to act fast before our heritage is all gone. This is exactly what we are doing. We are putting Slovenian culture and tradition at the forefront of our goals. By doing so it promotes excitement within our membership and makes others want to be a part of this. Educating ourselves on all things Slovenian is an important goal.



**Chance meeting in the salt shop in Ljubljana:
(Left to Right) Debbie Pohar, Agnes Gaber (former National Officer),
Bonnie Pohar Prokup and Karen Taylor**

Yes, we have a long way to go, but like I started off saying in the beginning, I believe we are on the right track. We have obstacles along the way with lack of funds for most ideas, but we are not letting this stop us. We actively pursue grants, we are working on a 501C3 status for the museum and we get closer every day for making our goals a reality, plus we create other ways of bringing in revenue that offers opportunities for others. I believe we can make it!

In closing, I have one important question, how many people look at you funny when you tell them tonight is chestnut night? Well, in my town it happens quite often. It's amazing how many friends I've introduced to chestnuts. This year we are so thrilled because we found a local man who said we could pick all the chestnuts we want. I wonder if this man knows just exactly how many people in my family love chestnuts, we could wipe his tree out.

Several times through out the season all the chestnut lovers in my family gather for chestnut night. Just recently we

celebrated St. Martin's Day at my parents house with wine we purchased at the Malik wine cellar in Slap, barley soup and of course chestnuts. Because we like them cooked two different ways we always prepare them to satisfy everyone by baking and the other way by boiling. I of course preferred roasted over an open fire but with an electric stove and it being to cold outside I have to settle for the boiled or baked method. Be sure to read Jenka's recipes on chestnuts in this issue.

Our family tradition of chestnut night continues until the stores no longer sell them. But for sure we have them on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This is a tradition that dates back way before my birth to my father's family.

Right now I am sure everyone is making New Year's resolutions. How about making one concerning SWUA? How about getting more involved whether its locally, nationally or for one project. It does not matter where you live or how much time you have, there are ways everyone can contribute. Remember, sending in a donation is helping, purchasing a shirt from our gift shop helps run the Heritage Museum, volunteering to clean the museum one time, filing papers, writing an article from your home computer for Zarja, organizing a branch event and the list goes on. Yes, there are many ways you can help and all this is "*Keeping the Spirit Alive*".

Best Wishes on a Wonderful 2009!

Bonnie Pohar Prokup
National President, Zveza
wprokup@aol.com



A New Branch and More!

What great news! The formation of Branch 110, Lake County, IL

An email arrived from Mary Gornik Carmody: "How do I start a new branch?" It is with pleasure the SWUA announces the formation of Branch 110, Lake County, IL. Mary has many ideas for the future of this branch. Please join them at 9:00am on Saturday, January 24, 2009 at the Ramada Inn Saddle Ridge restaurant located at 200 N

Green Bay Road, Waukegan as they begin their exciting adventure. Not limited to women, so guys make sure you show up.

For more information contact Mary

Tel: 847.354.2108

email: mary.carmody@rockymountainpotica.com

And More:

Vickie Thedos, owner of the Saddle Ridge Restaurant, is offering *Rocky Mountain Potica* as a 'special'. Now, exclusive to Lake County, you can enjoy a delicious piece of *Rocky Mountain Potica* for dessert or as an afternoon treat. Make sure you call ahead to be sure she hasn't sold out for the day. Ask about the "Potica and Coffee (or tea) Afternoon Special". Call Vickie at 847.336.6842. She can't wait to hear from you.

Vickie is the wife of a Greek immigrant and a potica lover! Her grandparents moved to Chicago from the Deep South many years ago. It is in Chicago that Vickie's grandmother

learned to make potica from a lady in the neighborhood, perhaps a Slovenian? Her grandmother began making a potica for everyone in the family at Christmas. As the grandkids and great grand kids came along it was an easy 80 poticas that she made and gave away.

Vickie can't wait to host a potica and strudel demo along with many other SWUA events with Branch 110 of Lake County, IL. Question for you: Have you ever made a "salty potica"? Could the ingredients have been ham or prosciutto, walnuts and chives and perhaps some dry cottage cheese?

Congratulations Branch 110, Lake County, IL!

Tastiest European Pastry this side of the Julian Alps

<http://www.RockyMountainPotica.com>

Welcome to Our New Members!

Chase Henry Poole, 5
Jennifer Evran, 12
Janet Oldenburg, 12
Wayne Adkisson, 20
Rachel Ferguson, 20
Rosemary Giarrante, 20
Dawn Irwin, 20
Claire Kimento, 20
Jerry Kimento, 20
Therese Kimento, 20
Mike Kompare, 20
Theres Marcic, 20
Lauren McFarland-Stiglich, 20
Pam McGuire, 20
April Morgano, 20
Frank Ostir, 20
Julie Oziemkowski, 20

Judy Philbert, 20
Jeffery Rodrigue, 20
George Rydman, 20
June M Siddon, 20
Debbie Stirnaman, 20
Patrick Welsh, 20
Shirley Johnson, 23
Kelly Klun, 23
Bonnie Nisen, 23
Barbara Schultz, 23
Paulette Tekavec, 23
Margrette Baker, 24
Melanie Wilds, 26
Anja Bucar, 33
Jeannie Somrak, 50
Faith Anne Tomsick, 50
Johanna Tomsick, 50

Zachary Tomsick, 50
Sophia Kren, 55
Carol Corbitt, 89
Margaret Elaine Kelley, 89
Jacqueline Scharf, 89
Jessica Scharf, 89
Meka Celidonio, 99
Jana Hlade, 99
Ann Lardi, 99
Monica Morrisette, 99
Diane Sweigert, 99
Katherine Leff, 100
Lea Plut-Pregelj, 108
Eleanor Whitmore, 108
Margot Whitmore, 108
John Zakelj, 109

VP Of Home Office Message

Information About Your 2009 Dues Invoices

You will soon be receiving your 2009 Dues invoices. As your National Vice President of the Home Office, my goal is to do the best job possible, but I need your help to serve you better. I am the only person to process the more than 4,300 invoices that will be returned over the next few weeks. In order to make this process as smooth and efficient as possible, this year I am doing two separate mailing of the invoices. Most members who joined prior to 2000 have small insurance policies, and these insured members will receive their invoices first. Social members (no insurance) will receive their invoices a week or two later so that I don't receive so many payments at one time. I am asking that you please be patient with regard to your check clearing the bank. Being a one woman office even the seemingly small task of opening the incoming envelopes becomes a major job. Each payment then must be entered into the system, checks stamped and then deposited. To expedite the process I am asking that you send in only the bottom portion of the invoice. This will make opening envelopes easier and allow me to use a battery operated letter opener. Envelopes that contain the whole page, instead of stubs only, risk the chance that important information will be cut off. Also, I am asking that you please **DO NOT SEND CASH.**

We greatly appreciate your kind and generous donations, but I am requesting that you please **PRINT** all of your donation information clearly. This will serve you better by ensuring that all names are spelled correctly and that your information is recorded accurately. Also, because we have deadlines for getting your information published in the *Zarja*, I must input the information before the deadline. If the deadline is missed, your donation may not appear till the following issue. Again, I ask for your patience and would appreciate it if you wait a couple of months before making any inquiries with regard to the receipt of your check and donations.

In the past I have received many questions with regard to whether one invoice can be sent to cover several members in a family. The only way that this can be done is that the work must be done manually. The SWUA is operating on a very limited budget and in an effort to better serve you in the most cost effective way possible, we must work with our current system. Unfortunately this system is just not sophisticated enough to allow for grouping invoices mailed to the same address. Of course you may write one check for several invoices, but please enclose all of the individual payment stubs that are to be covered.

This year all insured members will be receiving a revised beneficiary form to complete. It is crucial that you please assist us and ensure the ongoing benefit of your family by completing the form and returning it to me with your annual dues.

Finally, we are asking this year that you please pay your dues promptly. We rely on the dues to guarantee the ongoing operation of the SWUA, your organization! This has been a very eventful year that required many additional necessary building repairs and expenses for our museum and home office. Like the rest of the country we have had



a difficult and trying financial year and your ongoing support will help to assure our continued longevity. As members, you have the right to be fully apprised of our finances and I will be providing this in my financial report later this year.

Carol Ryba
VP of Home Office
Ryba4homeoffice@yahoo.com

Zarja The Dawn Donations "Keeping the Spirit Alive"

\$30 Donation

Frank Potocnik, 109, Memory of Raymond J. Potocnik
(9/11/2008)

\$20 Donation

Theresa Kotar, 43, Zarja
Deborah Miller, 24, Memory of Maria Knap
Carole Schloss, 50, Honor Helen Sturm

\$10 Donation

Dorothy Godfrey, 30, Memory of mother, Rose Zbasnik
Dorothy Lamm, 50, Memory of husband, Bob

Thank you!

VP of Marketing and Fundraising

RECRUIT and REVITALIZE in 2009

The SWUA New Member report from January 1, 2008 - November 15, 2008 totals 226 new members, 33 of whom are junior members. CONGRATULATIONS to all the following branches that are recruiting:

SWUA New Member 2008			
	Adults	Juniors	Total
Joliet, IL Branch 20	47	6	53
Home Office Branch 30	17		17
Fontana, CA Branch 100	10	1	11
Pueblo, CO Branch 3	11		11
Euclid, OH Branch 50	7	3	10
Lemont, IL Branch 99	9	1	10
Olney, MD Branch 108	6	3	9
Ely, MN Branch 23	7	2	9
Sheboygan, WI Branch 1	8	1	9
Twin Cities, MN Branch 109	9		9
Oglesby, IL Branch 89	6	2	8
Willard, WI Branch 102	6	1	7
Milwaukee, WI Branch 43	4	2	6
Aurora, MN Branch 35	4	2	6
LaSalle, IL Branch 24	4	2	6
Biwabik, MN Branch 39	6		6
San Francisco, CA Branch 13	3	2	5
Strabane, PA Branch 71	5		5
New York, NY Branch 93	5		5
Indianapolis, IN Branch 5	3	1	4
Duluth, MN Branch 33	2	2	4
Milwaukee, WI Branch 12	3		3
Pittsburgh, PA Branch 26	2		2
Washington, DC Branch 103	2		2
Chisholm, MN Branch 38	2		2
Nashwauk, MN Branch 86	1		1
Girard, OH Branch 55		1	1
South Chicago, IL Branch 16	1		1
Chicago, IL Branch 2		1	1
Cleveland, OH Branch 10	1		1
Lorain, OH Branch 40	1		1
Maple Heights, OH Branch 42	1		1

The top recruiters are also bringing in the most new juniors. There were a total of nearly 80 new members in late 2008 with 23% of the new members being juniors and 77% being adults. We need to keep up this trend of bringing in new juniors.

Of the new members who recorded their date of birth on the application, the following are percentages of new members in various age groups:

Ages 17 and under	16%
Ages 18 - 35	11%
Ages 36 - 50	17%
Ages 51 - 65	32%
Ages 66 +	24%

So many of our retired members have dedicated time and energy to the success of SWUA. Pass on that work ethic and responsibility to the younger generation and invite them to take on something new with SWUA with a new twist of creativity. Work together to support their ideas and allow change to happen by those ready and willing to show dedication. Nearly one half, 49% of our new members are within the ages of 36 - 65; they have high expectations of our organization and want to take the lead in promoting our Slovenian heritage in the US. 56% of our new members are 51 years old or older; 44% are age 50 or younger, so there are a significant number of new members out there to help revitalize branches.

Let's ALL go for it, RECRUIT and REVITALIZE in 2009, promote our *Zarja* magazine and invite prospective members to join SWUA. Make your activities and branch meetings interesting, so that people of a wide range of ages will want to come!

It is very important for branch officers to check the membership status reports received from Carol Ryba, VP of the Home Office and act on them promptly; contact members that haven't renewed their membership. Each branch has the responsibility of tracking people listed on the membership status reports that haven't paid and contacting them by phone, e-mail, or in person. Often times, people inadvertently forget about paying their dues, and need a human voice to remind them to renew their membership. If there is a reason people aren't renewing, find out why and let Carol Ryba or me know. If everyone renews promptly, it saves time and money for the SWUA, and the total number of members would be significantly higher on a consistent basis.

All members have the responsibility to market SWUA. Make it a priority to tell relatives, friends and prospective members about the *Zarja* magazine's 80th Anniversary

and share a copy of the magazine. Lots of news items, current events, photos and recipes that the Board Members worked diligently to collect in Slovenia last fall will be presented in *Zarja* in coming months. Highlights of our trip will be shared in future issues so readers may learn about cultural traditions, tourist farm travel opportunities, cuisine from different regions of Slovenia and more. We made contacts with Slovenians who are eager to work in conjunction with Americans of the SWUA to help us bring well-known Slovenians to America and share their talents, and the beauty and traditions of Slovenia. The meetings our group organized spread the word about *Zarja* magazine's 80th Anniversary, the SWUA and has opened new possibilities for collaboration between America and Slovenia.



(Left to Right) Bernadette Kovacic Fitzsimmons, Mary Lou Deyak Voelk and Dr. Janez (John) Arnez

As one of the SWUA Board members who went to Slovenia last fall to promote our vision, mission and purpose, here is a summary of just three days in Slovenia that amounted to three interesting interviews to be highlighted in future issues later this year.

Prior to the trip, I made arrangements to meet with a few individuals to fill in days while the rest of the *Zarja* team was on a culinary tour with Marija Bauer. Each of the topics and interviews conducted will be featured in *Zarja* to provide our readers with not only interesting information, but also contacts that you may find useful for yourself or other family members.

I met with and interviewed Dr. Janez (John) Arnez at the Studia Slovenica Research Institute in Ljubljana-Sentvid on October 16 and visited this incredible library archive collection. He founded the research institute in 1991 which stemmed from the founding of Studia Slovenica in Washington, DC in 1957, by three young Slovenian immigrants including my own father. Through March, 1990, the Studia Slovenica P.O. Box address was in Washington, DC, which my late father Eric Kovacic managed for 33 years, and actually picked up mail on the last day of his life in Brookland, a section of N.E. DC. He was in close contact with Janez, coordinating book orders and promoting all aspects of research and writing about Slovenian immigration throughout the world. My father will always be remembered as the Slovenian man who worked for the Library of Congress, setting up a booth at Slovenian events and a faithful spokesperson for Studia Slovenica, including the books and even articles he published under the name Studia Slovenica. A portion of my father's personal library and research collection has been donated by my mother, Nika Kovacic to the Studia Slovenica Research Institute. Dr. Arnez has collected books, periodicals and archives on Slovenian immigrants from hundreds of people from all

corners of the globe so that important aspect of history will not be forgotten and books and articles may continue to be written in both English and Slovenian in the future. Mary Lou Voelk, National Director of Culture and Heritage also joined me for this meeting and enjoyed learning all the interesting facts about the institute; she looks forward to working with Dr. Arnez to collaborate with on her SWUA projects

On October 17th, I visited and interviewed Mr. Franc Grom, artisan from Vrhnika, near Ljubljana who creates intricate designs with a variety of bird eggs, using a simple drill to puncture thousands of small dot size holes to create masterpieces for dignitaries around the world. Mary Lou Voelk, also joined me on this visit, along with Ms. Darja Japelj, a native from Vrhnika and old friend of my mother's who helped coordinate the meeting with Mr. Grom. We were very fortunate and thankful to have Jure Seseek, director of Radio Ognjisce along, and as our driver for this exciting day. We had the opportunity to stop at Ivan Cankar's birthplace and museum, and the Church of the Holy Trinity at the top of the hill (na klanču) in Vrhnika.

On October 18th, Miss Eva Sepec, program director of Smarjeske Toplice, a natural mineral water health spa and resort near Novo Mesto gave me a tour of the facility, and highlighted the many programs designed for the general public, patients with muscular problems and cardiovascular illnesses. I interviewed Miss Sepec to learn more about the state of the art high tech equipment and patient health programs that are offered at this resort and covered by medical insurance in Slovenia. I'm thankful to Mrs. Mojca Sosteric, a Kompas Tours Administrator who coordinated transportation to the resort, the meeting and use of the warm spring pools. - *Bernadette Kovacic Fitzsimmons*

SWUA Scholarship Program

Celebrating its 60th Anniversary, 1949 to 2009

CONGRATULATIONS to all SWUA members and friends who have kept Marie Prisland's dream of financially assisting young Slovenian students for the past 60 years alive! Over 250 young people have been aided in attaining the most precious commodity one can ever receive – EDUCATION. It is a gift that can never be taken away and often immensely determines the future life of its recipients.

CAPSULES, a long running *Zarja* column written by Marie Prisland, addressed the Scholarship Program when it reached its 25th Anniversary, in the December 1974 issue of *Zarja*. It is quite interesting and informative.

This fall marks the 25th Anniversary of our very successful scholarship program. 59 students have financially benefited from this fund over the years, totaling \$15,000 including the 1974-75 payments.

At the 1943 National Convention in Pittsburgh I was delighted when the delegates enthusiastically adopted my proposal that a fund be established to financially aid educational expenses for our needy, young, qualified students. To this fund was later added a benefit fund to extend help to our war-torn people in native Slovenia. At the January 1944 supreme board meeting, the bylaws governing this fund were finalized, setting a goal of \$10,000 to be divided: \$5,000 for scholarships and \$5,000 for Slovenian relief. Through the sale of greeting cards, contributions from the branches, individual members, and the formation of a Friendship Circle with \$20 memberships, the goal was attained 5 years later with Zveza contributing the first \$200. Consequently at the 1949 National Convention held in Pueblo, Colorado the Scholarship Fund started to operate. It was the first of its kind among the Slovenian organizations in America.

Through the Benefit Fund, purchases of flour, sugar, coffee, lard, household articles, school supplies, medicine, hospital instruments, sewing machines, etc. were sent to various critical areas in Slovenia: actually with additional relief sent by the individual branches a total of \$34,000 in financial value in food and goods was sent to Slovenia in the post-war period.

When in 1949 the announcement of scholarships was published in *Zarja*, five boys and one girl applied, three were selected for the 1949-50 year on the basis of their high scholastic records and need of financial aid. The winners were: Marie C. Bombach, member and then Secretary of Branch 105, Detroit, Michigan, Donald Carek of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and Fredrick Pahula of Soudan, Minnesota.

MARIE BOMBACH, attended Madonna College, Plymouth, Michigan majoring in journalism. She later attended Detroit State University and Indiana State University receiving her Doctoral degree in Education and Psychology. Besides teaching the deaf, retarded, and under privileged in Laport, Indiana, and Detroit, she was requested by the State of Michigan to set up and teach a special experimental crash program of education for adults. This program was so successful that a federal grant has been renewed since. Her interest also lies in medical research and studies in cardiology. She is married to William Alfred Dye, a writer and public relations man and is mother of one daughter. (Marie died as a young 65-year-old woman, who lived with her family in the inner city of Detroit, caring for the needy until time of her death in 1996).

DONALD CAREK, son of Mrs. Rose Carek, member of Branch 1, graduated from Marquette University Medical School in Milwaukee.

He served one year as an intern in Walter Reed Hospital, Washington, D.C. His Doctor of Psychiatry degree was granted him after 4 years of study at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (A total of eleven years of college studies) Presently he is a Child Psychiatrist at the Children's Hospital in Milwaukee and is married and the father of six children. (Donald retired to Bluffton, South Carolina, and in a 1996 letter written in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the SWUA Scholarship Program, stated "I would not have been able to get out of the starting gate without the SWUA Scholarship I received in 1949")

FREDERICK PAHULA, son of Mrs. Mary Pahula, Branch 34 chose teaching as his profession. Presently he teaches third grade at the Lincoln Elementary School in Ely, Minnesota. Before this he was stationed at Solon Springs, Wisconsin teaching art and English. He also taught painting for adult classes in Babbit, Tower, and Soudan and summer school in Elementary Art and Creative Writing. He has traveled through eight European countries including Yugoslavia. He also visited Ireland, Iceland, Hawaii, and British Columbia. He is unmarried and lives with his mother in Soudan, Minnesota.

(Frederick was born in 1931, one of six children, that his mother, Mary Pahula, long time Secretary of Branch of Branch 34, raised along with 5 other children as a young widow. Fred worked as a school janitor for years, an artist who wanted desperately to teach. At the age of 35 he applied for the first SWUA Scholarship which helped pay for his schooling at Superior State Teacher's College. He taught elementary education for years in the Soudan, Minnesota area and later retired to care for his mother. Fred died January 9, 2007.)

During the 25 years of Zveza's scholarship program the following professions were pursued: 20 teaching, 9 science, 5 law, 5 accounting, 5 business administration, 4 nursing, 2 music, 2 journalism, 3 priesthood, 2 medicine 2 dentistry, and one each in dietetics, medical technology, psychology, pharmacy, data processing, government work, sociology and secretarial work.

What a wonderful array of professions! How proud we all are of our scholarship winners! Members, let us keep this grand project prospering! Education is doubly needed today in every field including factory maintenance where some are required to obtain special technical skills to perform their work more efficiently.

The supervision of the Scholarship Fund was in the hands of Marie Prisland for 16 years, followed by Hermine Diocke, herself a college graduate and a very conscientious worker. All applications for scholarships are painstakingly reviewed and winners chosen according to the highest academic records and financial need.

At this anniversary time we are extending our sincere warm thanks to all the contributors – branches, members, and friends – for their past generous financial support, hoping that their interest in our scholarship program will continue in the future.

The Scholarship Committee is composed of: Mary Bostian, Hermine Dicke, Fanika Humar, Toni Turek, and Marie Prisland - President.

MARIE BOMBACH DYE lived a short but very productive life dedicated to helping the handicapped and illiterate until the time of her death in 1996. Marie wrote this message to *Zarja* readers' years ago but it is a timely communication for all of us, as we witness striking changes in every day events and more importantly, addressed to young students as they plan for their years to come.

Reflections of the First Scholarship Recipient

As I observe the events that have permeated the country with unrest in recent days, - I reflect and wonder - where have we, have I, failed? Yes, progress has been made, but why is there still so much hatred in our country and no less in the entire world?

In my application for the S.W.U. Scholarship, so many years ago. I expressed the thought that it was my desire to spend my life teaching all people to love each other and to live as brothers and sisters in Christ. This has been, and still is, my goal, however, when I survey the situation I wonder how much have I been able to accomplish? Had I been too idealistic or too naïve? It seems a lifetime is like a drop in the bucket. Needless to say, - often it depresses me.

Yet I am aware that I have tried to follow the admonition of the gospels: "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another; good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Peter 4:10) I realize that each time I give of myself of my talents, to others I am in a real way offering my thanks to God and including myself in a circle of giving and receiving.

In my life I have been privileged to enjoy many of the great people of our society from whom I learned much - who have been my inspiration. On the other hand, I have been in the company of the poor and hurting, who reached out their hands and hearts to me. I learned from them too, they gave my life meaning. Real saints and yes, real sinners - all were part of my life and all taught me in their own way. You must keep learning all your life or you are intellectually dead.

Yes, I tried and there is so much to do yet. I know I have tried to make a difference, perhaps one day - even if not in our lifetime, people will not see color, race, nationality or religion as a divisive force - but as a uniting force. And I am still working toward that goal.

I have written these lines as food for thought, a message for the present and future scholarship applicants, and recipients. You have a great potential - use it. Do not become discouraged,

-Marie Bombach Dye - Branch 105, Detroit, Michigan

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 1949 to 2008:

Please send an update of your current activities. *Zarja* readers and the Scholarship Committee would very much like to hear from you. Your reports will affirm the success of our Program.

ATTENTION STUDENTS: SWUA Scholarships will be available for the 2009-2010 school year. Visit website www.swua.org "scholarship" for more information and application forms. All materials requested must be postmarked and mailed no later than MARCH 1, 2009

CONTRIBUTIONS to the SWUA Scholarship Program, a 501c3 tax exempt Foundation, are desperately needed. Many applicants are working and attending classes to fund their educations. Federal grants and loans are limited. An education can determine the course of their lives, and are an investment in our own future. PLEASE CONSIDER our cause!

Our 60th Anniversary is an occasion to celebrate. The seemingly impossible has been accomplished - we have come a long way. Can you help us reach a 70th Anniversary celebration of the SWUA Scholarship Program?

Mary H. Turvey, Director
4 Lawrence Drive, Marquette, Michigan 49855
mturvey@aol.com

Scholarship Donations

\$100 Donation

Jacquelyn Smith, Scholarship Fund
Joyce Premeau, her mother
(+Josephine Mahkovec Goron)
Kristine Keller, her grandmother
(+Frances Kuchna)

\$50 Donation

Virginia Ivancich, Scholarship Fund

\$40 Donation

Jonita Ruth and Family, (+Ed Ancel)*

\$25 Donation

Millie Pucel, (+Ed Ancel) *

\$20 Donation

Frances Pavlovic, Scholarship Fund

*Ed Ancel, dear husband of National Secretary Olga Ancel passed to his new life on November 7, 2008. He was devoted to his family and to many Slovenian organizations and causes. As a book keeper and tax consultant for many years, he assisted Olga in her excellent work as the National Secretary of the Slovenian Women's Union. Olga Ancel died March 28, 2008 and is sadly missed.

For more information on the
SWUA Scholarship Foundation Program
please visit <http://www.swua.org> "scholarship"

Happenings: Culture and Heritage

by VP of Heritage and Culture Mary Lou Deyak Voelk

"Chestnuts roasting on an open fire", call it tradition in Slovenia! On the streets of Ljubljana and across towns and villages one is certain to find kiosks selling hot roasted chestnuts direct from the braziers. If you are fortunate enough to be invited into a Slovenian home, hot chestnuts right from the kitchen wood stove are a sure treat.

Our 10-day "project filled trip" to Slovenia in October had the following goals:

To make Slovenian agencies/persons aware of the preservation projects of the SWUA.

To instill in agencies/people that the preservation projects are part of the time line in Slovenian history.

To seek out agencies/people in Slovenia for use in seeking advice and conceptualizing procedures.

To interview Slovenian "People of the Know" for use in future articles and projects.

Prior to our visit, all appointments were in place. Presentations were made to government agencies and to members of the press. The main topics of discussion with Dragica Bošnjak, journalist of the Delo newspaper (largest in Slovenia), were the museum's preservation projects and Zarja's 80th anniversary.

A special thank you to Sonia Avguštin of Slovenian World Congress for arranging appointments with elite artisans/craftsman and museum. A special thank you to Jure and Ursa Sešek and Matjaž Merljak of Slovenian Radio who wore the hat of chauffeur for the day. It was an honor to be welcomed into the homes of such notable and talented people:

Franc Grom, creator of the remarkable vrhniški pirhi (Vrhnika Easter eggs)

Anna Češarek, sculptress and designer of the famous Ribnica crèche scene

Franc Jaklič, famous maker of the suha roba (woodenware)

Look for their stories in future issues of *Zarja*.

A special afternoon was spent with Dr. Janez Arnez, who heads the Studia Slovenica archival library in Ljubljana. In 1957 Dr. Arnez, Valentine Leskovšek and Erik Kovačič established the archival institute. Today the institute has a collection of over 60,000 books, 7000 periodicals and 1,200 archives and is the largest private initiative collection. I was simply overjoyed to hear that Dr. Arnez is willing to help us in our library endeavor. On our shelves in Joliet are about 250 books whose titles need interpreting and classification. So the following plea goes out:

VOLUNTEER NEEDED: Knowledge of Excel

Call/email: Mary Lou Deyak Voelk

251.968.4364 ottolou@gulftel.com

The Home Front

WWII Survey

Since publishing the WWII Survey, my eyes and ears have become extremely aware of the national efforts on behalf of those who served. Museums, publications, reunions and historical series continue to be abundant. Veterans' Day 2008 filled the local newspapers and the airwaves with news of parades and services, the American flag was everywhere. I was thrilled to hear that my grandson, Connor Voelk, and members of a Seattle Cub Scout Troop spent a Saturday placing display flags in a cemetery. So it comes as an extreme disappointment when branches/membership of SWUA have shown little interest in volunteering their time to fill out a simple survey. I plead with Branch presidents to emphasize the importance in collecting this data. Not only is it our time line in American history but in that of Slovenia. It is also the responsibility of this organization to respect and honor the integrity and courage of those Slovenian Americans who fought for this country and/or served on the Home Front during WWII. If each branch would submit a minimum of 20 surveys of those who served during WWII, our publication could list over 500 names. The life stories, memoirs and photos proudly sent in by WWII veterans are truly amazing. On their behalf, I am asking for serious input. Think of this survey as "volunteering on the home front". The survey can be found on the website www.swua.org.

Zarja Indexing

As I walked in the door of the Aurora Community Center in Aurora, Minnesota in early October, the smell of fresh perked coffee filled the air. Most impressive was seeing 17 members from branches throughout the Iron Range who were ready to hear all about the Zarja project. Thank you to Theresa Berg of Ely who delivered several boxes of Zarja, which had belonged to her late sister, Adeline Mustonen of Soudan. Thank you Iron Range Branches 35-Aurora, 39-Biwabik, 23-Ely and 34-Soudan for such a great turn out of eagerness! Thank you Rosemary Ribich and Anita Vovk for your love of the Slovenian heritage.



Bev Menart, Branch 33 of Duluth and Norm Setnicker, Branch 109 Twin Cities have also come forward to participate. As Norm Setnicker stated, "only when one begins a diligent reading of each magazine from cover to cover does one grip the immensity and importance of this preservation project".



The Path Taken

The Path Taken will not be appearing in Zarja 2009. At this time, "my time" needs to be allocated to several ongoing projects, new projects and the museum/library. However, please know that through 2009 I will continue the writing of family stories for future print. Today there are three stories going! Writing about family is most fascinating and it has truly become my passion. Do consider your story as a part of the "family jewels". It is something that can be passed on to generations. Please contact me if you wish have your story told. I await your phone call or email.

It was just two years ago when a volunteer named Rita Starich came forward. She listened to my idea and stuck by as we worked month after month through the project. To Rita I am forever grateful and to all those involved in this endeavor: the recent political campaign slogan, "YES WE CAN" is working for the SWUA also.

For questions or information
on any of the above articles/projects
please call or email.

I look forward to your phone calls.

Mary Lou Deyak Voelk
251.968.4364
ottolou@gulftel.com



Heritage Donations

\$25 Donation

Tory Bobenc, past President of Branch 34, Soudan
In memory of Anna Hodnik, Branch 35

Men in a SWUA World

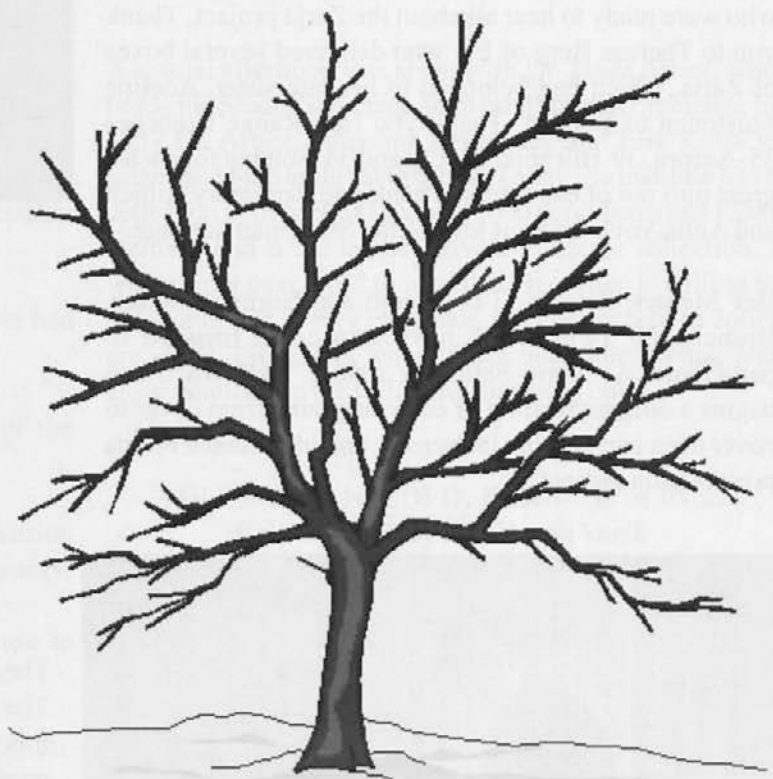
Many Uses of the Chestnut Tree

Since Jenka is covering all about cooking chestnuts, I have decided to talk about the tree itself and what the wood has been used for and what it is good for.

The Chestnut tree has a long history both in Europe and in the United States as not only a food provider but also as the premier tree in the early Native American days for its many uses. In the early days of America, the Chestnut tree was known as the Bread Tree and it provided wood for the railroad ties, strong framing for houses and barns, fence posts and fuel. The chestnut was also a very important part of the tanning process of leather as well as the obvious use of its nut as a healthy food source. As a matter of fact in that era the chestnut tree was so dominant and abundant that it was often said that in the Eastern forests a squirrel could jump from chestnut tree to chestnut tree from Georgia all the way to New York without putting a paw on the ground. The Chestnut tree made up nearly twenty five percent of all forest life in the United States before the chestnut blight (believed to have been brought over from the Orient) of the early 1900s began to ravish the crop and virtually eliminate the chestnut tree as a major industry by 1950. Interesting enough though, the tree was such a sturdy wood that long after the blight struck many of the poles originally put in to string telegraph lines remained standing.

In Europe however, the tree still has a life and still provides its wood for many uses including telephone poles, walking sticks, umbrella handles, fine furniture, kitchen utensils, bowls and veneer. Also, believe it or not some of the most well made caskets in the world are made from chestnut wood, would that make it dead wood? Ok, bad pun, but I have been pretty informative and needed to sneak a joke in somewhere. Anyway, the wood is fairly easy to work by using both hand and machine operated tools and has a course texture.

Now, about roasting chestnuts over an open fire, if old Don is going to build an open fire to cook on, I will have some chestnuts but you can bet a package of hotdogs is going on too! Guys, you know what I'm talking about, "wieners" a good old fashion weenie roast! When I build that fire, I am going to pull up my chair and a cooler of my



favorite pivo and of course some hotdogs to be cooked on the end of a stick. Nothing better on a late fall or cold winter night than a roaring fire, roasting chestnuts and a hotdog cooking over it and then, let's follow that up with a big scoop of potato salad and wash it all down with a cold pivo, now that's living! Wow, I may need a nap right now just thinking about it! My friend Marija from Slovenia makes the best Slovenian potato salad. I have asked Jenka to include it in her culinary section of this issue so you can enjoy chestnuts the way old Don does. Also included is Marija's way of preparing sausage "wiener" treats on those nights when it is just too cold to build an open fire outside. I have to admit Marija's "wieners" are just as tasty and also go great with a glass of pivo.

So, before I leave you this month, while you enjoy your "wieners" and chestnuts remember how useful the whole tree used to be many years ago. Have a good time huddling around your fires roasting your chestnuts and as always may good luck be yours. – Don Baldin





Slovenian Women's Union of America
Slovenska Ženska Zveza v Ameriki

Membership Application

Yes! I want to join the SWUA. I want to preserve and promote the legacy of our Slovenian-American heritage. As a member I will receive the publication Zarja The Dawn; I can affiliate with branches and events across the country and best of all, I will come in contact with fellow Slovenes.

Please type or print legibly. Choose type of membership:

Junior (Birth to 18) Annual Dues \$5.00

Adult Annual Dues \$20.00

Name and Middle Initial _____ Maiden Name _____

Street Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone/Fax _____ E-mail _____

Date of Birth _____ Do you speak Slovenian? _____

Please describe your Slovenian ancestry and provide **SLOVENIAN SURNAMES** _____

How did you hear about us?

SWUA member _____ newspaper _____ website _____ other _____

Applicant signature: _____ Date: _____

Branch Affiliation No. (if known) _____ Location: _____

Please make checks payable to the *Slovenian Women's Union of America* and mail to:

SWUA 431 North Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432

For additional information, contact:

SLOVENIAN WOMEN'S UNION OF AMERICA, 431 North Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432
815.727.1926 e-mail: swuhome@sbcglobal.net - website: www.swua.org

I would like to volunteer for the SWUA. My area of interest or expertise is:

Tell a Friend! If you wish us to send information to a friend or relative just fill in name and address here:

My friend's name _____

Address: City _____ State _____ Zip _____

sLOVEnia

A Slovenian Heritage Weekend

by Marilyn (Ciocco) Tavoularis

What a weekend I had at the AMC Mohican Outdoor Center in Blairstown, NJ, where I experienced two nights and two days of Slovenian Heritage this past November 7-9!

I'm not of Slovenian descent by birth, but I now wish I were to some extent! My dear friend Lynn, who introduced me to the finer things in life (the AMC – Appalachian Mountain Club and Toastmasters) is one of four children born to Slovenian-American parents whose own parents originated from Slovenia. When I first met Lynn, at least 12 years ago, each time she spoke about Slovenia I felt rather clueless. I couldn't remember the name of the country and I'd always introduce her and say she was very proud of her Slovakian heritage. I didn't know a thing about Slovenia. That was then, this is now! Over the years I've been learning more and more. I admit to a slight feeling of superiority when I mention "SLOVENIA" and people look at me with a puzzled expression on their faces! I

smugly tell them it's one of the countries, which made up the former Yugoslavia. Then of course, the reaction is, "ohhhh!"

After experiencing the Irish Song and Dance weekend a few times at the Mohican, Lynn decided to venture forth to see if she could put together a similar weekend for Slovenian Heritage. She began working on the plans in December of 2007. Her careful and detailed planning paid off. She had already met Ria (Polajner) Whitmire, who came to the USA in the 60's from Slovenia and who is a fellow AMC'er. Ria agreed to help Lynn with the weekend and what a magical team they were!

When I arrived late on Friday, I walked into the Blueberry Hill Lodge and while no one was there (they were at the boathouse learning Slovenian folk dances) - I looked around the place. I'd been to the lodge on several occasions, but this time there were additional items decorating the great



room. Family photos of relatives in traditional attire, a map of Slovenia and on the mantle over the fireplace, books, postcards, and other objects.

While wondering where everyone was, a new arrival entered and I introduced myself to Anton (Malensek), another Slovene coming to share the love of his country, language and customs with a diverse group. Then the weekend participants slowly stepped in after their first evening of dance instruction. Ria had arranged for her brother, Alfonz, to fly in from Slovenia to guide the group through some key dances! Alfonz, an incredibly handsome, patient, smiling and charming Slovene (if they do a BACHELOR show over there, he should be selected!) was able to encourage even the men present to try the dance steps.

Ron, one of the guests, lit a fire for us. We had coffee, tea, wine and snacks, and got to know each other. All of a sudden, the power went out. Fortunately we had been instructed to bring flashlights, so we were able to get about. Apparently 150,000 people in the area lost power that night! So we all headed to our bunks and tucked ourselves in, in the dark.



Lucky for us the power was restored overnight. After breakfast at the main lodge, we found our way back to the boathouse for more dancing lessons. What I found surprising was that no one seemed to have any inhibitions! It must have been the kind look on Alfonz' face as he taught us the steps, which Ria had to translate for us! We worked on a few dances from the Koroska region including the waltz, the squirrel and the

shepherdess (the female stands in front of her partner and peeks back at her partner from the left, from the right and then is spun into a full turn). We finished with the broom dance, which is a polka where you want to quickly grab your next partner when the music stops or else be left dancing with the broom!

After lunch on Saturday, which was kindly supplied by Ria, most of us gathered in the parking lot and shared cars to get us down into town, as we were going for a walk on the rail trail. Many wanted to go hiking, but our hike leader, Ed, felt that with the wet conditions from rain it would be too dangerous. The path went along the "Pauling Kill" and

was quite scenic. We did have to watch where we walked, as the path was quite muddy and additionally it was a path shared by horseback riders and of course their horses. Careful where you step!



After returning from our walk, Ria gave a demonstration on how to make Kifli. She had a fine young man as an assistant, six-year-old Gregoriy. They prepared the dough only; cookies were to be baked on Sunday morning!

While we were out hiking, Mia (Branc), another friend of Lynn and Ria's, spent the afternoon preparing an incredible authentic Slovenian dinner for us all. We began the evening with a wine tasting of Slovenian wines, there were several Reds and Whites. I personally tried about four of them and was impressed. I had two favorites from the Reds, but I only remember that one was called "Big Red" in English.

We sat down to the feast Mia prepared consisting of roast loin of pork, potatoes and sauerkraut. There was also tifa (a salad with winter greens, which was escarole) and liptavski sir (a dip made with farmers cheese and organic pumpkin seed oil drizzled on top – then served with bread). The food was plentiful and delicious. We were also treated to a trio of desserts, prepared by Mia and another Maria – walnut potica, tarragon potica and gibinica. (Marilyn did notice and read "The Typical Slovene" article that states "every 13th lady in Slovenia is named Maria! The three

native Slovenian women present were named Maria or variations thereof: Mia, Ria and Maria!)

After dinner, a few people stayed back to watch the Slovenian film "Vesna" (a romantic comedy from 1953 and one of Slovenia's most popular and beloved films of all time), while the larger part of our group walked over to



the main lodge to hear Dave, one of the resident managers of the Mohican Outdoor Center, play piano and sing with some of the 'locals'. Most Saturday nights one or two guys from town come up and play guitar and let us have a sing-along.

Sunday morning we woke up, cleaned up, watched Ria and Gregoriy shape and bake the Kifli and of course everyone got to eat one. Oh, the buttery, smooth, taste. What a treat!

Once again we gathered in the parking lot and this time we were able to hike up to the ridge via the Rattlesnake

Swamp trail. The rain had stopped overnight and we had a relatively clear day, at least by the time we reached 'the summit' it was clear enough for a view of the valley below. We posed for a group photo with a sign Lynn had made about reaching "Mount Triglav at Mohican". Not quite, but it was invigorating nonetheless. We were just thrilled to get to go hiking.

After lunch and further clean up, we all said our goodbyes, until the next time! - Marilyn (Ciocco) Tavoularis

"The weekend was perfect - nice people, good food and wine, cultural exposure, the out-of-doors...And I loved the dancing. Thanks to both of you." - Sally Lewis

A few notes from Lynn Zalokar:

I have attended a few "getaway weekends" at the Mohican Outdoor Center and the hosts can do as little or as much as they want in the way of food, décor and activities. I know that we went "above and beyond" in our efforts, but it paid off because we had a nice group of participants who noticed and appreciated all we did! Many left saying "are you going to do this again?", "will this be an annual event?"



While I made signs (*Dobrodošli!* or *Welcome*), name tags (*Zdravo, ime mi je* or "*Hello, my name is*") and brought books, articles and some family photos - Ria was the native expert over the weekend. She led us all in a brief language lesson on Slovenian greetings Saturday morning. She translated whenever Alfonz needed help explaining something. She thoroughly engaged six year old Gregory in the kifli demonstration.

Ria also added many authentic "extras" (a cow bell to announce meal times, woven cloths from Slovenia for the wine tasting, a special "ice wine" for us to try, red carnations and she even brought her big screen TV to show videos and movies!!)

We thank Mia Branc (she cooks for functions at St. Cyril's Slovenian church in NYC) for the fabulous meal, Mike Dalton and Tanya McCabe of the AMC for all their help in getting our weekend organized, Emil Gaspari of TriWines for his generous donation of Slovenian wines and organic pumpkin seed oil, Alfonz Polajner for making the trip to teach the dances (and yes he is a good looking and fit 68 year old!), Maria Skrilec (active with St. John's Slovenian Lutheran church in Bethlehem, PA and the Murska Sobota sister cities association) for her gibinica and the samples of her cherries infused with slivovitz!

Ria's Kifli Recipe

Ingredients

½ lb unsalted butter (softened)

½ cup sugar

2 cups sifted all purpose flour

1 ¼ cups ground unblanched almonds

1 tsp vanilla extract

½ tsp salt

Confectioners' sugar

Preheat oven to 350°.

Cream butter and sugar together until fluffy. Beat in flour ½ cup at a time; add almonds and vanilla, salt. Beat until slightly stiff dough. Shape into a ball and refrigerate (1 hour or more).

Pinch walnut size pieces of dough, roll into ½ inch thick strips. Shape into crescents. Arrange ½ inch apart on a lightly buttered baking sheet.

Bake 15-20 minutes until lightly colored. Cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes then transfer onto a cake rack, dust with confectioners sugar – cool 15 minutes before serving.



Slovenian Day in West Allis, Wisconsin

by Virginia Kmet Strukel

The Mayor of West Allis, Dan Devine proclaimed September 26, 2008 as Slovenian Arts and Culture Day in West Allis. Majda Koren, prize-winning author of children's books from Slovenia was in West Allis to present her new

book, *Louisa from Outer Space* from the Forget-me-nots series, along with one of the editor's Špela Breclj.

Mike Kozolka, Director of the West Allis Public library, set up the Conference room and the Constitutional room for each of them. Thanks to our Superintendent of Schools, Kurt Wachholz

Frohna, Rose Chepeck, Toni Needham, and Al Jelinek wore *naroda noša*, and Al instructed them on the contents of the showcase that was on exhibit for more than a week.

In the evening Mayor Devine presented Mary Cay Freiberg, President of the Slovenian Arts Council-University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, with the proclamation naming this Slovenian Day. Dr. Zvone Žigon, Consul General from the Republic of Slovenia, was here for the occasion, had council hours before the event, and addressed the group. The Uspeh chorus gave a mini concert. There were displays of Slovenian artifacts, wood carvings, paintings of Slovenia by John Vlaj, bobbin lace, literature, Slovenian Women's Union, KSKJ, Bob Smole had a display for the Federation of SNPJ, and a video of UWM Music library which houses the largest collection of Slovenian music outside of Slovenia. Ewa Barczyk, director of the UWM library was also present.

While the guests enjoyed *potica* and *strudel* baked by Rose Chepeck, Mary Cay Freiberg, Barbara Martinka, Milka Menchak, Toni Needham, Virginia Strukel, and Stan Vidmar, they enjoyed music by our talented musician Ed Vidmar. When Ed plays, the Slovenians join in singing, which made it a true *Slovenka Zabava*.

Thanks to all who made this such a memorable event.



who allowed the fourth and fifth grades from Mitchell and Irving schools to come to the library at 9:30, 10:30, 1 and 2:10. The 240 students met with both Majda and Špela. They were introduced to the complete series, which are in the library, met the author and got her autograph. In Špela's room they viewed scenes from Slovenia, and learned more about Slovenia. The students were treated to Slovenian cookies, *Vinske palicke* (wine sticks) and *sok* (juice). Helen





Branch Reports

Poročila Podružnic

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

With the New Year, I am happy to announce the slate of officers of Branch 1 remains as follows: President - Aggie Gruenke, Vice President - Mary Ann Schellinger, Treasurer - Julie Kinney and Secretary - Angie Fritz. Best wishes to all of them and may their efforts to promote and preserve our American-Slovenian culture be fruitful.

Several of our members attended the SNPJ sponsored program of the "Singing Slovenes" October 17 in Milwaukee. It was a wonderful evening of music and song. Not the usual post program snack, either but delicious strudels, potica and cookies. Hopefully we may one day host this wonderful singing group.

On Sunday, November 9, SS Cyril and Methodius Church hosted a "Ministry Fair". This involved several displays of various programs, which are part of the church's laity works. We gladly accepted to display our SWUA exhibits resulting in several new potential members. Here again was a way to meet and chat with friends and acquaintances. It was also a good chance to become familiar with the other programs, some of which we were not aware existed.

Looking forward to a new year with best wishes for a happy, healthy, productive year to all!

ANGIE FRITZ

BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

*The China Teapot blew her spout
As herbal peach tea poured out.
Sugar and lemon added to the blend,
Making Cup say to Saucer,
"Yum Yum, My Friend."*

Meetings resumed in October, and hostess Marie Mutz created a tea party atmosphere. Helen Perse gave the mystery gift. The heritage program focused on the 3 species of European honey-bees, especially the friendly gray Carniolan honey-bee. The discussion of the folk art paintings done on the wooden fronts of the beehives seen throughout the orchards of Slovenia was amusing and interesting. Displayed were two wooden fronts donated to the Slovenian Museum in Pueblo by Bernice Krasovec and Helen Miklich.

The spirit of Thanksgiving prevailed in November. Margaret Cullen was hostess and Andrea DeGarbo gave the mystery gift. Junior



member Angela Perez and member Dorothy Zakrasek shared their special recipes.

The annual Christmas Party was held December 2nd and members once again donated monetary gifts to the National SWU Scholarship Fund in lieu of a gift exchange. The story of the NUTCRACKER was told and solved the mystery of: Why the KING OF MICE vowed vengeance on the Nutcracker Prince and how the evil spell on Nutcracker was broken. A HAPPY NEW YEAR with God's Blessings is extended to all Sisters and Brothers of SWUA of America from Pueblo in Colorful Colorado.

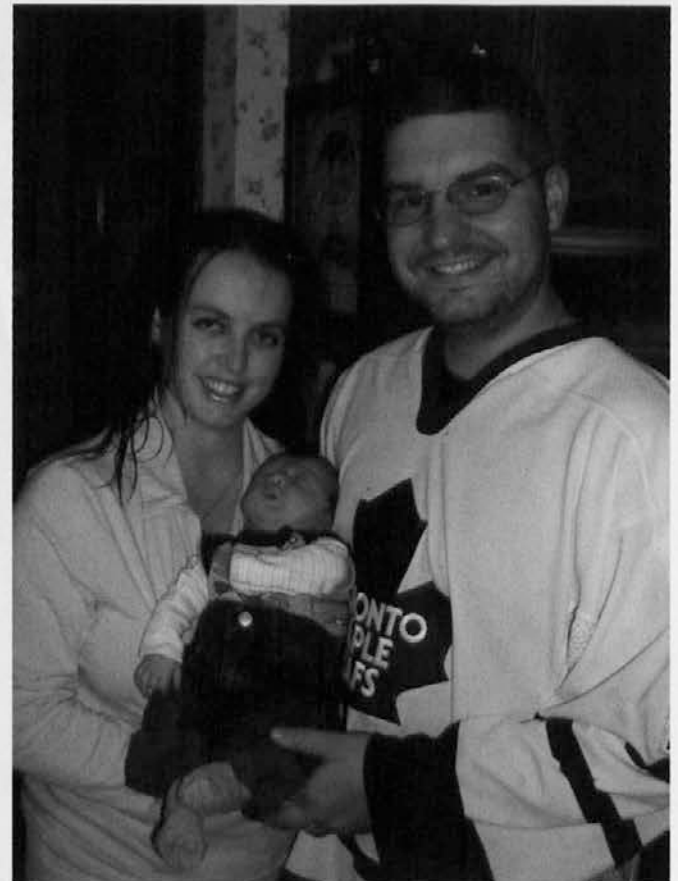
BERNICE KRASOVEC and EILEEN KAPLAN

BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana

Winter Greetings! The long cold days of winter are upon us, but Mary, Karen and I have a wonderful January meeting planned for you! Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 10, 2009, 12:00 pitch-in luncheon at the Nash. Always a fun filled time, bring yourself, family and friends to join us!

Thanks to all who attended our Memorial Mass. We had a great turnout for our "krofe and koffee" after the mass. It is always a good time to remember those who are no longer with us, or because of illness, could not join us. Call someone today that you haven't heard from lately!

Apologies for missing the article deadline for the last Zarja issue, but I was too busy becoming a "first time" grandma! Our oldest daughter, Katie, and her husband, Pat, welcomed





their son, Chase Henry Poole into the world on October 6, 2008. Chase was a healthy 6 lbs. 10oz. Welcome to our newest member!

Our Indianapolis Slovenian Women's Union banner took a trip to the Indiana State Museum, not for display, but for a behind the scenes "check-up". Since I have been President of Branch 5, I have been intrigued by the possible history of our banner. The textile expert at

the museum was able to test the fibers and confirm that it is 100% silk, with a braid border of an early rayon and silk blend. What really interested her was the banner is attached to a 49 star American flag on the reverse side. She was able to give me instructions for the care, storage and displaying of the fragile cloth. If anyone has an early picture of the banner on display at a meeting, please bring it to the January meeting. We would love to see it!

As always, please keep all our members and their families in your prayers. Remember to keep our military in your prayers also. See you at the meeting!

MARY, KAREN and PHYLLIS
phyllisswu5@aol.com

BRANCH 12 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

I will take this opportunity to extend Christmas greetings to all of our lodges and members of the SWUA and trust that your holidays were joyful and blessed. May 2009 bring you nothing but peace, contentment, joy and of course most importantly good health.

We had our Thanksgiving luncheon on Thursday the 20th which was prepared by our master chef, Virginia Strukel and we had the works, turkey, dressing, potatoes, cranberry sauce, salad and pumpkin pie, and our cost per person was \$2.00. Can you beat that?

Please read Virginia Strukel's article on Slovenian Day in this issue of Zarja on pages 18 and 19, because it was a beautiful event.

Our Christmas luncheon was on December 11th and we had a marvelous time. Let's look forward to 2009 and many happy moments with our fellow members.

So until the next issue, here's hoping everything is just right in your little corner of the world.

FRANCES REMSHAK

BRANCH 13 - San Francisco, California

I hope all of our members had a beautiful Christmas and Happy New Year. We had a very successful year in Branch 13. We had elections of officers at our November meeting. The officers for 2009 are President Doreen Sustarich, Vice President Agnes Leach, Financial Secretary Moreen Spencer, Recording Secretary Barbara Chiodo, Treasurer Michele Twers, Auditors Virginia Sustarich and Ann Sustarich. Everyone welcomed Agnes to the Board.

I would like, on behalf of all our members, to thank President Doreen Sustarich for such a wonderful and successful year. She worked hard to keep everything going smoothly all year. We had a very well attended Member of the Year Luncheon in May. We had a wonderful raffle with great prizes and everyone had a great time.

We had a BBQ at my home in August which all of our active members attended. My garden was all in bloom and I added a wishing well and windmill to the garden, which everyone enjoyed. We had a wonderful lunch of sausages with all the trimmings, baked beans and salads. We also had a birthday cake to celebrate Doreen and Moreen's birthday. What a beautiful day.

Our monthly meetings have been wonderful. We have a potluck luncheon before our meeting. Two new members, Jackie Kambic Lowe and Tessie Sutsos attend regularly and enjoy being with "old friends" as we have known each other all our lives.

Thank you President Doreen for a year we will never forget. You are a GREAT President !!!!

We invite all of our members to attend our meetings. We meet the first Thursday of each month at 12:00 noon at the Slovenian Hall on Vermont Street in San Francisco. I know you will enjoy the lunch and the meeting.

A big Hello to Anna Fabian, who for years was an active member of our Branch 13. Your daughter Diane said you always ask about us. God Bless You Anna.

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BRANCH 14 - Euclid, Ohio

We hope that everyone had a blessed Christmas season and that the New Year showers more blessings on you and those you love.

Our annual Christmas party at the Slovenian Society Home on Recher Avenue was held this year on December 2. The meal prepared by Sophie Mazi was delicious and brought back memories of old Slovenian weddings. This year we welcomed guests from Branch 50 and members of the Slovenian American National Art Guild who savored the traditional Slovenian food which is so hard to find these days. Afterwards everyone enjoyed a raffle of wrapped Christmas gifts brought by guests. There were enough lovely gifts so that almost everyone who purchased a raffle ticket won a prize. Branch 14 thanks everyone for participating as this is one of our two fundraisers we have a year to meet our expenses.

We must once again thank Stana Grill without whom this affair could not go forward. Stana spent countless hours on the phone taking reservations and arranging tables. Again we had a full hall, but sadly missed the Stupica family. We never sell tickets in advance, only by reservation picked up at the door and as usual everyone who said they were coming, did arrive. It is rare today to find such honesty and responsibility like we find in our members.

Please send me your information to be used in this column.

PATRICIA BUDZILEK pbudzilek@oh.rr.com

BRANCH 16 - South Chicago, Illinois

Happy New Year to everyone! On October 19 about 8 of the women from our Lodge went to the beautiful 80th Anniversary that Branch 20 had. It started out with a champagne breakfast in Ferdinand Hall with delicious homemade potica and apple strudel. We had a short meeting conducted by Regional President Joe Skala. We attended Mass at beautiful St. Joseph Church with the Singing Slovenes who sang a wonderful Polka Mass. After Mass we went to the Patrick Haley Mansion.

We had a delicious dinner while the Bruce Korosa Orchestra entertained us. After dinner we were entertained by The Singing Slovenes again. It was a beautiful fall day and the Patrick Haley Mansion was something to see.

Since Branch 95 has disbursed, we would like to invite all members to come and join our Branch. We will welcome you with open arms. One of your members, Helen Nowicki has joined us for the last two meetings and she enjoys it.

Olga Kowalkowski is feeling much better, she has been out of commission since June because of her knee. We hope she can attend our February meeting, we miss her.

Our member Julia Pastor fell and broke her wrist while gardening. She was trying to bring her flowers in for the winter. We hope she can get back to her busy routine soon.

Our next meeting is February 14th, Valentine's Day.

DOROTHY ROSSI

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Happy New Year everyone! Looks like 2009 will be busy. So much to do, so little time. In celebration of our 80th Anniversary, 4 Proclamations were received. They were from the State of Illinois, Will County Board, City of Joliet and City of Crest Hill, proclaiming October 19, 2008 Slovenian Heritage Day. What an honor!

Our New Year will start with the installation of officers at our January 18th meeting. They are Char Kobe President, Robyn Coyne Secretary, Jean Herbst Treasurer, Josephine Lustik, Bernice Nemanich and Pat Butterbach Trustees, Pat Schager Reporter and Nancy Horwath Sgt. at Arms.

Congratulations to members Wayne and Isabel Atkinson who were married recently and to member Cindy (Gudac) Ribolic on her recent marriage. Congratulations to Pam McGuire on her election win for Circuit Clerk.

Condolences are extended to member Joyce Korst on the passing of her husband, member Richard. Also to member Nancy Ursitti on the passing of her daughter member Kathleen Ursitti, member Georgene Agnich on the passing of her mother. Also member Alice Stiglic on the passing of her husband and to the family of member Mary Marolt. Mary was National Treasurer for 10 years. Condolences are also extended to members Pamela, Elizabeth, Katherine, Joseph and Guadalupe Ancel, Vera and Gordon Muir, Carita, Hannah and Maria Girman, and Marge Franze on the passing of their loved one.

Remember the January meeting where along with the installation of officers, a buffet dinner will be served. February meeting will have guest speaker James Lilek showing a CD of his recent tour of Croatia and Slovenia.

PAT FIGUROWSKI

Branch 20 Scholarships

Adult Continuing Education Scholarship:

Member 21 years of age or over who is pursuing advanced or continuing education.

High School Scholarship:

Graduating eighth grader accepted to one of the Catholic high schools and is enrolled for the fall 2009 semester.

High School Scholarship:

Current high school student who wishes to continue in a Catholic high school or is planning to transfer from a public high school to a Catholic high school.

Scholastic ability must be shown as well as an evaluation of the applicant's character and code of behavior. For eligibility information and application forms, contact:

Branch 20 Scholarship Program, %Theresa Burns
1109 Plaza Drive, Joliet, IL 60435-3844
Phone: 815.725.5319

Applications must be received prior to April 1, 2009

BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Dober Dan! It is with great sadness that we report the passing of one of our dear members, Frances (Terselic) Puetz. Frances was 94 and an active member of our branch. We extend our deepest sympathy to her daughter Joan and son Gary.

What would we do without tradition and customs? It's kind of like the glue that holds everything together. From one season to the next we follow our traditions and customs. One of those customs involves chestnuts. "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire" sure brings back memories for me. As a child, I can remember my father making a small fire in the backyard and roasting chestnuts in a large pan. We'd then all sit around and enjoy the delicacy and of course you couldn't forget the small glass of home made wine and perhaps a song or two. Those were the days. Until next time, may your hearts be filled with peace and love.

LORETTA STORY 9lives@comcast.net

BRANCH 35 - Aurora, Minnesota

Greetings to all branches from Aurora. Before I go any further, I wish to thank each and every member of our branch for all your help and contributions. Because of you, our convention was a great success. Our attendance was small but enough to hold a meeting. We discussed the calendars, Zarja project and it was decided that we would order calendars from the Ely Branch rather than sell them. The Zarja project was agreed to put on hold until the winter months. A motion was made to send a check to the scholarship fund for \$25.

Another motion was to send a check to Gospod: Msgr. Tone Kompare at the St. John the Baptist Parish for \$25 for the "Home for the Elderly" fund raiser. This "Home for the Elderly" is being constructed in Trnovo, Slovenia and was the wish of Architect, Joze Plecnik, as this home belonged to his family. Anyone wishing to help them in this cause may send a check to: John the Baptist Home, Kolezijska 1, SL: 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija. They will be happy to accept any amount of help and also keep them in your prayers for success. After closing the meeting, prizes were drawn and a delicious pumpkin dessert was served plus a cardamom bread and zucchini bread. We thank Julie Pirnat and Pauline Korpela for the great lunch.

Lisa Ochsendorf of Hugo, MN completed the Twin Cities 26 mile Marathon. Lisa has trained for this for a long time, completing Grandma's 10k and a 20-mile marathon. The Twin Cities Marathon was her goal for now. Lisa's daughter, Amanda, traveled home from Loyola University in Chicago to support her Mom along with her brother, Marcus, and many friends and relatives. Her parents, Anita and Frank Vovk are really proud of her accomplishments. Cestitke, Lisa!!!

ANITA VOVK 218.229.3202 gospanita@yahoo.com

Lisa Ochsendorf



BRANCH 39 - Biwabik, Minnesota

Srecno Novo Leto to all our SWUA members from Branch 39 in Biwabik, MN. We hope you all had a joyful Christmas and we pray that 2009 brings us all health and happiness.

It looks like 2009 will be an exciting year for SWUA. A celebration of eighty (80) years of Zarja and a Secrets of Slovenia tour in May. The calendars were a great gift and the photos of Slovenia are inspiring. If you have not yet purchased a calendar, you are missing a treat. I especially like the noting of all the Slovenian holidays and the corresponding American holidays. I can remember observing some of the Saints days in our home as a child. St. Martin's Day in November was the most vivid. That was the day when the "new wine" was tasted. Does anyone else remember? The Slovenian tour sounds great.

We are celebrating our Branch Christmas party on January 4th, 2009. The members always enjoy the dice game with the wrapped gifts.

Members have been busy indexing the articles of our past Zarja's. You can read about that in Mary Lou's article about this project. It's amazing how simple and fun it is, once you begin. Do a page or two while you are having your morning coffee. Mary Lou graciously spent a morning with our Iron Range branches to instruct us on procedure. The Aurora branch served us lunch and we all had an interesting day. Zbogam

ROSEMARY (SERTICH) RIBICH
rribich@northlc.com

BRANCH 42 - Maple Heights, Ohio

To those of you who did not attend our November 8th meeting you missed a most enjoyable speaker in Bob Dolgan, the retired Cleveland Plain Dealer sports writer. Bob's book on Cleveland sports legends titled "Heroes, Scamps and Good Guys" and his book on "The Real Frankie Yankovic" was the subject of his presentation. He related many interesting stories about popular sports figures and answered questions from the audience. His revealing commentary on the Polka King was strategically paced to allow his wife, Cilka Dolgan to lead a community sing of the million dollar sellers, "The Blue Skirt Waltz" and "Just Because".

In October we lost another Slovenian stalwart with the passing of Rose Gregoric Meljac. May her soul and all the souls of our dear departed members rest in heavenly peace.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, February 14th at 11:00 am at the Maple Heights Library. We are asking all members to make a concerted effort to attend even if you have never done so before. This will be a very important meeting, which could well determine the fate of our branch. We implore our many out-of-state members who receive the Zarja to send us their input to help a struggling membership in deciding how best to continue a 78 year membership. Won't you all please help? Send your comments to Lil Sadowski, 5534 Beach Court, Parma, Ohio 44134 or call 216.398.4367 or email LRSadow@aol.com

LIL SADOWSKI

BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Our branch held a very successful bake sale at the 88th St. School on Election Day. Many thanks to all who contributed their special bakery and to the members who worked so diligently managing the sales.

With the holidays being so busy for everyone, we will have our Branch Christmas Party on January 10, 2009 at Klemmers Banquet Center at noon. The cost is \$17.00 and reservations are a MUST. Please call Josephine Janezic.

Our next regularly scheduled meeting is February 22, 2009, at 10 am and will be a brunch at Meyer's Restaurant on S. 76th St. and W. Coldspring Rd. If you are unable to make our noon week day meetings, here's your chance to attend and to be able to socialize with other members. Mark your calendars!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday Season. My wish for 2009, is for Good Health, Happiness and Peace.

MICI BREGANT

BRANCH 47 - Garfield Heights, Ohio

Hope everyone's holidays were very blessed and memorable. Our next meeting will be on March 8 at the Maple Hts. Library at 1:00 pm. Our Member of the Year Celebration will be May 2, 2009 at Piper's 3 at 4:30 pm. More details to follow. Mass for Living and Deceased members is on June 7, 2009 at St. Lawrence Church 10:00 Mass.

Branch 47 will be hosting the Ohio Regional Convention on October 4th, 2009. Mass at St. Lawrence at 10:00 am. A simple luncheon is planned at the Slovenian National Home on 80th St. Further details to follow.

Birthday wishes go out to all members for November, December, January and February.

Details of our Christmas celebration and election of officers will be in a later issue. Contact Elsie Spellacy at 330.699.0031 or Olga Dorchak at 330.468.7989 for further information.

KATHERINE WALLACE

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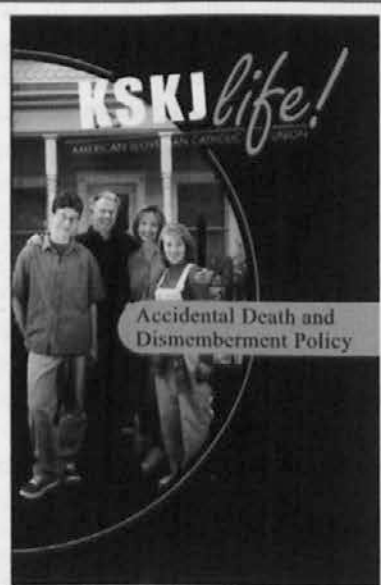
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BRANCH 50 - Euclid, Ohio

On Sunday, October 5th, our Branch hosted the 2008 Ohio SWUA convention, beginning with Mass at Saint Vitus Church in Cleveland Ohio, followed by a delicious breakfast buffet at the Saint Vitus Village prepared by Linda Plecnik. Despite heavier than expected turnout to this annual event, Linda and her remarkable crew attended to everyone's needs. In addition to a splendid array of finger pastries for dessert, a beautifully decorated cake was donated by yours truly. Our branch president, Rose Mary Toth, who also serves as vice president for the convention, presided in Cookie Maxin's absence. Members of several other Ohio branches were present, including Branch 10 (Steffie Segulin and two guests), Branch 14 (Diane Varney and three guests), former Branch 32 (Pam Dirk), Branch 47 (Olga Dorchak and thirteen guests), and Branch 54 (Joanne Ponikvar with six guests). These were in addition to thirteen Branch 50 members, including former members of Branch 32 of Euclid, which recently merged into Branch 50, as well as friends of the SWUA. Marge Church, Director of the SWUA Scholarship Foundation gave a compelling report explaining the importance of fundraising and donations to insure the future of the Scholarship, encouraging all in attendance to help the program with their generosity. Also in attendance was Fr. Victor Cimperman of Saint Vitus, and Kathy Dorchak Ferrante, past National President, and her mother, Olga Dorchak. Popular radio personality Tony Petkovsek spoke on upcoming Kollander travel opportunities and the annual Thanksgiving Polka Hall of Fame events in Cleveland. Entertainment was provided by Joey Tomsick who played the button box accordion, but also spoke about the important work he is involved with for the Geauga County

Department on Aging, which provides daily services to 22,000 seniors enabling them to live independently at home. Member Phil Hrvatin gave an update on the very timely and important topic of the planning for a new Slovenian community newspaper. Beyond the spiritual gathering at Mass, the great food, the important community news updates, and musical entertainment, the convention also provided an exciting 50-50 raffle and plenty of giveaways including baskets made by Cookie Maxin and plants donated by Rose Mary Toth and others. Rose Mary thanked everyone for attending and Father Victor Cimperman.

At our October Branch meeting, Ivanka Matic reported on the recent bus excursion for Baraga Days in Lemont and Joliet Illinois, which included a trip to the SWUA National Museum in Joliet. The trip included a visit to the impressive national shrine of Saint Maximilian Kolbe in Libertyville, Illinois. Those interested in the Cause of Bishop Baraga should visit the Bishop Baraga Association's website at www.bishopbaraga.org.

BRANCH 54 - Warren, Ohio

Greetings and Happy New Year. I hope that the holiday season was enjoyable and time was spent with your loved ones. Our Christmas luncheon was well attended and Louise Vett, Fran Sainato and myself were in charge of the festivities. We will try to have a meeting in February or March, depending on the weather.

Two of our faithful members lost their husbands. Our deepest sympathy to Mary Diana and family, on the passing of "Cappy" Diana. He will be sorely missed by his loved ones. A week later, Virginia Shine's, husband, Albin died after a tragic fall and complications. He was the secretary



of our AMLA 32 for many years and also had been a former member of the Supreme Board in Cleveland. Our deepest sympathy and prayers to the families.

I attended the Ohio Convention in Cleveland at St. Vitus Parish. It was an inspiring Mass, brunch and informative meeting. Joey Tomsick entertained us with his accordion and gave a talk on seniors. The St. Vitus Village, where the brunch and meeting was held is a beautiful facility. It was nice to see some of the women that I met at the 2007 National Convention especially Lil and Jackie.

May 2009, bring all our members and families much health and happiness and peace with God's many blessings.

JOANNE PONIKVAR

BRANCH 55 - Girard, Ohio

Greetings and Happy New Year 2009 from Branch 55! It is hard to believe that a new year is upon us already, I hope that the holiday season was enjoyable and memorable for all. In Branch news, anyone interested in information about upcoming meetings and events is asked to please contact Maria Selak or Anka Krakora.

As the cold weather lingers for a few months longer, it is good to be reminded of the peace and silence nature brings to us during the winter season. As the Earth sleeps and prepares for the renewal that comes with the springtime, let us too take time to reflect upon our own lives, and renew our hopes and dreams for this New Year 2009!

*Winter Trees by William Carlos Williams
All the complicated details of the attiring and the
disattiring are completed! A liquid moon moves
gently among the long branches. Thus having
prepared their buds against a sure winter the wise
trees stand sleeping in the cold.*

MONICA SELAK

BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

Greetings to everyone. Did you get your SWUA calendar yet? I am so pleased with mine; it even has my Saint's Day marked and the pictures are lovely. We have had another successful bakeless bake sale. Thank you to everyone who contributed, especially our out of town members. We appreciate your generosity.

We have more new members and extend a warm welcome to junior members Margaret Elaine Kelley and Jacqueline Scharf and adult members Jessica Scharf, Jennifer Entrican and Rosie Kamnikar. If anyone remembers Branch 89's aprons from the last national convention; it was Rosie who made them.

The Girl Scouts are holding an International Festival next March and we are planning to have a booth at it. It sounds like a lot of fun and maybe we can teach the polka to share our Slovenian culture. We are looking forward to it and will probably find some Slovenians who don't know

very much about where their ancestors came from or our organization. It will be a great opportunity.

As always, we would love to hear from you.

BARBARA BRUCH barbarabruich@yahoo.com

815.339.2714

BRANCH 93 - New York, New York

Please read the article on our recent event in this issue of *Zarja* pages 14-17! For further information on this or upcoming events contact: Lynn Zalokar, 201.947.6336, lzalokar@yahoo.com Website: www.swuanyc.org Yahoo group, to subscribe e-mail: SWUABranch93NYC-subscribe@yahoogroups.com Facebook page: www.facebook.com (SWUA Branch 93 NYC is under Groups, Type: Organizations, Sub-Type: Clubs & Societies)

BRANCH 99 - Lemont, Illinois

Greetings to all, and I hope 2009 has you feeling fine! There are many new and exciting things to mark on your calendars for this year and always things to celebrate from 2008! Our December 7th cookie sale was once again a success thanks to all your contributions! The strudel culinary class in November was fun as well, with 17 attendees! It is safe to say that our heritage is being passed on through the next generation in the kitchen.

Speaking of delicious cooking, there will be a meeting on January 23 at 1pm at the Bolingbrook Olive Garden (215 S. Weber Rd.) at a cost of five dollars per person, where members are invited to meet our regional president, Joe Skala.

Also, Branch 99 would like to take this opportunity to say Happy Valentine's Day and there will be no events in February. But don't worry, because we will have another meeting at the SCC on March 29th in the library.

Just so everybody knows, any information for registering to volunteer at events can be done through our new secretary, Barb Block at barbandlarryblock@att.net or by phone 630.379.6442. If there is anything you would like to see in future articles, please contact me! In addition, there are still 2009 calendars on sale for \$10 to help support the cost of the legendary *Zarja* magazine.

Finally, we lift up our former vice president Jean Gale, who passed away on October 25, 2008. Blessings to her family, and to all.

OLIVIA jazzdancer8807@yahoo.com

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Celebrating our 100th Year!

BRANCH 100 - Fontana, California

Our members are in the midst of the Holiday Season as I write this. It is such a wonderful time of the year for family and friends. We look forward to the family meals and some of the Slovenian traditions. Of course, the potica will be the centerpiece of our Christmas specialties. Last Christmas I was inspired by the "Potica Contest" that took place at the SWUA Convention at Starved Rock, IL to bake a tall, round potica in addition to the usual loaves that I make for the holidays. It turned out beautifully and all are looking forward to another one so that we can reminisce about Grandma Mici's potica once again. While taking a few days off with our daughter, Janet and her husband recently, she remarked how our family was so spoiled with the wonderful and nutritious foods that we have enjoyed most of our lives, fresh vegetables, homemade soups and stews with everything made from scratch. Grandma started it all when she came from Slovenia to Chicago in 1921. She had been a cook for five years at a gostilna in the village of Kropa during the "Great War" and brought the knowledge of simple, tasty meals along with the traditional food of Gorenjska with her...DELICIOUS!

And now, a story about CHESTNUTS, the theme of this magazine issue! When our son, Ken was a college student he went to Slovenia to take advantage of the Summer Language School that was being held in Kranj at that time.



Petra, granma Weber, Slavica, Gunther, Jean and Arnold Koci

It was a month of language lessons, cultural lessons, as well as some touring of Slovenia. He met a student from Austria in class, who has a



Gunther Duetschl roasting chestnuts

Slovenian mother and Austrian father, Petra Weber. During the next few years our family had an opportunity to visit Petra and her family and she actually came to California for some months to learn the English language so that she could teach Kindergarten. In 1998, my husband Arnold and I traveled to Austria and many other places in Europe, and visited with the Weber family. It was October and Petra's parents, Gunther and Slavica took us touring around their region of Stiermark (Stajersko in Slovenian). We stopped along the way and picked bags full of chestnuts and brought them back to the hunting lodge in Kainach that evening. It was kind of interesting because Petra's husband grew up in this country house and now they had updated their living quarters, but saved a part of the house in its original state. In the old tradition we had a wonderful evening with Petra's husband roasting the chestnuts over the old wood stove, and the whole family joining together for roasted chestnuts, the new wine "sturm" followed by delicious cheeses, cold cuts and breads. Gunther Sr. brought out his accordion to set the tone and we ate, drank and sang some of the old songs. It was an evening to remember!

JEAN KOCI
ajkoci@cox.net

BRANCH 102 - Willard, Wisconsin

It has been quiet here in the country around Willard this past fall. It is hard for us to believe it is already January. Our Christmas party was held On December 6th. Members enjoyed a potluck, a chance to visit with one another and a grab bag present exchange. Several of our members also attended the Slovenska Druzba meeting and party held on December 7th. We are thankful that travel home to Willard was not hampered by snow or ice making it possible for more members to attend.

Birthday greetings to first generation, Willard resident Anne Snedic, who turned 100 years young on November 11th. Anne currently resides at the Clark County Health Care Center. Birthday wishes also go to Agnes Debevec, Gertrude Bukovec, Christine Lemerande, Aimee Nething, Sue Pakiz, Bonnie Brierton, Frieda Klancher, Ellen Plautz, Christine Polzin and junior member Zoe Folland (Zoe was 2 years old on December 20th).

Get well wishes are sent to members George Plautz (Sr.) and Pat Sixel.

Rose and Frank Pakiz report the birth of a new great-grandson, Gavin Joseph on October 24th. Gavin and his parents, Andy Pakiz and Anna Phelen live in Fort Collins, Colorado.

From all the members of Branch 102 and everyone who shares our Slovenian heritage from Willard, our prayers are sent to you for a peaceful 2009. Until next time.

KAREN HRIBAR-SPIRES
kleespires@comcast.net

BRANCH 103 - Washington D.C.

After the September 7th monthly Slovenian Mass held in the Slovenian Chapel at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the branch hosted a lunch for members. The event was judged as quite successful and may become a yearly event.

After the October 5th Mass, we joined KSKJ group's annual Communion breakfast held in the Shrine cafeteria.

During the summer, Tatjana Zunko organized an outdoor picnic with attendees bringing different food items. The event was very enjoyable and attendees expressed the wish that the picnic be repeated.



Church in Cooperstown, NY, she began as a tribute to her deceased parents, Mary and Frank. Virginia Roland is recuperating

from open-heart surgery. In November, Jim Cesnik returned home after a stay in the hospital. We wish good health to both Virginia and Jim.

During early summer Mimi Mejac, accompanied by 13 Branch 103 family members (son Peter, daughters Maria and Helen, spouses Sarah, Chuck, and Paul, and grandchildren, Kevin, Tony, Christy, Nicholas, Andrew, Andrea, Matthew, and Meghan) cruised from Venice to several ports in Greece and to Split, Croatia. When the cruise ended, the group split up for visits with relatives and friends and sightseeing in Slovenia. On prior trips, Mimi and her late husband Conrad, had taken up to three grandchildren on their trips. For this trip Mimi decided to invite the entire family. Since their return, the cruise and the trip to Slovenia have remained the focal points of many conversations within the family.

In member news: Molly Thomas visited her daughters. Cindy Kukenburger is a cantor at St. Mary's Catholic



Kevin Mangold, recipient of an SWU scholarship and now a college senior, joined three other students from Penn State to participate in the "Battle of the Brains"; a contest held at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania. They competed against students from 114 universities in solving seven computer technology problems during a set time period. He and each member of his team won monetary scholarships. Kevin's brother Tony, also a Branch 103 member, is now a high school senior. He is a volunteer firefighter and also participated in a Maryland carpentry competition.

In late December, Washington Slovenian Bishop Jamnik visited the community, during his fact-finding trip to the Catholic University of America. The bishop said Mass at the Slovenian Chapel and participated in a social attended by Slovenian community members.

During early August, twenty-nine family members of Mary Lou Terselic, gathered at their home. Susan Eckert, and her three daughters, Tabitha, Ruth Anna and Sarah were present. Susan's husband, Tim, daughter, Tabitha, and son, Peter are studying at Trinity Evangelical University north of Chicago. Nancy Terselic, and husband, Jason Butsch, also traveled from Cincinnati. Rich's interest continues in preserving old Slovenian music from 78 rpm phonograph records. If you have any old records that you would like to share, contact him at 301.874.2446 or rat@tidalwave.net.

Closing Note: SWU Scholarship Director Mary Turvey issued an appeal for help in keeping the scholarship program afloat so that young students may continue to benefit. Read the inside front cover of the November/December issue of the Zarja for details and be generous in supporting this important SWUA activity.

MIMI MEJAC and
MARY LOU TERSELIC

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BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

One of the highlights of 2008 for us was the picnic we had after mass August 3rd. It went so well that we are considering making it into an annual event. About 20 people gathered outside of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in the garden area for some great food and conversation. Normally, we get together in the Shrine's cafeteria after mass to catch up but this was a nice change. With the sound of water spraying up from a nearby fountain and streams of sunshine coming through tree branches overhead, we ate a variety of Slovenian foods, talked and nurtured our Slovenian heritage.

We are fortunate to have our own chapel to worship in every first Sunday of the month: the Chapel of Our Lady of Brezje. Dedicated in August 15, 1971, it's just one chapel of many devoted to numerous nationalities that line the sides of the awe-inspiring National Shrine. Though the chapel is small, its mere 300 square feet can hold about 20-30 people, our pride for it is immeasurable. The walls are made of several kinds of Italian marble. Inscribed into this marble are many wise and devotional quotes, including one from the great Slovenian poet Ivan Cankar: "The merciful eyes of our Mother of Brezje will look upon you and you will be consoled." Thanks to all those who worked so hard and donated so much to make it a reality.

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BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities, Minnesota

As we look back and reflect on 2008, Branch 109 (Twin Cities Slovenians) would like to summarize our accomplishments along with the members who helped make these events memorable.

1. Festival of Nations: "Slovenian Art and Architecture" Coordinated by Jim Smrekar, featuring artists Tom Moren and Sue Rademacher. DVD highlighting the theme with music: Frank Medved and Don Palkovich. The brochure layout: Mary Schwanke and Norm Setnicker. The homemade kozolec: Miro Medved.

2. Baraga Picnic. Yul Yost coordinated the panel painting highlighting Bishop Baraga's life. This last panel, on the outside of Yul's stuccoed garage, completes the pictorial

5th Anniversary Pilgrimage and Brunch Celebration



of Baraga's life. Our Branch is indebted to Yul's passion of the Slovenian culture- wine making, gardening, cooking and love of history.

3. Forget-me-nots Book Tour with author, Majda Koren and coordinator Spela Brecej. The TC Slovenians joined with the "St. Cloud KSKJ Slovenians" for a two-day tour and book reading in Roseville and St. Cloud. Majda and Spela ended their stay with a shopping trip to the Mall of America. Coordinating this event were the following: Mary Ann Palmer, Diane Debevec Kiffmeyer, Gerry Karakas Moen, Miro and Karen Medved and Norm Setnicker.

4. Hosting Dr. Elizabeth Haven Hawley from the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Hawley's power point presentation highlighted the Slovenian collections, programs and projects, which the IHRC is involved. We were especially interested in the back issues of the Zarja and how we could contribute to setting up the databases for each issue of the Zarja- a project, which Mary Lou Voelk has undertaken. The IHRC is a treasure trove of Slovenian books, papers, group records and oral histories.

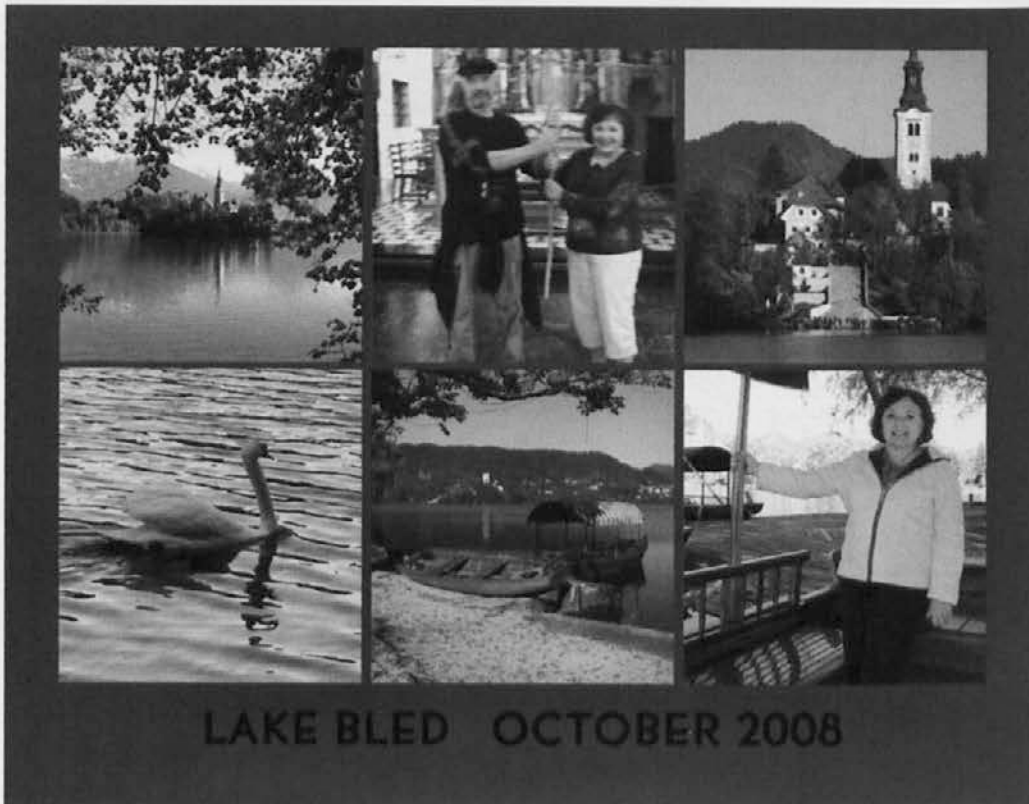
5. St. Martin's Day Wine Tasting Event held at Andrew Percic's "Nectary Restaurant featured our local button box players: Karen Medved and Shelby Setnicker sharing their traditional



**SLOVENIA:
BORDER, POSTOJNSKA
CAVE, LJUBLJANA**



**IRON WORKS TOWN OF
KROPA, SLOVENIA
OCT. 8, 2008**



LAKE BLED OCTOBER 2008

Slovenian tunes for a backdrop of wine tasting and storytelling. Don Palkovich coordinated this fun event.

6. Slovenian Children's Christmas. Mary Percic Bernard headed this December event by teaching nine boys and girls in the singing of "Silent Night" in Slovenian. She also taught them some Slovenian words and phrases that were appropriate for the season. The program ended with the membership joining the children in singing "Silent Night" in Slovenian. SRECNO NOVO LETO 2009 from the Twin Cities Slovenians: Branch109.

Illinois/Indiana Regional Convention Report

Joliet, Illinois – October 19, 2008

Submitted by Joe Skala, Regional President

Dober Dan, The IL/IN Regional Convention was on October 19, in Joliet, IL and was hosted by Branch 20. This was an early morning meeting followed by the celebration of Branch 20's 80th Anniversary. We arrived at 7:30 am and prior to the start of the Convention we were treated to the best apple strudel and potica I ever tasted.

We opened the Convention at 8:30 am with a prayer for our deceased members and our military personal; also a pledge of allegiance. We were honored to have a presence of two National Officers, Denise Bartlett, National Treasurer, Carol Ryba, National VP of the Home Office and National Auditors Rita Bottomly and Gen Buol. It was during this introduction we were informed that our National President, Bonnie Pohar Prokup, Zarja Editor, Debbie Pohar and other National Officers were in Slovenia to gather more authentic culinary recipes for *Zarja*. Yvonne Kalokey, Regional President of Wisconsin also attended.

Four of our eight branch Presidents were present: Branch 2 - Fran Morrison, Branch 16 - Marjorie Mitchell, Branch 20 - Char Kobe and the recent President of Branch 99 - Corrine Leskovar. Branch 24 - President Loretta Story and Branch 89 - Secretary Barbara Bruch sent reports on their branches.

Minutes of the 2007 IL/IN Convention, hosted by Branch 5 were read and approved. Correspondence directed to the Convention included a spirited note from National President, Bonnie Prokup and a beautifully written Slovenian-American history of the *Zarja* by Editor, Debbie

Pohar. A summary of her letter tells how the *Zarja* started during the adverse time of the Great Depression and since its start has never missed a publication. It is the oldest ethnic publication in the country. The binding force of the SWUA. A special thanks for remembering our Convention during your busy schedule.

Branch reports were read either by a Branch representative or by me. The branches which did not report were contacted after the Convention and are included below.

A summary of the branch reports shows that seven of our eight branches are active and doing well. Meetings are held with good attendance, annual fund raisers, Christmas dinners, picnics or outings, baking classes, bake sales and bake less sales. Money is dispersed thru scholarships, children's Christmas parties, Churches, the needy, birthday cards, *Zarja* and Slovenian Heritage Museum. Events include Crowning of the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph's Day dinner and Member of the Year dinners. Members are kept active thru regular meetings, direct mail and new membership drives.

The convention was closed at 9:30 am, thanking our participating members and our host, Branch 20. A closing prayer was directed to our Patron Bishop Baraga for his recognition to sainthood. The rest of the day was spent celebrating Branch 20's anniversary starting with a Polka Mass at St. Joseph Church, a gourmet dinner and entertainment by the Kyle Korosa Orchestra and the Singing Slovenes. Hvala lepa.



As stated in the November/December issue of *Zarja*, Branch 93 reported Alenka Suhadolnik, Slovenian Consulate General in NYC invited a few Branch 93 members to meet with Barbara Miklič Türk, the wife of the Slovenian President. On September 26th a few members were also invited to attend a reception in honor of the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Danilo Turk.

Branch 93 members with President Dr. Danilo Turk and first lady Miklič Turk.

In the Kitchen with Slovenian Children Authors

with Jana Bauer, Author of *In the Land of Gingerbread*

by Karen Taylor, Zarja Journalist

Representing the Slovenian Women's Union of America, and more specifically our beloved *Zarja*, our journey to Slovenia was actually more of a pilgrimage than a sightseeing event, (although we managed to see some truly amazing sights and many amazing people) so we weren't traveling to the usual places. Instead our purpose was to try to experience the Slovenia of our ancestors in a way that would help us better understand who they were, their joys and struggles, their work and play, their daily life (which we learned will always include their daily bread) and their culture. By better understanding our families and the people of Slovenia we hoped to better understand ourselves, our own spirits and thereby enrich our lives as

Slovenian Americans. It is our hope and privilege to share our experience with you during our 80th Anniversary year.

For me it was a great fortune that the onset of our mission began with the author of our *Forget-me-not* book: *In the Land of Gingerbread*, Jana Bauer. But I'm getting ahead of myself....

As we prepared to land and got the chance to get our first glimpse of our "homeland" I was overcome by the beauty of trees on the hillside, dressed in the glorious colors of fall. It brought me a sense of peace and purpose. I was finally in Slovenia again, where I "belonged". In only a matter of moments, that sense of peace and tranquility was quickly replaced with the incredible chaos that comes with airports, customs, the juggling of luggage of seven people, and the loss of luggage of our editor, Debbie Pohar. In the midst of all of this commotion stood a quiet, serene, chestnut haired beauty who calmly allowed us to settle into a new time, place and culture and made all the arrangements necessary for us to have the offended luggage rejoin us along our journey. Did I mention amazing people?



Jana Bauer on the steps of her grandparents house that were featured in her book

Jana Bauer whisked several of us away and for the next several days, immersed us in a world that was different from any other I had previously experienced in Slovenia. She, her husband, author and playwright, Evald Flisar, and their 20-month-old son, Martin took us to spend a few days with her mother, Marija, in the mountains along the Croatian border.

Jana's chief concern in making all these arrangements was to ensure that we were on time to pick Martin up from pre-school. So like many of American women, she, too, is trying to balance the demands of marriage, motherhood and a professional career. As a well-known children's author with four books under her belt, another on the way and nomination for the prestigious Vecernica award, it looks like Jana has done just that, and made it look easy.

Over the next few days we were lucky enough to get the chance to really become a part of the daily rhythms of life in the mountains of Jana's childhood and the opportunity to get to know this remarkable young woman a bit better. Here's a few of the questions we asked her as we sat outside of the home of her grandparents and great-

grandparents, just a walk down the lane from the home in which she was raised.

Zarja: What lead you to become a children's author?

Jana Bauer: "I had such a good childhood, that's why I started writing." She went on to tell us that she would never have been a writer if she didn't have a father who was such a wonderful storyteller. He would often take her for long walks in the woods that surrounded her home and told her stories of gold in the mountains and the fairies that lived among the tree roots. This spurred the imagination and creativity of her youth and later inspired her to write as an adult. She said that her father would often be away for extended times due to his work and than her mother would try to fill in with bedtime stories but that Jana had to tell her that she just didn't tell it right. She would wait for her father's return and the "real, real stories" that only he could tell.

Z: Why did you choose to create a story about gingerbread?

J: "Because it is so magical" and that gingerbread is such a strong part of the Slovenian history and culture.



Z: Your story seems to be representative of so many parts of Slovenia. Is there any special significance to the illustrations that you have chosen for this book?

J: Each of the scenes were carefully constructed and many represent either her own childhood memories or well-known places in Slovenia. The first part of the book is intended to characterize the Kostel region in which she was raised and included the home that has passed from her great-grandparents to her grandparents. Other houses in the book symbolize the Prekmurje region in which her husband, Evald, was raised. Of course, the beehives are a unique part of Slovenian culture and the one at the end of this book looks very much like the one that stands outside her mother's home. The ice cream cones give us a glimpse of how Mt. Trglav might look to a child and the caves of Postojna are represented in chocolate complete with stalactites and stalagmites. Of course we all recognize the heart-shaped cookies for which Slovenia is known.



Z: How did you go about creating all of the fantastic gingerbread and candy scenes that are such an important part of your book?



J: I asked my mother to build the gingerbread houses that were to adorn the book. We began to shop for every type of unusual candy that we could find to make the various pieces of the scenery. My mother baked and worked for an entire month on it and when she was finally pleased

with her finished product she asked me "Is that it?" I had to tell her that we had only completed the first chapter! By the end she had built an entire village and it filled one whole room in the upstairs of her home. Jana's two-year-old niece (to whom the book is dedicated) used to want to sneak up on the pretense of wanting to see the village when in fact she wanted to eat its embellishments. Jana had to limit her to the number of pieces she was allowed to eat each week. By the end of the project, Jana said that she and her mother were working diligently to fend off the ants and bugs that had beaten a path to her gingerbread door.

Z: Is there a moral to the story? Something you want children to learn from *In the Land of Gingerbread*?

J: The story is about the importance of friendship and accepting and loving people for who they are. It is also about forgiveness and the fact that it is always better to be good and do the right thing rather than to choose the wrong path and be bad.

Z: Is there any one thing you would like to tell us about your book?

J: This book would never have been completed without my mother (Marija Bauer) and my brother, (Alen Bauer, who illustrated it). They made it possible.

Z: You are not only a writer; you also edit the Forget-me-not book series. Is there a big difference between a writer and an editor?

J: "Not really. As an editor you are actually a kind of surrogate parent to the books you edit, you worry about how well they will do, you devote a lot of your time to them. You make corrections, work with the author, look for the right illustrator and keep your fingers crossed that everything will work out. Often you worry more than you do about your own books, because you feel responsible to the people who have entrusted you with their work. And if one of the books wins a prize you are just as happy as if you had won it yourself for your own book. That's what being an editor is about dedication, especially if you are involved in publishing original work by Slovenian authors and illustrators. They get easily drowned in the multitude of translated titles. Publishing Slovenian books for children is almost an act of patriotism.

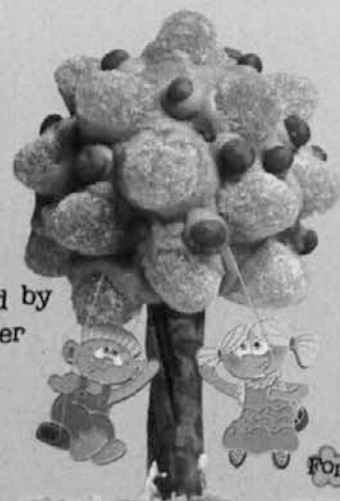
In the Land of Gingerbread

by Jana Bauer

Far beyond the red Christmas stocking lies the Land of Gingerbread, where the hills are soft and nicely baked, the fields taste of chocolate and the clouds in the sky are made of sugar foam. In the south of this land lies Gingerbread Village, and in this village lives a gingerbread girl by the name of Lisa. She lives completely alone, for her Daddy and Mummy have fallen into a black hole when the Land of Gingerbread was attacked by the terrible Big Mouth. One day Lisa decides to find the black hole and save her Mummy and Daddy. Together with her friend Crunchy she sets off through the Burnt Forest. Are they doomed? How will they escape from the horrible Big Mouth? Will Lisa ever see her parents again?

Jana Bauer *In the Land of Gingerbread*

Illustrated by
Alen Bauer



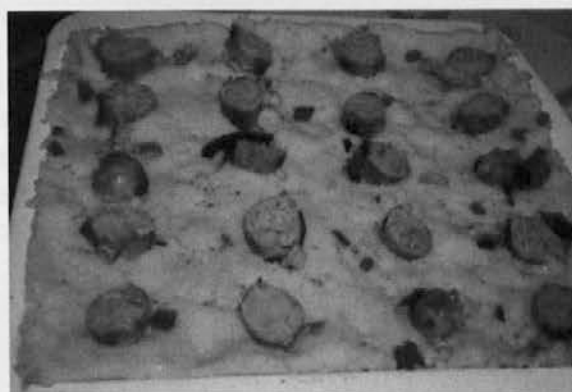
JANA's POTATO (KROMPIRJEVI) ZGANCI

1 pound potatoes
1 onion chopped
½ cup lard
½ cup cracklings

Boil the potatoes in enough salted water to cover by about 1 inch. When the potatoes are about half way cooked through add flour to the top of the potatoes in a ring, leaving a hole in the middle in which you can see the potatoes and broth. The broth should be simmering through the ring of flour. The flour should remain on top of the potatoes and you should not mix it in or submerge it in the broth. Place the lid on the pan

and continue to simmer at a low temperature for about 30 minutes. Remove the lid and remove 1 cup of the potato liquid to set aside. Mash the potatoes and flour together with a hand masher until you have a coarse mixture. Blend with a hand mixer until smooth. Slowly add the reserved cup of potato broth into the potato and flour mixture. Brown the cracklings in the lard.

SUGGESTION: Take any leftover zganci and spread it out onto a well oiled baking pan. Layer it with leftover meats (sliced sausages) or any other ingredients (such as pizza toppings and cheeses) and bake for 20-30 minutes until it is heated through and has formed a crust on the bottom.



Jana's leftover dish

Forget-me-nots books are available at:

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In the Land of Gingerbread by Jana Bauer

How Oscar Became a Detective by Andrej Rozman
Roza (**Sold Out**)

Emil Rabbit by Tatjana Kokalj

The Giant Hen by Desa Muck

Spots Becomes a World Champion by Evald Flisar

Louisa from Outer Space by Majda Koren

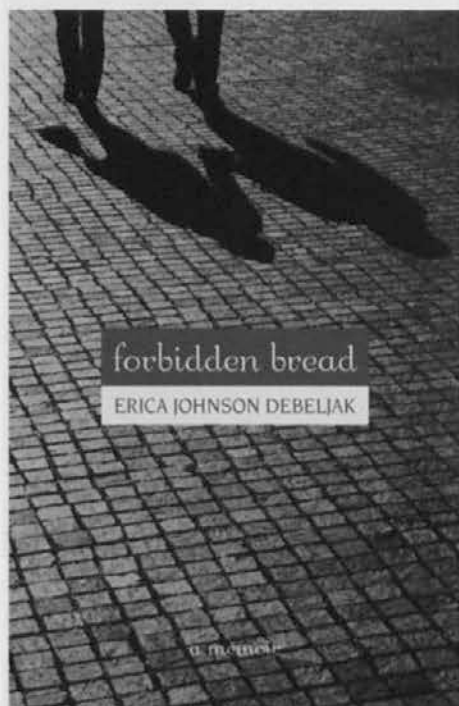
Anton's Circus by Peter Svetina



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Forbidden Bread

A Memoir

By Erica Johnson Debeljak

A witty, touching memoir of an East-West romance set in the tumultuous years of post-communist Slovenia

- Ljubljana, the setting of much of this story, is an increasingly popular tourist destination comparable to Prague for its culture and beauty
- Debeljak is the winner of the 2007 *Glimmer Train* "Family Matters" contest

Forbidden Bread is an unusual love story that covers great territory, both geographically and emotionally. The author leaves behind a successful career as an American financial analyst to pursue Ales Debeljak, a womanizing Slovenian poet who catches her attention at a cocktail party. The story begins in New York City, but quickly migrates, along with the author, to Slovenia. As she struggles to forge an identity in her new home, Slovenia itself undergoes the transformation from a communist to a capitalist society. A complicated language, politically-incorrect ethnic jokes, and old-fashioned sexism are just a few of the challenges Debeljak faces on her journey. Happily, she marries her poet and comes to love her new husband's family as well as the fast-disappearing rural traditions of this beautiful country. Set against the dramatic backdrop of the Slovenian Ten Day War and the much longer Yugoslav wars of succession, *Forbidden Bread* shows a worldly and courageous woman coming to grips with her new life and family situation in a rapidly changing European landscape.



Erica Johnson Debeljak's essays and stories have recently appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *Common Knowledge*, and *Eurozine*. She is the author of three previous books in Slovenia, among them *Foreigner in the House of Natives*. She lives with her husband and three children in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

BIOGRAPHY/MEMOIR

Translation Rights: World except Slovenian

SCALA TRANSLATION SERIES

North Atlantic Books

April 7, 2009

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 Spring 2009, 978-1-55643-740-3, \$15.95 US / \$17.95 CAN, Trade Paper, 304 pp., 5-5 x 8-5,
 Biography/Memoir

Jenka's Taste of Slovenia

New...Direct from Slovenia

In honor the 80th Anniversary of *Zarja the Dawn*, the Zarja staff has decided to expand the culinary section of the magazine so that you the readers, can enjoy the recipes and techniques that Jenka has learned on her recent trip to Slovenia. This new expansion will allow us to bring you more recipes, more great stories about the food (both traditional and being cooked currently) in Slovenia, wonderfully delicious pictures and of course great ideas to host a party or simple dinner Slovenian style. *Entertaining with a touch of Slovenia by Jenka* will be changed to *Jenka's Taste of Slovenia*. Our very own Jenka has been working with Marija Bauer from Slovenia, a woman who shares Jenka's "Love of Slovenia" and its culinary gifts. They are both 100% Slovenian and though a language barrier and an ocean separate, the two are able to overcome the obstacles with their kindred spirits.



In addition to the new and improved *Jenka's Taste of Slovenia*, we are also lucky enough to introduce a new column featuring recipes and stories from the authors of the *Forget-me-nots* Series. Each author will prepare a favorite recipe with exciting pictures of their dish, the author and book. Watch for featured authors such as Tatjana Lokalj of *Emil Rabbit*, Jana Bauer of *In the Land of Gingerbread*, and Majda Koren of *Louisa from Space* plus others creating unique dishes.



Also helping to make this special project a big success will be SWUA's National Secretary Karen Taylor who will join the Zarja staff for the duration of this special project and handle most of the writing duties specializing in Slovenian Culinary for the anniversary year. We would also like to thank SWUA member Bob Ficek and Zarja Editor Debbie Pohar for lending their photography skills for the project. We believe these new editions are something you will enjoy.

Dober Tek
The Zarja Staff

Marija and Jenka, cooking in Slovenia

Chestnuts

An Endearing Winter Treat

A popular tradition all over the world starting in the fall and lasting all winter is to serve hot chestnuts to family and friends. Today most all metropolitan cities in Europe and Eastern United States have roasted chestnuts for sale from a street kiosk. Chestnuts date back to prehistoric times and were probably one of the first foods eaten by man. Legend has it that the Greek army survived on their provisions of chestnuts during their retreat from Asia Minor in 401-399 B.C. Chestnuts have had a long history of cultivation in Europe. During Roman times, the chestnut was the basis of a vital economy in the Mediterranean Basin as well as rural and mountainous areas of Southern Europe. Chestnuts were a reliable food source. For several hundred years, Southern Europe in areas such as the Italian and Julian Alps was called the "Chestnut Civilization."

The majority of the chestnut trees, *Castanea sativa*, currently found in America are of native European stock, but Native Americans feasted on America's own variety, *Castanea dentata*, long before European immigrants introduced their stock to America. In the early 1900's, a fungal disease devastated the American chestnut population.

The harvest season usually lasts about three weeks as the burrs of the chestnut tree fall little by little in October. In rural European regions where chestnut trees are abundant, harvest season means drying a good portion of the crop to grind into flour. The chestnut flour is often substituted for some of the wheat flour in bread and pancake recipes. Wood smoking sheds are created for drying the nuts, a process that takes about two weeks. Since the fires have to be closely tended, this annual event becomes the center for social networking of the villages.

When purchasing fresh chestnuts in the grocery store, expect to find a few spoiled nuts in the batch. For that reason, it's best to buy a little extra to allow for the spoilage.



Because chestnuts are totally encased in the protective shell, it's impossible to tell if a chestnut is spoiled. Look for those that feel heavy for their size, have no cracks, and show no mold on the surface. It's best to keep whole, unpeeled fresh chestnuts refrigerated until you're ready to cook them; keeping in mind it's always best to eat foods when they're at their freshest.

Chestnuts are an endearing winter treat, yet in many parts of the world, chestnuts are often used as an everyday potato substitute. You can make use of the winter chestnut crop in a thousand different ways. Deliciously sweet as they are, chestnuts are laborious to prepare because they require peeling not only their outer shell, but also the inner skin, the pellicle, which likes to cling to the nut.

The most traditional and simple ways to prepare chestnuts to retain their sweetness and savories all begin with the same first step. Make a crisscross cut on the flat or domed side of the chestnut with a sharp, firm paring knife. From this point, the chestnuts can be roasted, baked or boiled.

Roasting chestnuts

Roasting over an open fire is easy to do. The proper pan is the most important item to have. The pan needs to have holes into the bottom to roast properly. For a 12" pan, there should be about 25-30 holes in the pan, evenly spaced. A

heavy duty aluminum plate can be used with holes punched in the bottom if no other pan is available. Place nuts in a single layer and gently shake them over a hot fire for about 15 minutes. Once the chestnuts are roasted, take a large bowl and line it with a large cloth towel. Place the roasted chestnuts into the bowl and cover them with a cloth. The chestnuts should sit in their own heat for approximately 2-4 minutes as this makes them easier to peel. After they have sat awhile, they are ready to be eaten.



Baking chestnuts

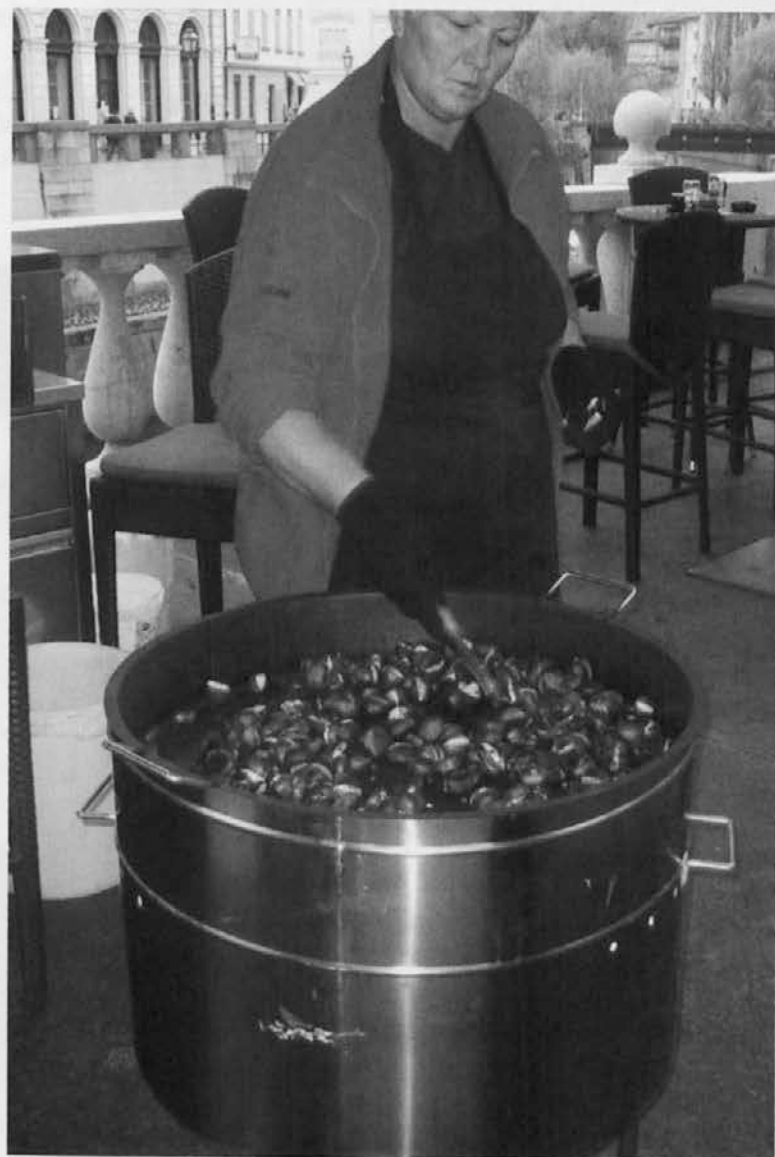
Place the nuts on a baking sheet and roast at 375 to 400 degrees for about 20 minutes. You can test for tenderness by piercing through the cut side with a fork. Peel with a firm, sharp paring knife, taking care to remove the dark brown inside skin.

Boiling chestnuts

Place the nuts into a saucepan, cover with water by two to three inches, and cover the pan. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce the heat slightly, and boil gently for 25 to 35 minutes. Cool them slightly and peel with a sharp paring knife, taking care to remove the brown inner skin as well. The shells and inner skin are easier to remove when the chestnuts are quite warm.

Chestnuts can be mashed, pickled, chopped, minced or sliced. Consider adding them to sauces or soups as a thickener and flavor enhancer. Chestnuts work well in savory dishes as well as sweet ones. They are often used as a substitute for potatoes or pasta in Europe due to their high starch content. Mashed or whole braised chestnuts are good partners with sweet potatoes, carrots, mushrooms and cabbage. However, most Americans use them in stuffings and desserts. Chestnuts can be enjoyed whole as a tasty snack and are best when served hot and accompanied by juice or a nice glass of wine and family and friends.

Dober Tek!



Chestnuts roasting on the street in Ljubljana

You're invited to a Chestnut Party

START A NEW TRADITION - Try hosting a Chestnut Party

Planning a party can be fun and this one is rather easy. Start off by choosing a date and creating a guest list. After that follow the suggestions below and you too can start a new tradition perfect for this time of the year.

Setting the mood:

Chestnuts are best when shared with appreciative fans sitting around a fireplace in a cozy casual room. Be sure to light plenty of candles, turn the lights down low and play some soft music in the background such as one of the latest CD's from the Singing Slovenes. If you need a copy you can purchase one from our gift shop by calling 815.727.1926.

A nice assortment of wines and cheeses pair up lovely. If you want to include more food try the sausage sandwiches with potato salad included in this issue. With the current martini craze across America, I have created a chestnut martini. This is very delicious and tastes just as great

without alcohol. But again, a chestnut party could be as simple as just chestnuts and wine.

The presentation of the food is very important. I like using my kitchen table best. I drape an assortment of tablecloths that coordinate with my color scheme. The cloths go all the way to the floor, the more cloths you use the better the look. I then go to my garage and look around for sturdy objects such as an old paint can, a case of soda or a step stool. I then build up my table and create different heights. I continue to drape clothes over these objects that were sitting in my garage. At the very top I add something spectacular whether it's a centerpiece or a tray of food that needs to stand out. If it's a small gathering I usually add the bar to this table.

For this kind of party I would suggest that my guests sit on my couch around the fireplace. I may add a few chairs from another room to create a cozy atmosphere.

Kostanjeva Krema Martini Chestnut Cream Martini

16 chestnuts, cooked and peeled
1 cup milk
¼ teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar
Whipping cream, heavy
Rum or Scotch whiskey
Whole chestnut for garnish
Chilled martini glasses

Cook (which ever way you want) chestnuts, peel them and puree in a blender. Add milk, confectioners' sugar and vanilla; mix again until smooth. Refrigerate the cream until ready to use.

Fill cocktail shaker with ice. Add 2 oz. of chestnut cream, 2 oz. of heavy whipping cream and 2 oz. of rum or Scotch whiskey and shake. Pour into frosted martini glass. Slit a whole chestnut and place on glass lip for garnish.

Marija's Klobase Sausage "Wiener" Treats

1 package of crescent roll dough
4 pieces of sausage, cooked

Wrap completely, each piece of sausage with the crescent roll dough. Place on greased baking sheet and bake per instructions on crescent roll package.

This is a very simple and easy way to make a great klobase treat but if you are more ambitious, you can make your own dough to wrap the sausage in.



Krompirjeva Solata

Marija's Slovenian Potato Salad

(Old Don's, from a *Men in a SWUA* World fame, favorite potato salad served at his chestnut party.)

4 pounds potatoes

Cook the potatoes with their jackets (skins) on. When cooked through peel the potatoes and cut them into thin slices

4 sour gherkins or pickles

6 slices soft salami

1 large onion

2 hard boiled eggs

3 slices medium-hard cheese

Dice each of the above ingredients and add to the potatoes.

3 tablespoons mayonnaise

2 tablespoons mustard

Touch of vinegar

Touch of pepper

Mix the above ingredients and add to the potato mixture. Refrigerate.



Kostanjeva Torta

Chestnut Cake

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

3 large eggs

2 cups sugar

¾ cup vegetable oil

¾ cup buttermilk

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 (8-ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained

1½ cups chopped chestnuts, pre-cooked

Cream cheese frosting

Line 4 (9-inch) round cake pans with wax paper; lightly grease and flour wax paper. Set pans aside.

Stir together flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. Beat eggs, sugar, oil, buttermilk and vanilla at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth. Add flour mixture, beating at low speed until blended. Fold in pineapple and 1 cup of chestnuts. Pour batter into prepared cake pans.

Bake at 350° for 25 to 30 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks 15 minutes. Remove from pans, and cool completely on wire racks.

Mix cream cheese frosting with remaining ½ cup of chopped chestnuts and spread between layers and on top and sides of cake.



ZARJA The Dawn

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The date was 1929 when the first *Zarja The Dawn* came hot off the press. Envision those early days when wagons were brimming full of *Zarja* being

the past and will be for the organization and its members up to the present day and into the future. The emergence of technology has allowed *Zarja* to continue its high standards of publishing as well as allowing it to become a state-of-the-art publication with the addition of color photography and articles by visiting writers from the Homeland.

Zarja is 80 years! This is truly a milestone in history, not merely for us as Slovenians, but because it appears that we are not only the oldest ethnic magazine in the United States but also quite possibly the oldest ethnic magazine in the world. To honor this great accomplishment of our 80th Anniversary, we have created a beautiful calendar for 2009. We hope that you join in as we celebrate this historic and proud event and that this calendar illustrates the extraordinary role that the *Zarja* has had through its historical presence in recording, preserving, honoring and nurturing our Slovenian heritage. For those of you that have already purchased a calendar we thank you and for those of you who still have not purchased one, we still have some available, please consider purchasing one. All of the proceeds are going directly to help our beloved magazine. Thank you - *The Zarja Staff*

pulled down the street in Slovenian neighborhoods for door-to-door delivery. In that by-gone era, when many of the founding members and our ancestors were newly immigrating to this country, *Zarja* was the teaching tool that guided the Slovenian woman into the new society.

Zarja was introduced only months prior to the worst stock market crash in history, which then launched the Great Depression. This horrendous financial and social catastrophe was followed by years of mass poverty where many people lost their jobs and were forced to live in shantytowns. Then on the heels of such hard wrought adversity came World War II, where not only life changed here in the U.S., but also dramatically in the homeland, Slovenia where our fellow Slovenians suffered greatly. Despite the overwhelming obstacles during that time, not a single issue of *Zarja* went unpublished! Down through the years, *Zarja* has always emerged as a strong voice, celebrating the courage and spirit of the women before us and keeping sisters throughout America in touch.

Today our younger generation has become a cross-cultural blend of heritages. Sadly, most of the Slovenian neighborhoods are gone, as are the Slovenian churches. Once again, *Zarja* has shown its perseverance and strength, this time as an informational tool. Following the vision, mission and purpose of SWUA, *Zarja* has become the communication agent that serves to preserve our legacy, promote our culture, honor our traditions, and educate through research and the provision of scholarships for our multigenerational, male and female membership. *Zarja* is the only magazine published primarily to honor and preserve the ethnic culture of Slovenian-Americans. Over 4,000 Slovenian-American families read it.

Throughout its longstanding history, not one issue of *Zarja* failed to come off the press. *Zarja* has been the binding force for the Slovenian immigrant woman of

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