

Zarja

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Spring 2022

The Dawn



Active beehive moved to collect honey in the Bela Krajina region.

Photo by Mary Glaze

Slovenian Union of America

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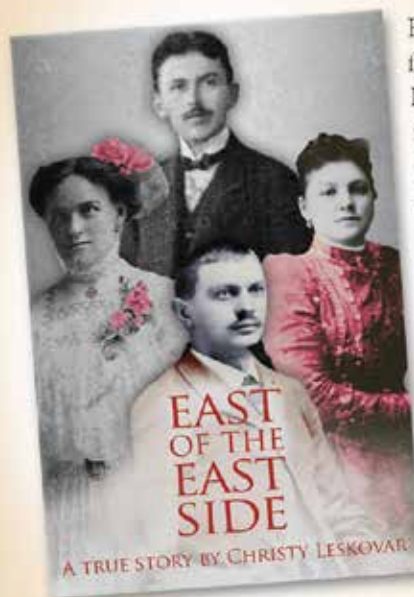
SLOVENIAN UNION OF AMERICA

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EAST OF THE EAST SIDE

A TRUE STORY BY CHRISTY LESKOVAR



From Slovenian peasant farms to the glittering Paris opera to the copper metropolis of Butte to the Flathead Indian Reservation, *East of the East Side* tells the remarkable true story of courageous immigrants swept by the tide of history and shaped by war, greed, and outsized personalities as they chase the American dream with surprising turns along the way.

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Zarja - The Dawn

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Communications for the next issue of publication

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

Submission Guidelines

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

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



THE STATE OF THE UNION

It's All About celebrating!

- Read the article on page 3 by Teri Rossi; all members of Branch 16 should be proud.
- Mark your calendar for June 15-17, 2023. It's Pueblo, here we come! Slovenian-Americans from throughout the country will convene in Colorado for a purpose: Their Slovenian heritage is a personal treasure. The 2023 SUA Convention in Pueblo will be a celebration of Slovenian heritage for everyone and will showcase Slovenian families whose ancestors immigrated to Leadville, Crested Butte, Pueblo, Denver, and other areas of Colorado. Yes, all are invited: SUA members, non-members, and anyone invigorated by singing and dancing. Mark June 15-17, 2023, on your calendar and start planning to celebrate all things Slovenian!

Potica, Pints, and Prayers in Old Bojon Town, a 44-page booklet on the history of Pueblo Slovenians, is a great read online:

http://www.historitecture.com/pdf/bojon_town_context.pdf

To view a 14-minute video on YouTube about Pueblo's Old Bojon Town or Eilers Heights neighborhood created by the same group, Hisoritecture, follow this link and simply skip the ads in the beginning:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXy1bbBBvZs>



Potica, Pints, and Prayers in Old Bojon Town

Prepared by:

Mary Therese Anstey
Cheri Yost
Adam Thomas
HISTORITECTURE, LLC

Wade Broadhead
City of Pueblo

Dawn DiPrince
El Pueblo Museum

Past and Present Residents of Bojon Town

Certified Local Government Grant
CO-13-017

July 2014



- Giving Tuesday is the cornerstone of the Slovenian Union of America's annual fundraising efforts. A top priority from this annual promotion is to award grants to our young SUA scholars. Because of you, we were able to raise an incredible \$1,175 in just 24 hours!



The passion and commitment from donors like you keep our Slovenian heritage alive for future generations. We hope to make you proud when we use these funds to make scholarship gifts in the coming year. Thank you for supporting the Slovenian Union of America's Giving Tuesday!

SUA Education & Cultural Grant Committee Grant Chair, Beverly Kochmann announces changes to the Grant Committee. Two members have resigned and a new person has been added.

David Boelens (Branch 30) dboelens@aurorapower.com

Debbie Duris (Branch 111) dcduris@gmail.com

Frances Kovatovich (Branch 35) velike2000@yahoo.com

The Slovenian Union of America is looking for a volunteer to help with our Feature Friday emails.

The ideal candidate would have experience specific to GoDaddy email marketing, or a general understanding of digital marketing and/or web design.

Please send contact information to: Rick Mutz, Membership Manager Slovenian Union of America

SUA 95th Anniversary and Proclamation Tour



Village of Rečica.

The SUA 95th Anniversary Tour including the dedication of a proclamation to our founder, Marie Prisland, was postponed several times because of COVID. The proclamation, in both English and Slovenian, was to be dedicated to the village of Rečica, population 502, the birthplace of Marie Prisland. The family of Marie Prisland, Alenka Jerak, Consul General, and Olivera Baumgarten of the Slovenian Consulate in Cleveland have been kept up-to-date. Once world travel is declared safe a tour will be at hand. The tour will be promoted in *Zarja*, the SUA website, and Feature Friday.

An email from Teri Rossi, Branch 16, included a photo and these questions: “Can you shed some light here? I think every branch may have had a group like this. Can you say what they did and what they were called?”

Overcome with curiosity, I dove into my collection of *Zarjas*. Most 1943 *Zarja* issues have a cadet photo on the cover. The issues and photos are all about Patriotism.



Articles throughout the 1940s include cadet news and photos. See the American flag in the photo below. From another source, a Cadet is carrying a banner with a lone star and a number, indicating the number of service men from said community serving in the war. Curiosity came over me again, including the question, “When did the Cadet groups begin?” The October 1933 *Zarja* issue had pertinent info. Read the message from the Supreme President, Marie Prisland.

Zarja holds historical information in member involvement during WW II. See for yourself. The National and University Library of Ljubljana has scanned *Zarja – The Dawn* magazines. They are online for everyone to read. Here is the link where you can simply search: www.dlib.si/.

Click on ENG and enter *Zarja the Dawn*. The following site will translate! <https://www.deepl.com/translator>. Yes, it is possible to copy *Zarja* articles and paste onto the translator page!

Regards,
Mary Lou Deyak Voelk
President
Slovenian Union of America

Activities of Our Branches

Marie Prisland,
Supreme President:

CONGRATULATIONS

It was a joyful surprise, to see the beautiful picture of our first and I believe, only “drill team” in our Union. Congratulations to the members of Branch No. 50! No doubt, the delegates of the last convention still remember with much pleasure, these girls for their fine assistance on the various programs during the convention. — I hope that the branches will take a lot of interest in this work, and organize such teams which could appear in public and thereby create more and better publicity for the branch and the Union. I know that Miss A. Hlasec of Cleveland, and our supreme officer, Mary Zore of Sheboygan, who are very much interested in this work, will be willing to give any instructions necessary. Miss Zore is very anxious to get a team started at her branch, and I hope that her starting one, will encourage other branches to do likewise. She will also strive to organize clubs such as social and sport clubs for the younger members in the branches. Here's hoping for real cooperation among our younger generation!

A Magnificent Ending of 2021 and a Beautiful Beginning in 2022 for Branch 16, South Chicago

The birth of this story occurred long ago, in the 1890s, when Slovenian immigrants arrived in a community known as the “East Side” in South Chicago, Illinois. The East Side was situated along the shores of Lake Michigan, in the land of steel mills and opportunity.

Here, with employment available in the steel mills, our Slovenian ancestors settled. By 1904, they built their own church. This small Slovenian Church, St. George, provided the centerpiece for their lives. Soon, they married and had children who became the first generation born in America!

St. George, of course, bustled with activity as the community settled in and grew. And, in February of 1928, the Slovenian women of St. George eagerly became the 16th Branch of a new organization, the Slovenian Women’s Union of America (SWUA). The support that women across the nation provided to each other through the SWUA made their lives easier and better through the sharing of knowledge and experiences. Still, they kept the Slovenian culture close to their hearts.

We all share a part of this timeline, a part of the history of a community, and a part of the bigger whole – the immigrant experience of Slovenians and of Slovenian women who came to the United States to build their future.

Fast forward to the present: December 2021

About a week before Christmas, I received a phone call from our member, Bob Kuhel: “You’re going to be getting a letter and check in the mail soon. My investments performed well this year, and I decided to make a charitable contribution to Branch 16.” This letter contained a check from his IRA fiduciary as a qualified charitable contribution “in Memory and Honor of his Mother, both Grandmothers, and many Aunts and Cousins that belonged to Branch 16 over the years.” This touched me deeply. I have never met these women, but I know them, and you do too. They are all of us, in a timeline, in the oneness of the world.

Bob is one of that special group we mentioned. A first-generation American of Slovenian descent, born to Slovenian immigrants. He grew up in that community on the Southeast Side of Chicago, near the shores of Lake Michigan. He graduated from Chicago’s Bowen High School, Loyola University, and The University of Notre Dame. His career in Hospital Administration has spanned over 45 years. We are fortunate that he is able to share his time and talent with the SUA as National Treasurer and with Branch 16 as a member. Bob hopes his donation can start a wave by others over the age of 72 to use their IRA and tax deferred accounts to support Slovenian culture and heritage.

So - to **Robert J. Kuhel, member of Branch 16 and National Treasurer of the Slovenian Union of America** - we thank you deeply in both a practical and spiritual way, for reminding us how strong our ties are as we look back on what came before, and reminding us once again of the value and importance of our shared heritage and culture. Your STUNNING gift of \$10,000 will aide Branch 16 in continuing on to 100, and we hope, far beyond. Bless you, Bob! **Hvala lepa za vašo radodarnost!**

-by Teri Rossi

New Members Welcome - Dobrodošli

Butler, Stefani R., 001
Klunk, Jolenne, 001
Mertens, Janet, 001
Pentek, Jennifer M., 001
Shircel, Terrance, 001
Berumen, Katie, 003
Blatnick, Irene, 003
Kihn, Morgan, 003
Levy, Diana, 003
Perko, Kay, 003
Sabo, Kathy, 003
Uehlein, Eric, 005
Amaya, Edgar Ivan, 016
Echevarria, Christina Divjak, 020
Guardia, Maleah, 020
Guardia, Molly, 020
Guardia, Quintin, 020
Otis, Jack Andrew, 020
Plut, Victoria, 020
Boblenz, Lori, 030
Haver, Monica, 030
Louise, Mary A., 030
Machek, Gerald, 030
Piersol, Michael, 030
Robertson, Paul, 030
Scott, Elizabeth, 030
Stafford, Zac, 030
VanMatre, Eloise, 030
Judnick, Barbara, 035
Judnick, Rosemarie, 035
Johnson, Catherine, 043
Cashin, Brian, 093
Vogrincic Martinez, Paula, 093
Hajdin, Melinda, 100
Starc-Horner, Loraine, 100
Cedilnik, Marjeta, 108
Lindquist, Cathy, 108
Parsons, Lori, 108
Winters, Jessica Senk, 108
Colarich, Peter, 109
Peternell, Bailey, 109
Stafford, Jill, 109
Zupancic, Sonja, 109
Spotts, David, 111
Starc, Joseph Frank, 111



BECOME A MEMBER OF SUA TODAY!

Benefits of Membership

- √ **Receive quarterly issues of *Zarja - The Dawn* magazine** that highlights Slovenia, its rich heritage, culture, traditions, recipes, and more.
- √ **Participate in local branch activities** which promote “Keeping the Slovenian Spirit Alive.”
- √ **Educational Grant and Cultural Grant Opportunities.**
- √ **Research** both of SUA’s historical and genealogical resources - the *Ivana Project* and the *Matti Register*, both long-term scanning projects of member documents since 1926.
- √ **Visit SUA’s website** with links to numerous Slovenian-American interests.
- √ **Visit SUA’s free Heritage Museum** in Joliet, Illinois, with Slovenian heritage exhibits and library.

New Member Application

Annual Member Support is payable each January and covers the period January through December.
Membership Renewal Notifications are sent annually in December.

- Adult (\$30 Member Support/*Zarja* Subscription) Junior – Birth to 18 (\$5 Member Support)
- International (\$55 Member Support/*Zarja* Subscription)

It is our policy to send one issue of *Zarja* to each address unless requested otherwise.

Please print the requested information below and send this application form with a check payable to:
Slovenian Union of America, 431 N. Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432-1703

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ M ___ F ___

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Branch Affiliation Number (if known): _____ Location: _____

Maiden Name: _____ Do you speak Slovenian? _____

Please describe your interest in Slovenia: _____

Slovenian Surnames (if applicable): _____

How did you hear about us? SUA member ___ newspaper ___ website ___ other _____

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

Applicant’s signature: _____ **Date:** _____

SUA operates exclusively for charitable, educational, and religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.



Slovenian Union of America

April's Showers of Dollars Drawing

April 2022 Fundraiser

The monies received will benefit the SUA National Convention in June 2023. Here is how the fundraiser works: Each day in the month of April 2022, one (1) winner will be chosen to win the cash prize for that day - \$65 or \$175. In addition, for their efforts, the persons selling each winning ticket will win \$10. The daily winner and the seller can be the same person and win both prizes.

**Entries may also be purchased online at slovenianunion.org.
There are no processing fees for online purchases.**

A minimum of 300 entries must be sold. The winner chosen on each Sunday in April will win \$175 each.
In addition, the top sellers (1st, 2nd, and 3rd places) will win \$150, \$100, and \$50 respectively.
This is a WINNING opportunity for everyone!

Thank you for your support!

A minimum of 300 entries must be sold. The winner chosen on each Sunday in April will win \$175.
In addition, the top sellers (1st, 2nd, and 3rd places) will win \$150, \$100, and \$50 respectively.
This is a WINNING opportunity for everyone!

Checks will be mailed to the winners. A complete list of winners will appear in a future issue of *Zarja - The Dawn*.



Top Seller Prizes

1st Place: \$150
2nd Place: \$100
3rd Place: \$50

APRIL 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 \$65 Prize	2 \$65 Prize
3 \$175 Prize	4 \$65 Prize	5 \$65 Prize	6 \$65 Prize	7 \$65 Prize	8 \$65 Prize	9 \$65 Prize
10 \$175 Prize	11 \$65 Prize	12 \$65 Prize	13 \$65 Prize	14 \$65 Prize	15 \$65 Prize	16 \$65 Prize
17 \$175 Prize	18 \$65 Prize	19 \$65 Prize	20 \$65 Prize	21 \$65 Prize	22 \$65 Prize	23 \$65 Prize
24 \$175 Prize	25 \$65 Prize	26 \$65 Prize	27 \$65 Prize	28 \$65 Prize	29 \$65 Prize	30 \$65 Prize



**\$10.00
per entry**

Cash prizes
totaling
\$2,990

No. of Entries: _____

Check Enclosed for: _____

Entry Form (Copies Accepted)

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Entrant's Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Seller's Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Branch Number and Location: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Please complete form and mail with your check in the amount of \$10, per entry, payable to SUA.

Send to: Debbie Duris • 9167 Briarwood Road • Macedonia, OH 44056 • (216) 212-2316

Donations Thank you! - Hvala lepa!

\$10,000 Donation

Robert J. Kuhel, 016,
Memory / honor of my Mother,
both Grandmothers, and many
Aunts and Cousins that belonged
to Branch 16 since the 1930's

\$300 Donation

John Voelk, 023,
Educational Grant via Benevity

\$250 Donation

Mary Lou Voelk, 023,
#GivingTuesday

\$150 Donation

Jane E. Mraz, +Frances Morison

\$120 Donation

Mary Ann Palmer, 109, SUA

\$100 Donation

Branch 02, +Frances Morison
Christopher Serazin,
+Agnes Serazin
Mary Glaize, 030, Zarja
Agnes Gaber, 002, SUA
Bernadette Blatnik, 111, SUA
Fred Adamic, Jr, 003, SUA
Geraldine Beha, 111, SUA
Jim Miklich, 100, SUA
Kirsten Williams, 111, SUA
Maria Natalia Bajuk, 108, SUA
Maria Skrilec, 093, SUA
Elizabeth A. Fox, 089,
H/O Immaculate Heart of Mary
Anthony Kambich, 020,
Educational Grant
+Helen & Anton J. Kambich
Raymond Smolich, 020,
Building Improvements
Carolyn M. Tomazic Engers, 020,
+Vickie Mikolic Hodgman
Mike Hodgman, 093,
+Vicki Hodgman (nee Mikolic)
Cindy Kreisl, 016,
+The Sebahar Sisters
Stephanie Helm, 030,
+The Masel Family

Sienna Haslup, 111,
+Teresa (Vrcek) Gorup
Milena Gobetz, 001,
+Prof. Dr. Edi Gobetz;
Educational Grant
Albina Medved, 023,
+Paula Mavec &
Theresa Vlajaljevich
Paul Lesnik, 100,
+Mary Verbic Lesnik
Janell Lukach, 089,
+Marilyn Argubright;
Educational Grant
Gary L. Sever, 108, +Luke Sever
Mike Sixel, 102,
+Josephine Artac and Pat Sixel
Carleen Ozanich, 109,
+Jennie Ozanich
Natasha Leskovsek, 108,
+Janez Arnez & Studia Slovenica
Karen DelRaso, 020,
+James & Lois Lausch
Judith Monshau Smith, 108,
+Grandparents
Mary and Jerry Mutz
Marion Steffy, 002,
+Felix, Anna, & Lee Jackopin
Kathleen DeMuth, 002,
+Corinne Leskovar
Elizabeth A. Fox, 089,
+Carolyn M Widmar
Jennifer Boudreau, 100,
+Anton, Frances, Martin, Edward,
Ted, & August Dragar
Marcelene Brann, 111,
+Albina Marsey & Charlene Glass
Beverly Kochmann, 109,
#GivingTuesday
Linda Edgington, 100,
#GivingTuesday
Mary Glaize, 030,
#GivingTuesday
Robert Kochmann, 109,
#GivingTuesday

\$88 Donation

Anthony Kambich, 020,
Scholarship Fund
H/O Anton & Helen Kambich

\$80 Donation

Mary Ann Partyka, 099,
+Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Schultz

\$70 Donation

Bernadine Medved, 109, SUA
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John Zakelj, 109, SUA
Jozica Tompa, 043, SUA
Ronald Erjavec, 020, SUA
Sonja Mosquin, 093, SUA
Kathleen Clime, 093,
H/O Kozole Family
Veronica Sustar, 043,
Building Improvements
Karen Zuga, 111, +Victoria Zuga
Rosemary Kostansek, 111,
+Rose Zuzek
Frances Susa, 026,
+Mary & Judith Susa
Cheryl D. Barkovich, 100,
+Joseph & Edith Barkovich
Mary Jane Vidmar Williamson,
108, +John, Jane & John Vidmar
Virginia Ivancich, 023,
+Helen Strukel;
Educational & Cultural Grants
Metza Jaksa Whiteley, 093,
+Anna Kocjan Jaksa;
Educational & Cultural Grants

\$50 Donation

Branch 43, #GivingTuesday
Branch 89,
Educational & Cultural Grants
Branch 89, Zarja
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+Jeanette Perpich Korsman
Donna Sadar, 035, SUA
Elisabeth Filipic, 093, SUA
Frank Murn, 043, SUA
Janet Marie C. Hagan, 109, SUA
Milena Gobetz, 001, SUA
Sonia Juran Kulesza, 030, SUA
William Tyler, 111, SUA
Carole Poirier, 111,
Educational Grant
Carolyn M. Tomazic Engers, 020,
Educational Grant

Carolyn M. Tomazic Engers, 020,
Cultural Grant
Carolyn M. Tomazic Engers, 020,
Building Improvements
Carolyn M. Tomazic Engers, 020,
+ Mary Brezovar Tomazic
Linda Edgington, 100,
Educational Grant
Maria Staresinic, 026,
Educational Grant
William Tyler, 111,
Educational Grant
William Tyler, 111, Cultural Grant
Marian Schoener, 020,
Building Improvements
Mark Shircel, 002,
+The Stiglitz Family
Mary Jo Savol, 020, +The Ramuta
Family; Cultural Grant
Katherine A. Popich, 100,
+The Popich Family
Dana Goetz, 043,
+ Sophie Stampfel
Mary Ann Govek, 001,
+Sophia Govek
Heather M. Bissell, 003,
+Sally Glavich; Eduactional Grant
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+Rudy & Frances Grahek
Eileen Plese, 020, + Rose Hrvatin
Patti Meglich, 030,
+Robert & Margaret Meglich
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+Mrs. Mary (Zgonl) Barbarich
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+Mary Javernick
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+Margaret Laken Connell
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+Lucia Anna Rozina-Yung
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+Justine Dragavon
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+Josephine Perko
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+Joseph & Stephanie Golob

Patricia Reddy, 043,
+Joe (“Slip”) & Marge Zefran
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+Isabelle Gulas
Dorothy Swintosky, 030,
+Frank Zevnik & Anna Zaller
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Margaret Gorenssek, 111,
+Frank & Juliana Gorenssek
Ruth J. Monaco, 002,
+Francis Hren
Cheryl Megahan, 030,
+Dorothy Bernick & Anna Karun
Helen Baumann, 001,
+Doniella Zagozen
Sheryl L. Thorpe, 005,
+Deceased Members of Lovisceck/
Konechnik Family
Barbara Tercek, 111, +Clarence &
Mary Doles; Mary & Christ Lokar
Dolores Lewis, 002,
+Ann Kahover
Alice Skerjanec, 003,
+Angela Skerjanec
Annette M. Charron, 003,
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#GivingTuesday
Denise P. Bartlett, 043,
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+Stella, Lavena, & Jeanie
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+Josephine Pohar
Patrick Ziegenhorn, 001, +Johanna
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Beatrice Holmes, 020,
+Barbara J. Wilhelm
Nancy E. Bartholomew, 111,
+Ann Potochar Elliot

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H/O Mary Lou Deyak Voelk

\$30 Donation

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Siegfried Brewer, 109, SUA
Susan A. Eckert, 108,
H/O Richard & Mary Lou Terselic
Kathryn Keefer, 109,
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+Walter Lustik
Daniel Ivanich, 020,
+Mary (Mayme) Ivanich
Sarah Evangelista, 100,
+Maria Yakos
Steve Kamnikar, 089,
+Kamnikar & Kernz Families
Tom Klobucher, 024,
+John & Rose Ann Klobucher
Wendy Lauer, 024,
+Janice Mueller, Marilyn Temple,
& Anna Bedenko
Georgene Bender, 030,
+George Plautz
Rick Pisa, 109, +Franciska Prijatelj
& France Vesel
Annamarie Bodisch, 093,
+Anna Bodisch

\$25 Donation

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Donald Dvornik, 020, SUA
Jeane Novotny, 005, SUA
Josephine Lustik, 020, SUA
Louise Vett, 111, SUA
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Slovenian Women Union Scholarship Foundation

SWUSF is announcing applications for the school year 2022-2023.

Applications are available as of April 1, 2022.

*To obtain an application send a letter request to
SWUSF % 6019 Lausche Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44103, Attn: S Kuhar.
They may also be picked up at the new St. Vitus Parish Social Hall, 6022 Lausche Avenue,
Cleveland, Ohio 44103 during the annual Palm Sunday benefit event April 9-10, 2022.*

Requirements include the following:

Applicant must be a member or in the process of applying for membership in the Slovenian Union of America slovenianunion.org.

Has applied or is applying for admission to an accredited two-or-four-year institution, preferably a four-year program.

Is of Slovenian descent and agrees to perform six-to-eight community service hours from April 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, at the direction of SWUSF.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. General documentation includes the following: full high school record of classes and grades; SAT or ACT test scores; if applicant is a current college student, complete college transcript(s) of all classes; if a transfer student to include all college transcripts; at least one letter of recommendation from a teacher, principal, pastor, branch officer of SUA, with two letters of recommendation preferred; list of activities involved in local or broader American Slovenian communities and/or organizations; 400 word or less essay; and a full copy of completed FAFSA of an applicant or copy of full college financial award letter on college letterhead.

Deadline for a completed SWUSF application is MAY 3, 2022.

The goal is to have a decision submitted back to all applicants by Memorial Weekend 2022.

Inquiries may be directed to my attention here: SWUSF, Attn.: S. Kuhar, % 6019 Lausche Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44103, 216.361.1444, or via email at skuhar@hotmail.com.

- Stane Kuhar, President, SWUSF

INSTAGRAM USERS INCLUDING JUNIOR MEMBERS AND OTHER MEMBERS!!

Please consider joining SUA's Instagram Subcommittee as occasional reporters on our Instagram account. All you have to do is agree to submit a couple of posts at the beginning of each month regarding your SUA branch or anything interesting about Slovenia (where do you want to visit, what is your favorite Slovenian food, what bands or music genres are popular in Slovenia right now, etc.). On your resume and scholarship/college applications, you will be able to list your involvement with SUA's Instagram account. If interested, send an email here: suasocialmedias@gmail.com.

**Follow us at [slovenian_union_of_america](https://www.instagram.com/slovenian_union_of_america)
or scan the code with your smartphone.**



Follow us for more content on Slovenia and Slovenian heritage!

Proud of MY Slovenian Heritage!

- by Rich Terselic, Branch 108

A heritage is an intangible individual possession, generally inherited and conveyed most often by birth. It can be a source of pride in the culture from which your family comes or the culture with which you associate. In this commentary, I am dealing with my Slovenian heritage that came to me from my deceased parents. Both were of Slovenian heritage although only my father was born in Slovenia.

I credit my father with a primary role in communicating to me a basis for a high measure of pride in my Slovenian heritage. He wasn't always correct in the details of what he said, but it provided a strong basis to build my pride. As an adult, I discovered examples of things he told me as a child where his pride as a Slovene had him overstating the positive attributes of Slovenes and denigrating the other cultural groups within Yugoslavia. I think readers will understand my message without stating exactly what my father said.

I just read an interesting story involving heritage by birth that is pertinent to me. Currently, there is a professional basketball player playing with an American team. His parents were born in Nigeria but immigrated to Greece, where their son was born. They are not of Greek heritage, but their son was awarded Greek citizenship and otherwise follows Greek cultural norms. The young man considers himself to be of Greek heritage. Similarly, I claim Slovenian heritage although I was born in America. I believe others such as me do likewise.

It could be seen as merely an act of Providence that I was born into a Slovene family. However, I consider my Slovene heritage very valuable. Why is that?

First, while Slovenia hasn't existed for very long as an independent political entity, we can trace our individual Slovene culture and language back at least to the 1400s. In addition, the Slovenes have had a strong element of democracy for several hundred years, back to when the ruling dukes promised to share decision making with their subjects. As an American, living in a democracy is important to me.

Second, people who recognized themselves as Slovenes have never acted with military aggression toward their neighbors. On the other hand, some neighboring countries have done so toward Slovenes. Modern day Slovenia chooses to participate in peacekeeping activities. In fact, one of my relatives served in that role while a member of the Slovene military in Kosovo.

Third, for a country that has never had a population of more than a few million, individual Slovenes have distinguished themselves in numerous fields. Two members of my own family are noted architects, and another, an engineer, is known as "The Father of the Boeing 747."

Fourth, I have members of my family (from both sides) who live in Slovenia. I have visited them, and some of those family members have visited me in America. I love them, and they add to my feeling of pride in my heritage.

I have a friend whom I admire highly as an educator and a man of faith. However, I feel a measure of sadness for him. He recalls bits and pieces he heard about his heritage but not enough to attach a measure of pride. Other than to know that his heritage is Polish -American, his family members communicated little knowledge of family history to him.

It is possible to adopt a heritage. America has been a receiving place for immigrants from many places in the world. Many opt to adopt a heritage as Americans and drop that of the countries from which they came.

Countries can go through dark times, too. I can be proud of being of Slovene heritage although I am not proud of the horrors perpetrated by the Slovenian Communists Partisans that worked their evil during and after WWII.

While I can't take any credit for contributing to their accomplishments, I feel a measure of special pride when I read about the achievements of Americans of Slovene descent in the performing arts, politics, sciences, sports, religion, and other fields.

My Italian-American wife can claim the same things as far as her heritage as I do regarding my Slovenian-American heritage. We have been blessed with four children who have 50/50 heritages. While each will make their own decisions as to whether they favor one heritage or the other, the choice is theirs, and they can have an equal measure of pride in following either or both.

A note of thanks to my daughters, Susan and Nancy, who assisted in the editing of this article.

Impressions 30 Exhibit

Tito's Lost Children, War One: Slovenia



Author Andrew Anzur Clement with his book, *Tito's Lost Children*, featured in the *Impressions 30* exhibit at the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana.

SUA members were represented in the *Impressions 30* exhibit at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum (SEM), describing how Slovenes around the world reacted to the country's declaration of independence in 1991.

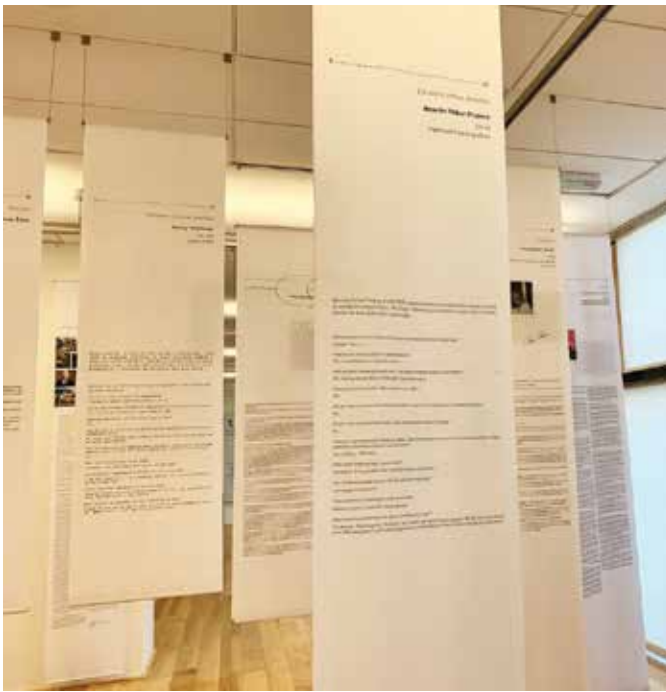
The exhibit contains reminders that Slovenia's independence referendum was a bold, risky move 30 years ago. Mira Kosem Borštnik (Branch 111) recalls wearing national dress in a procession at the Cleveland Cathedral and signing a petition that called on the US government to recognize Slovenia. "Still strong in my memory is my son asking in tears for them to help Slovenia and save it from the Yugoslav Army, which was attacking our homeland."

Andrew Anzur Clement, son of SUA member Terry Anzur, was only a baby in Southern California at the time, but he went on to write a novel based on the real events of 30 years ago. The book, *Tito's Lost Children, War One: Slovenia* is showcased in the exhibit and will become part of the national library's permanent collection of books by Slovenes abroad. It follows a fictional group of young adults through the developments surrounding Slovenia's Ten-Day War. Later books in the series, available on Amazon.com, depict events during the 1990s war in the Balkans (Link: <https://amzn.to/2H2hPeK>).

Now a dual citizen of the US and Slovenia living in Ljubljana, Andrew finds "inspiration for my writing every day, both in Slovenia's modern and older history as well as its present-day place as a member of the European Union." In the featured excerpt, a fictional character arrives in Ljubljana just in time to witness the independence ceremony in Revolution Square (now called Republic Square) and concludes, "Slovenia really is something special, after all."

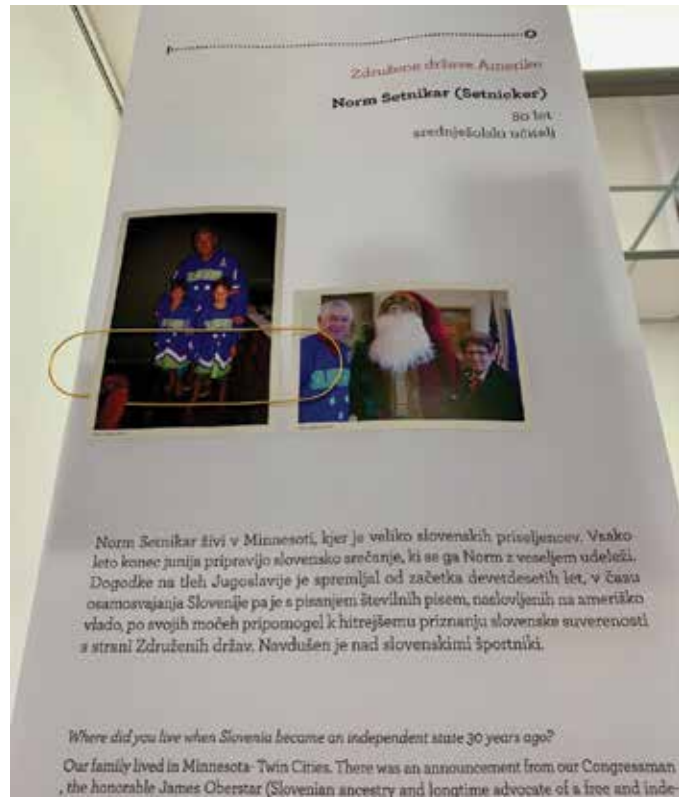
The museum received 67 replies from all over the world to a questionnaire for the exhibit. Nancy Kochevar (California) and *Zarja* editor Bonnie Pohar Prokup (Illinois) expressed their warm feelings for Slovenia's natural beauty, food, and other traditions. Johnny Snidarich spoke of his family's pride in flying the flag of independent Slovenia at an annual celebration of their heritage in Northern Minnesota. Norm Setnikar described reactions to independence among Slovenes in Minnesota. Michael Koski wrote that Slovenes in the Twin Cities still hold an annual program to honor Slovenia's independence: "It is a time to gather and to celebrate."

Jointly organized by the ethnographic museum and the National and University Library (NUK) in Slovenia, the exhibit is being made available to go on tour in Slovene immigrant communities around the world.

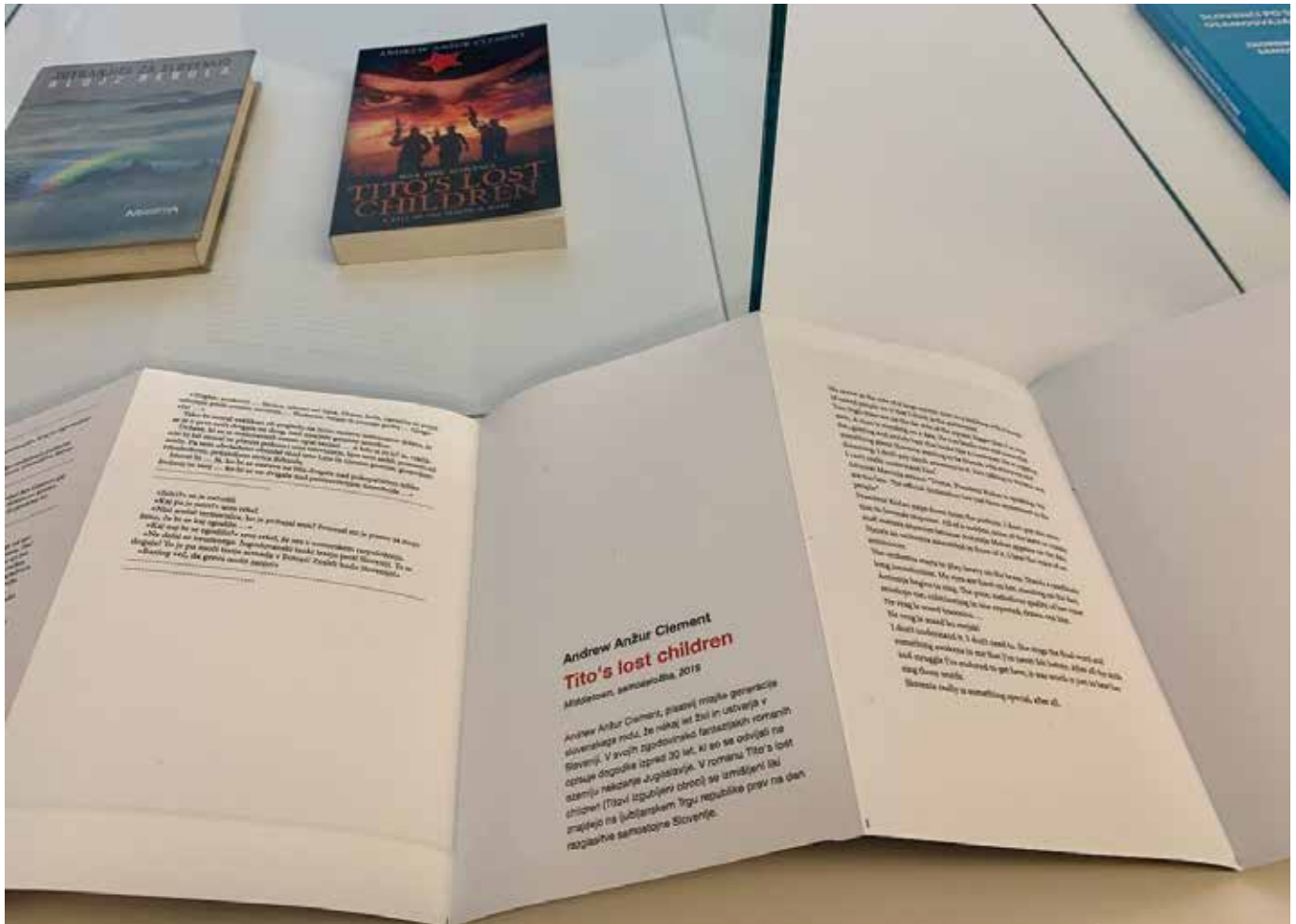


Bonnie Pohar Prokup and Nancy Kochevar were among Slovenian Americans who contributed to the *Impressions 30* exhibit at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

Tito's Lost Children showcased at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.



Norm Setnikar was among those who shared their pride in Slovenia's independence for the *Impressions 30* Exhibit at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.





Andrew Anzur Clement, one of the Slovenes abroad featured in the exhibit of reactions to Slovenian independence among Slovenians abroad.

Here is an excerpt from *Tito's Lost Children, War One: Slovenia* by Andrew Anzur Clement:

We arrive at the side of a large square, next to a building with a bunch of naked people on it that I think is the parliament.

Two high-rises are on the far side of the square, bigger than I've ever seen. A man is standing on a dais. He has beady eyes and somewhat flat, graying and unruly hair that looks like a combover. He is yapping something about Slovenia wanting to be friends with everyone and dreaming. I don't pay much attention to it. He's talking in Slovene and I can't really understand him.



Terry Anzur with her son, author Andrew Anzur Clement, at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum exhibit of reactions to the country's independence among Slovenians abroad.

Admiral Mamula swears. "Damn. President Kučan is speaking. We are too late. The official declaration has just been announced to the people."

President Kučan steps down from the podium. I don't pay any attention to Jovanna's response. All of a sudden, none of the leave or remain stuff matters anymore because Antonija Mohar appears on the dais. There's an orchestra assembled in front of it. I hear the voice of an announcer. The orchestra starts to play, heavy on the brass. There's a needlessly long introduction. My eyes are fixed on her, standing on the dais.



Andrew Anzur Clement discusses the exhibit with Helena Janežič of the National and University Library (NUK) in Slovenia.

Antonija begins to sing. The pure, melodious quality of her voice envelops me, culminating in one repeated, drawn-out line.

Ne vrag le sosed booooooo

Ne vrag le sosed bo mejak!

I don't understand it. I don't need to. She sings the final word and something awakens in me that I've never felt before. After all the strife and struggle I've endured to get here, it was worth it just to hear her sing those words. Slovenia really is something special, after all.

Zarja - The Dawn

Do you enjoy potica and polka music even though you can't speak more than a few words of Slovene?

You've got plenty of company!

Do you enjoy potica and polka music even though you can't speak more than a few words of Slovene? You've got plenty of company according to Nada Šabec, a professor of English at the University of Maribor. SUA members were among those who shared their personal stories in her new book, *Slovene Immigrants and Their Descendants in North America: Faces of Identity*.

Šabec, a two-time Fulbright scholar, spent more than 30 years studying the role of the Slovene language across generations of immigrant families in the US and Canada. She found that while use of the language declined over time, the descendants mostly retained their connection to Slovene culture, music, traditions, and way of thinking: "As more bicultural than bilingual, Slovene Americans and Canadians stand a good chance of maintaining their dual sense of ethnic and cultural identity at least for the foreseeable future."

SUA member Teresa Koci (Branch 100) assisted Šabec in collecting some of the narratives from 16 Americans and 10 Canadians, describing how their connection to Slovene language has evolved through the first, second, third, and fourth generations. These "authentic voices" form the second section of the book, published in English by the University of Maribor Press. Slovenian communities in Cleveland, Toronto, Vancouver, Washington DC, and Southern California are among those represented.

- Terry Anzur, Branch 100

The book is available at this link:

<https://press.um.si/index.php/ump/catalog/book/625>

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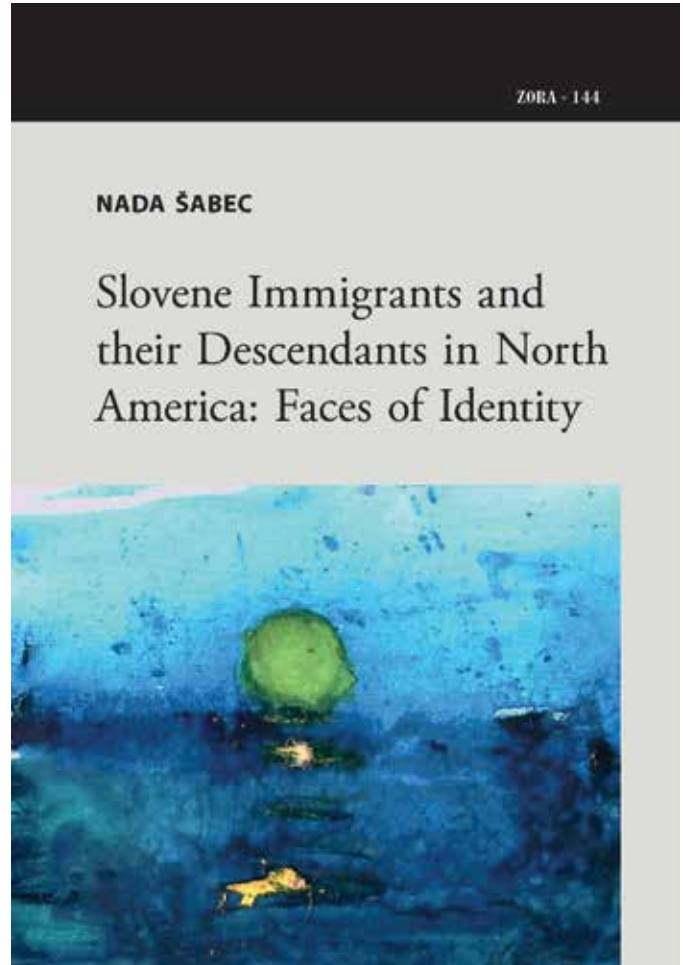
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Fourth Generation: *Ellen Koci*

Spring 2022



Terry and Nada at the University of Maribor.

“Smoltzie”



*Zarja Staff Writer, David Sodac
Branch 89 Oglesby, IL bdsodac@gmail.com*

John Smoltz with Great Uncle Tony Dannon and his father John Smoltz Sr.

Little four-year Johnny’s parents had great aspirations for their first-born son. They knew he clearly would have inherited their love for playing the accordion. The music gene that coursed its way through generations of Smoltz and Tersigni family members surely must have reached Johnny as well. So, at the tender age of four, Johnny was enrolled in lessons with the Michigan Maestro, his very own great-uncle Tony Dannon. Johnny was indeed talented and began winning in-state and out-of-state trophies up to the age of seven but then declared he wanted to be a pro-baseball player. Johnny’s music career didn’t exactly work out as his parents planned. Drafted out of high school, John Andrew Smoltz embarked on an illustrious, twenty-season career with the Atlanta Braves as a record setting pitcher from 1988-2008. He pitched on the 1995 World Series Champion team, was an eight-time NL All Star selection, the 1996 Cy Young Award winner, the 2005 Roberto Clemente Award for sportsmanship and community involvement, and in 2015 was a first ballot inductee into MLB Baseball Hall of Fame. Smoltz ended his playing career in 2009 after brief stints with the Boston Red Sox and the St. Louis Cardinals.

John is a fourth generation Slovene -American, descended from four generations of males all named John Smoltz. The *Smolc* (Smoltz) family has traced its roots as far back as the 1600s. His great-great grandparents, Janez (John) Smolc b.1858 and Lucilja Petek b.1862 were from the village of Breg, in the southeastern region of Slovenia. John and Lucilja's son, also with the given name of Janez (John), was born in 1889 in Breg and would become baseball John's great-grandfather. He brought the family name to America in 1906, immigrating to the Minnesota Iron Range territory where he found work in the Chisholm mines. In the 1910 US Census, he was recorded as a boarder residing with the Slovene family of Joe and Mary Loushin and their young children. The household also boarded eleven other Slovene immigrants all working in the local mines.

John Smoltz met his future wife, Mary Pahulje, at the Loushin family home where she was employed as a domestic helper. Fifteen-year-old Mary had just returned from Carniola, Slovenia. She was born in Ely, Minnesota, the daughter of Rok Pahulje and Mary Lovsin. After the tragic mining death of her father a year earlier, she and her mother had traveled back to Slovenia for family support. Mary returned alone to the Saint Louis County, Minnesota, area in 1909. She and John Smoltz married in 1911 and settled into Chisholm to begin raising their family. Four children were born into this Smoltz family: Mary Ann Smoltz Nornberg [1912-2001]; Frances A. Smoltz Margo [1913-2004]; John Frank Smoltz [1916-1991]; and Frank Raymond Smoltz [1916-1991]. Mary Smoltz and her two daughters became quite active in the Chisholm SWUA Branch 38. She had joined the Chisholm branch as a charter member when it was first founded in 1930. Mary was their Branch President for several years.

When great-grandfather John Smoltz of Chisholm, Minnesota, died at the age of forty-four in 1933, their oldest son, John Frank (baseball John's grandfather), eighteen, decided it was time to go looking for a job. John Frank

Smoltz broke the family tradition of working the local mines. He chose to either join his uncle Frank in Detroit or uncles Rudy and Tony in Cleveland, Ohio. He tossed a coin in the air with "heads" being Detroit and "tails" Cleveland. The toss revealed "heads," so he moved to Detroit to live with Uncle Frank. John (baseball John's grandfather) would meet and marry Teresa Gehringer in 1939. Their children were John Adam (baseball John's father), Mary Rose Balester, Joanne Stroka, and James David Smoltz. Grandfather John owned and operated the Dairy Bakeries of Detroit and in his spare time played his button box accordion as a member of the Melvindale Accordion Club. Grandfather John also spent over twenty-five years working with the Detroit Tigers grounds crew. Their oldest son, John Adam Smoltz, met his future wife, Mary Tersigni, in Dearborn, Michigan, while he was attending Wayne State University. They met while moonlighting as accordion teachers at the Modern Accordion Studios, the studio owned and operated by Mary's acclaimed accordionist uncle, Tony Dannon. They soon married and began their family in Warren, Michigan. Their first born was John Andrew (baseball John), followed by Michael and Bernadette. There was no doubt in their minds that their first-born son would join them as an accordionist. His future could even hold promise for a musical appearance on the Lawrence Welk Show! So, Johnny began playing with his parents at polka parties and dances at the age of four. John's father, mother, uncles, and grandfather were accomplished accordion musicians. His father plays several instruments and has organized and played in several bands through the years including his recent band, The Diamond Kings Band... how appropriate is that! Baseball John's great uncle, Frank Smoltz, was a well-known button-box accordionist and is in the Minnesota Polka Hall of Fame. So music ran in his veins through both sides of his family. At the age of seven, Johnny shocked his parents with his plan for a change. His parents were loading up the car for another gig, when Johnny declared, "I didn't ask to play the accordion... I don't want to play the accordion... I want



***Great Uncle Frank Smoltz,
Minnesota Polka Hall of
Famer.***



***Relative Bob Miller,
Phillies pitcher.***



***Grandfather
John Frank Smoltz.***



***Great Uncle Charles
Leonard Gehringer, Detroit
Tiger's 2nd baseman.***

to be a professional baseball player!” Shocked at what her son was saying, mom suggested he’d always need a backup plan if baseball fell through. Mom obviously didn’t need to worry as all the baseball accolades and awards attest to his career choice over the accordion.



John’s dad, John Smoltz Sr.c, with his accordion.

Of course, John Smoltz didn’t only inherit polka playing genes from his family tree but also an incredible baseball talent. His mother’s uncle was Charles Leonard Gehringer (1903-1993), nicknamed “The Mechanical Man.” Charles was selected to the Sports Hall of Fame in 1949. He was an American professional baseball second baseman, coach, general manager, and team vice president, who played in Major League Baseball for the Detroit Tigers for 19 seasons. Another baseball relative contributing to the athletic gene pool was Bob Miller (1926-2020). Miller was a right-handed pitcher, who played with the Philadelphia Phillies from 1949 to 1958. In 1965, Miller became the head coach of the University of Detroit Mercy baseball team, a post he held for 36 years. Bob Miller was elected to the school’s hall of fame in 1979 and the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame in 1999. It’s no wonder that baseball John’s DNA makeup held not only spirited accordion playing talents, but also competitive athletic abilities and entertaining communication skills, as well!

John talked about his determination as a youngster to become a professional baseball player. The curb was 40 feet away from a brick wall and a screen door to his house. This is where he went every day to hone his skills. He put up a strike zone and four boxes outside the strike zone in which to work on those areas as he practiced. He

shared, “Every day when I wasn’t doing something with my friends, I went out there. I was on the mound. I was the hero of the game. The stadium was always packed. I was pitching Game 7 of the World Series every single day. And I threw in a loss, just to keep it real. I went 99-1. That was my mindset, I would create these scenarios. If you don’t dream it, you’ll never achieve it.” Baseball became Johnny’s obsession. John felt there was no other way to learn baseball than to teach himself. His parents couldn’t train him, but they could drive him to practice and youth games and take him to watch others. He would watch a game then emulate that guy. He grew up a Tigers fan but watched everybody. In an earlier interview John reminisced, “I would play these games in my mind, and in my mind I believed that when I get these opportunities someday to live this out, it’ll be just like I thought it was as a kid.”

When the Smoltz family moved from Warren to Lansing, Michigan, John was in the 5th grade and still disciplining himself with constant practice and skill improvement. At Waverly High School, John played basketball, football, and baseball and excelled at all three. He still maintained his dream of playing professional ball. His paternal grandfather, John Frank Smoltz, born in Chisholm, Minnesota, also had a love of everything baseball and playing the accordion. In addition to delivering bakery products house to house, he worked as an usher and groundskeeper for the Detroit Tigers for over three decades. When Johnny was a junior at Waverly High, granddad persuaded a Tigers executive to send a scout to see the boy pitch. Scout Ken Madeja probably was not happy to be chasing yet another tip on somebody’s son or nephew or grandson, but he reported back, “This time we got a good tip. This kid is pretty good.” By Johnny’s senior year, college and pro scouts were flocking to Warriors baseball games. One of them was Clyde Weir. Smoltz caught his eye when he was scouting for the Cleveland Indians. Weir recalled, “He was just an outstanding athlete. The thing that jumped out to me, and it holds true today, is his tremendous desire to compete. He was just a guy who was so projectable. He had



John with his parents, Mary and John, on Senior Day at Waverly High.

that live body.” Projections had young John possibly going as high as in the first three rounds. Scouts were quickly taking notice, but John’s hometown school, Michigan State University, offered him a scholarship to play ball for them. Once word got around that he had signed a college contract, pro scouts felt he might be difficult to sign. Consequently, his MLB possibilities fell significantly. Then, the day that Johnny enrolled in his campus classes, before he set foot in a classroom, his childhood dream of becoming a part of the Detroit Tigers program came true. Detroit took him in the 22nd round of the 1985 draft. He signed the night before classes started.



Smoltz when drafted in 1985 by Detroit Tigers.

He was signed into Single-A baseball in 1986; the following year young John moved to Double-A, and, in the same season, up to Triple-A. He was a promising pitcher, and the Detroit club was in the middle of a pennant race. Detroit needed an experienced pitcher, so Smoltz was traded to the Atlanta Braves for Doyle Alexander. He and his family were devastated. His dream of playing for his hometown Detroit Tigers came crashing down. John refocused on his childhood goals of making it to the big leagues. He could do it with Atlanta franchise, and he most definitely did! On July 23, 1988, after rapid progress at Triple-A Richmond, Smoltz made his major league debut for the Braves at Shea Stadium in New York. In a 6-1 victory, he held the Mets to a run on four hits in six innings. He never looked back. Smoltz went on to become only the second player in MLB history to achieve both a 20-win season and a 50-save season. Only Dennis Eckersley had achieved that feat before Smoltz. Additionally, Smoltz is the only player in major league history with more than 200 wins and 150 saves.

In a 2015 interview with MLB.com columnist Terence Moore, Smoltz shared, “I competed in tournaments all over, and the accordion was always bigger than me, all the way to the age of 7. The whole experience taught me a lot. I learned about discipline and about how you can’t miss practice. You have to put a lot of time into playing, and it prepared me for other things I didn’t think it would prepare me for.” Smoltz’s fellow baseball opponents didn’t always forget his accordion performing past. Back when the Atlanta Braves played the Yankees during game two of the 1999 World Series, the New York fans uncovered the fact Smoltz played the accordion. The Yankee fans tried to distract Smoltz with their unrelenting heckling. Fellow

announcer Joe Buck once comically quipped that every time Smoltz would walk to the mound, accordion music would blast from the sound system and fans would play their “air” accordions in the stands. However, it didn’t faze Smoltz; the Braves won that game 12-2. During a 2016 MLB televised talk show, John entered stage-left with a huge grin on his face while he was spiritedly and competently playing “Beer Barrel Polka” on his accordion.



Smoltz in Atlanta when his jersey #29 was retired on Turner Field.



Smoltz pitching practice in “Field of Dreams” game in Dyersville, Iowa.

John’s post player years have been exceptionally gracious to him. His career as a sports broadcaster has zoomed to great heights, starting out in 2010 when he joined the Atlanta Braves sportscasting crew on Peachtree TV. He was then offered contract stints with FOX, MLB Network, TBS Network, and then the top booth for FOX Network in 2014. John and fellow commentator Joe Buck have been in the broadcasting booth ever since they first covered the 2016 Chicago Cubs winning the coveted title. Andy Masur, a columnist for Barrett Sports Network and part of the Chicago White Sox radio broadcast team on WGN Radio in Chicago, commented, “Smoltz has the rare ability of parlaying a fantastic Major League career into an ability to analyze what he’s seeing. He’s good at being able to explain it in terms the audience can understand. There are few former athletes that “get it” the way he does. He combines knowledge, wit, and candor into a broadcast like few baseball analysts can. His baseball resume gives him the credibility to make some of the statements he does.”

Just as Smoltz honed his baseball skills as a youngster bouncing a rubber ball off the side of the house, he also practiced his commentator skills at a young age. He would provide his own play-by-play broadcast, imitating the voice he loved to hear on the radio, that of the beloved Detroit Tigers Ernie Harwell. John culminated a tremendous 2021 broadcasting season this past year, participating in two of baseball’s greatest events. Smoltz called the Field of Dreams game between the Chicago White Sox and New

York Yankees during the most-watched regular season baseball game on any network since 2005. The game attracted over 5.9 million viewers. The event was held at the Field of Dreams motion picture site in Dyersville, Iowa last August 12. John shared that the Field of Dreams events were by far one of the coolest things he had been a part of since his broadcasting career began: “The setting was incredible. Just being there was great, considering I am of the age where the movie and the game became full circle.” Then there was the October start of the 2021 World Series between his beloved Atlanta Braves and the Houston Astros. The series matchup held a very special connection to him having been both a former player for his beloved Braves and being the color commentator in the FOX broadcasting booth. John admitted that it was probably the hardest series he had ever done given that everyone knew he had played with the Braves all those years and pitched in their last championship World Series. He had to be a broadcaster not a fan, and that was difficult, but he felt he did his job without letting his excitement show. It was a most fulfilling and satisfying year for Smoltzie.

When John Adam Smoltz received the phone call from Baseball’s National Hall of Fame, he shared, “Never did I dream that when I was on the mound in Lansing, Michigan, on that curb in the street from 40 feet... Never did I dream that a hall-of-fame career could ever come from an accordion-playing 4-year-old that dreamt one day to stand on the mound and do his thing, but ultimately it has. That

call wraps up the career I had filled with ups and downs, filled with so many failures that I couldn't even tell you. But without those failures I don't think that greatness could have ever happened. Failure is a good thing if you let it be."

Never a good golfer early in life, John currently is challenging his previous lack of skills at golf. He has been keeping an ambitious link schedule between his busy sports broadcasting commitments and is now a regular in the Pro Players Tour golf series. Like Smoltz said about failure being a good thing, his once disdain for the game of golf has now turned into a new talent. The series of tournaments raise funds and awareness for charitable organizations throughout the country. He also generously gives back to his adopted Atlanta, Georgia, community through his annual John Smoltz Braves Celebrity-Am Golf Tournament. The tournament is now in its 30th year. This two-day event provides a memorable opportunity to play golf and socialize with Braves alumni; former professional athletes from the NFL, MLB, NBA and NHL; and local celebrities. Proceeds from the event benefit pediatric cancer research at the Aflac Cancer and Blood Disorders Center of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. His biggest fan, his grandpa John Frank Smoltz, is surely playing his button-box rendition of the Beer Barrel Polka while shining down on his grandson's accomplishments with all his pride and joy.



Hall of Fame Inductee 2015.

Special Note:

Hvala goes out to John's father John Adam Smoltz, cousins Chris Pahule, Richard Gehringer, and Richard Smoltz for all their help with family background, being available to answer questions, and sharing their ancestry research.



Slovenian Union of America

Across America - Branch Reports

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Contact information: Mary Ann Schellinger
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“It’s the most wonderful time of the year” is the start of a traditional Christmas carol yet this is not always true, especially for some residents in care facilities. Many don’t have family or friends to spend time with them, so members of our board decided to change that. At the beginning of December, we visited Progressive Nursing Home in Sheboygan donned with holiday hats, masks, gloves, bells, and some “melt in the mouth” mints for the residents. It brought us so much joy as we walked through the halls to see smiles on many faces as we “tried our best” to sing Christmas carols. Some residents even sang with us.

On the 14th, our branch got together for our Christmas party – the first time for this and the largest attendance since Covid hit in March of 2020. As we had done for the past few years, members were asked to donate hats, scarves,

and mittens to distribute to those in need through our local food pantries. The total amount brought in that night was over 200 items. It should be noted that one of our “crafty” members took advantage of the down time due to Covid and hand made over 150 items.

We again congratulated Ed and Germaine Tesovnik for being chosen as the 2020 Members of the Year. Julie (Gruenke) Kinney was presented an angel ornament in memory of her mom, Aggie Gruenke, who passed away this past year.





We all enjoyed a wonderful meal provided by Al & Al's including Slovenian kranjsky and sauerkraut. And, as usual, there was no lack of sweet treats provided by the officers for the dessert

participated in the meeting which was held in the dining room at Eiler's Place. The enthusiasm of the group was contagious! The Executive Convention Committee has filled all of the chair positions for the convention committees and also has individuals who have signed up to help each committee chair with plans. Attendees included SUA members as well as other people interested in celebrating Slovenian heritage in 2023. The 2023 convention will be a celebration of Slovenian heritage and showcase Slovenian families who immigrated to Colorado. In addition to SUA Branch 3 and SUA members from throughout the country, other Slovenian and community groups will be on hand to join in the celebration. Anyone interested in volunteering during the convention (June 15-17) can contact Annette Charron (amtcharron@gmail.com).

table. We played bingo after dinner with the titles of Christmas songs on the cards. This project was put together by our president, Mary Sandwick. When someone got a bingo, they were asked to sing a line of the song that made them a winner. It was fun to see the group "helping" out to join in the song. The evening ended with the singing of a few Christmas carols. What a wonderful sight it was to see all the smiles and hugs being shared by everyone for holiday wishes.

MARY ANN SCHELLINGER

BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information: Annette Sabo Charron
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On Thursday evening, October 28, 2021, Branch 3 held a volunteer meeting for individuals interested in helping plan the 2023 SUA National Convention to be held June 15-18, 2023, at the Pueblo Convention Center. Over 20 individuals

Branch 3 held its annual Christmas luncheon at Park East restaurant on December 7, 2021. The theme of the luncheon was St. Nicholas, and the luncheon committee, which included Elaine Volk, Theresa Jesik, and Kay Perko, delighted attendees with special touches. Guests entered to see a beautiful rendition of St. Nicholas loaned to us by Norma Becco. It was designed and created by Barbara Gregorich based on a statue at St. Mary's Church. Each table was beautifully decorated with items related to the celebration of *Sveti Miklavz*, which took place on December 6. For fun, attendees participated in a game created from *A Legend of Saint Nicholas*, a children's book written by Branch 3 member Bernice Krasovec. Although Bernice was unable to attend the luncheon, goodies from the luncheon were delivered to her afterwards. Marian Pechek won the game,



The Branch 3 Christmas Luncheon planners (left to right): Theresa Jesik, Kay Perko, and Elaine Volk.



The Branch 3 Christmas Luncheon: (left side) Judy Kochevar and Andrea (Mutz) DeGarbo; (right side) Ruth (Mutz) Garcia and Kathy Kochevar.



The Branch 3 Christmas Luncheon: (left side front to back) Jeanne Finn, Barb Karlinger, Gina Skul, and Betty Skul; (right side front to back) John Finn, MT Karlinger, and Christine Charron.



The Branch 3 Christmas Luncheon: (left side front to back) Eileen Kaplan, Patti (Gersick) Derby, Angela (Gersick) Mock; (right side front to back) Marge Cullen and Barbara (Gersick) Greenwood.

including a signed copy of the book. A piece of coal and a stick were awarded to John Finn, the only person who did not participate! Raffle tickets were sold for three hand-carved wooden St. Nicholas ornaments donated by Barbara and Mike Gregorich. Door prizes included St. Nicholas-themed table centerpieces and Slovenian wine. Madeleine Khosla gave everyone Christmas goody bags filled with useful items, sweets, and a small bottle of wine. For Branch 3 members, the afternoon brought back fond memories of celebrating the special tradition of *Sveti Miklavz*!

Longtime Branch 3 member Josephine Krasovic passed away on December 28, 2021, at the age of 90. Josephine seemed to never miss a Branch 3 meeting and will be remembered for her exceptional sense of humor and her never-failing luck when playing bingo or entering branch raffles. Branch meetings just won't be the same without Josephine's off-the-cuff humorous comments. We extend condolences to her family including her sister, Branch 3 member Agnes Glavich, and her niece, Branch 3 Treasurer Diane Slaten.

Since Slovenian immigrants to Colorado will be featured at the 2023 SUA National Convention, all SUA members with Colorado Slovenian immigrant roots are encouraged to share their family stories at the convention. On the evening of the banquet at the convention center, a room will be dedicated to the stories and the history of Slovenian families who immigrated to Colorado. Guidelines for family displays will be posted in an upcoming *Zarja*. It isn't too early to start exploring your family heritage with your siblings, parents, grandparents, and extended family! Contact Diane Slaten (dmslaten@comcast.net) or Annette Charron (amtcharron@gmail.com) if you have any questions or suggestions.

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON
& M.T. KARLINGER

BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana

Greetings to all Branch 5 members! As we said "goodbye" to 2021, we were praying that the sickness, closures, and cancellations would soon be over and done with, but, alas, that is not the 2022 we are experiencing!! Staying mentally and physically healthy is a challenge, so please stay in contact with family and friends! Check in on someone you haven't heard from; even writing a few notes sent by "snail mail" can brighten another day in quarantine for all!!

Last year, we lost several members of our Slovenian community, most with Haughville and Holy Trinity childhoods. Teachers, shopkeepers, postal workers, military, and government workers still retained a strong sense of family and Slovenia ties. Some were born into it, and some married into it, but it was always important to share their Slovenian knowledge with family and friends. RIP: Janice McCracken Burger, Angelina Dragan, Mary Barbarich, Martina Mauser Dawnorowicz, George Johns, Frank Velikan, and Robert Fon. Please keep their families in your thoughts and prayers.

Please continue to check the Slovenian National Home website for updates on events, Friday night dinners, and improvements being made to the Nash! The new roof, painting, lighting, and restrooms are just the beginning of remodeling plans. Consider making a donation in your family name to your Slovenian National Home so that we can continue Slovenian events in Indy! Thinking of you all in 2022...

MARY, KAREN, PHYLLIS

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Contact Information: Georgene Agnich
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We extend our sympathy to the family of member Bernice Nemanich, who passed away on December 25, 2021.

Branch 20 donated a Christmas wreath for the grotto at St. Joseph Cemetery in Joliet again this year. Alas, the pandemic prevented us from gathering at Merichka's Restaurant for our annual Christmas party.

Members Jim Lilek and Georgene Agnich are assembling an archive of photos, minute books, financial records, and any other items pertaining to Joliet's American Slovenian Home (Slovenski Dom), which was founded in 1947 and closed in recent years. Please phone or email Georgene at the above number or email address if you have something to contribute to this important archive.

In anticipation of SUA's 100th anniversary in 2026, Georgene is also seeking old photos and information about the Stonich Building, which has been the national office of SWUA/SUA since 1976, and also photos of Joliet's "Slovenian Row" neighborhood centered around St. Joseph Church.

We fervently hope to resume our regular meetings and activities when the pandemic subsides. We are especially eager to honor Sandy Rodeghero, our 2020 Member of the Year, at a banquet in May.

Wishing everyone a Blessed and Happy New Year!

GEORGENE AGNICH



BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Welcome 2022! I've made a few resolutions for the new year. How about you?

Branch 24 held its annual Cemetery Walk on November 2. About 20 members attended on a cold, sunny evening.



Prayers were said, and names of deceased family members were read. We had all placed candles and flowers on the graves prior to meeting at our Slovenian chapel. Following the cemetery, we then met at the Liberty Restaurant for dinner and a bow making class by Mary Mecum.



In early December, we met at The Right Spice restaurant for our annual Christmas party – a festive evening to start the holidays.

I enjoyed reading the Winter 2021 issue of branch reports. The pandemic has not stopped the Slovenians from enjoying and sharing our heritage. Keep up the good work SUA!

DIANE DATA

BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

I hope all had a happy and blessed holiday. The New Year was ushered in with a snowfall here in Milwaukee and followed by a COLD spell.

Our dual celebration honored Janet and John Cerar, our Members of the Year for 2020, and *Martinovanje* was well attended and enjoyed by all. The afternoon began with a delicious dinner. Following dinner, Helen Frohna gave a brief history of the customs of *Martinovanje* as celebrated



John and Janet Cerar



in Slovenia. The dinner concluded with the singing of “En hribcek bom kupil.” Honoring Janet and John was both emotional and happy. The couple was presented with gifts: a crown for John, red carnations for Janet, and a keepsake engraved clock for both of them. They were accompanied by their daughter Amy, who gave an emotional talk about her parents. The celebration was beautiful, touching, and enjoyed by all.

This year’s Christmas Party brought 25 members together for a delightful afternoon. There were lots of gifts, door prizes, singing, and a delicious lunch. Rather than exchanging gifts, it was decided that each member would bring either a pair of socks or



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mitten that would be donated along with \$50 to the Cathedral Center here in Milwaukee, which provides shelter for families. With Jackie Smith and Beverly Marinello leading, we sang “Silent Night” in both English and Slovenian and wished each other “Vesele božične praznike.” The afternoon ended with the installation of officers for 2022. Beverly Marinello led the oath of office.

It was a sad holiday for two of our members families. We received news that Judy Rechlitz passed away after a fall with some complications. Judy was at our Christmas Party and enjoyed all the camaraderie. After a long and courageous fight with cancer, Jack Kolesari died on January 1 with his loving wife, BettyAnn, by his side. Our sincere condolences to these two families. Eternal rest grant unto Judy and Jack. May they rest in peace.

MICI BREGANT

BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

Contact information: Terry Kamnikar
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Greetings! Branch 89 will kick off the year with a Zoom meeting on Monday, March 14. Unfortunately, with the increased cases of Covid, no in-person meetings will be held at this time. Hopefully, you will be able to “attend” virtually.

Donations collected for the annual Bake-less Bake Sale

topped \$1,000. What an amazing group!

After much discussion, the Heritage Days committee regretfully announced that the annual Heritage Days event will no longer happen. Thank you to the committee and volunteers that made this event such an enjoyable gathering.

A Mass for all deceased and living SUA members will be held on Tuesday, June 21 at 7 a.m. at Holy Family Church in Oglesby, Illinois. This Mass will be live streamed on Facebook.

Our sincere condolences to members Ona Rehn and Chris Sabotta on the loss of their husband and father, Bob Rehn.

Lastly, the Easter season will be here soon. Time to celebrate with some of your favorite Slovenian foods. Bring on the smoked sausage, potica, and strudels! Also, those pretty spring flowers help make beautiful butaras to decorate your front door with.

To all of our members, be well and stay safe.

TERRY KAMNIKAR

BRANCH 93 - New York, New York

Contact Information: Kathleen Simmonds
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Prior to the holidays, member Tjaša Visnar (Founder and Artistic Director of [Transforma Theatre](#)) hosted a wildly successful Science in Theater festival from November 12 to 14 in New York. Among the performances was a



Kathleen Simmonds stars in the world premiere of *The Dark Outside* by Bernard Kops.
Photo by Emilio Marid.

sold-out show “Eden” starring our very own Gaia Visnar! Playwright Wi-Moto Nyoka was inspired by the research of Polona Šafarič Tepeš in writing the piece where a doctor and a scientist work to cure a patient from an unexplained condition that may unlock secrets in the universe. Čestitam Tjaša and Gaia! If you would like to see more of Gaia’s work, she will be playing in the showcase production of “[Bite the Apple.](#)” This female-centered story explores modern relationships through the archetypes of the Grimm’s fairy tale characters (running March 10 - 13 in the West Village).

November also saw Branch 93 member Kathleen Simmonds starring in a three-week run of the world premiere of *The Dark Outside* by Bernard Kops at Theatre for the New City. Playwright Mr Kops, at age 95, is one of Europe’s best-known and most admired playwrights who the Queen awarded a Civil List pension for his services to literature. Also starring in the show was Broadway legend, Austin Pendleton.

Are you interested in becoming more involved with the SUA Branch 93 in NYC or do you know someone that would make an excellent candidate? We are seeking enthusiastic members to join our leadership. Please email nycslovenianunion@gmail.com with any recommendations or to self-nominate.

We love hearing from our branch members, so please also reach out with any ideas for future events. Wishing everyone a prosperous and happy 2022!

KATHLEEN SIMMONDS

BRANCH 108 - MD/DC/VA National Capital Area

Contact Information: Bernadette K. Fitzsimmons
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We are all hoping that this spring 2022 you are feeling uplifted and welcoming warmer days and relief from the challenges of the pandemic. We miss one another and continue to send virtual hearts and hugs to all for a Happy Easter! Vesela velika noč in veliko pirhovo to all our member and friends across the country.

Setting aside a day to make potica for Easter and Christmas has now become a tradition in our family. I am fortunate to have learned this tradition from my mother and continue to use her filling recipe including extra rum, lemon and orange rind, walnuts and a little heavy cream. I’ve tweaked my own version of making the potica dough in the bread maker to simplify the process, also giving me more time for breaks between dough risings. The results have been beautiful, and even my discerning mother can’t tell the difference and is quite intrigued with my signature bread maker potica dough recipe.

Due to the continued spread of COVID and its variants, Branch 108 has found that meeting through Zoom is actually fun. Given that we have members spread throughout 8 states, this works really well for our branch. By the time we receive this *Zarja*, we will have already had our show

Spring 2022



and tell of cherished Slovenian items to share with our members and friends on Zoom.

A couple of members sent in some news to share for this issue. Jonna Sanders reported that she completed her first semester as an Entomology PhD student at the University of Maryland, doing honeybee autopsies and working to get the hang of Mitochondrial DNA extractions. Jonna is a beekeeper and postponed the invitation to her home in Virginia for a honey breakfast and tour of AŽ hives in her own backyard. Everyone is looking forward to feeling comfortable to meet again in person soon and be able to have this unique activity later in the year.



Nancy Terselic sent a note in from Ohio to report that she is still pursuing bobbin lacemaking as a hobby and is interested in sharing this artform and ideas she’s found about Slovene lace designs. She still dreams of spending some time at the Idrija Lace School in Idrija, Slovenia.

Lea Plut-Pregelj wrote from Washington, DC to report that she has been diligently working in preparing and gathering details from members of the Slovenian community and other resources to gather artifacts from the Our Lady of Brezje Chapel dedication in Washington DC in August 1971 for a display to be held at the Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, DC. She has taken a trip to Cleveland to visit the Western Reserve Historical Society to research the archives of Joseph Nemanich, the president of funding for the chapel. This has been quite an undertaking, and she continues to inspire us with her endeavors in honoring the history and hard work that went into the chapel becoming a reality.

The Slovenian Chapel continues to serve the Washington area community and visitors with monthly Masses and connections with families of Slovenian descent.

Irene Odorizzi reported from Virginia that she and her husband are staying indoors at home most of the time and avoiding crowds. She follows *Zarja* about how SUA has evolved over time and wishes our members all the best.

May Kokal, Nika Kovacic, and Ana Skopec all spent some time in the hospital in late fall and are recovering fine at home. They have enjoyed staying in touch with members through phone calls during their recovery and look forward to visitors once this pandemic passes.

Erika Roda, Lisa Kokal, and Danny have been in touch and are doing well, mainly meeting up in person locally with family members and staying well this time in history we have all been living through.

Sincere condolences to longtime SUA member Donna Zadnik on the passing of her husband, Valentine Zadnik, in December 2021. Donna has many memories of attending SUA and other Slovenian events in the last couple of decades, learning about Slovenian culture. She will continue to honor her husband’s legacy as a loyal SWUA member and misses everyone.



The Fitzsimmons at Christmas.

Slovenian Saying by Bernadette:

Dokler lipa cvete, ne manjka čebel.
**As long as a lipa tree blooms,
 there’s no shortage of bees.**

Sedem let moraš na enem kraju ostati,
 ce hočeš ljudi prav spoznati.
**If you want to know people well,
 you must stay in one city for seven years.**

BERNADETTE FITZSIMMONS

BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities (TC) of Minnesota

Contact Information: Elaine Barthelemy
elaineab@yahoo.com

Rather than focusing on what we are not able to do (canceling our Martinovanje celebration again this year due to



Hank Thunander and Mary Ann Palmer led us in December.

Zarja - The Dawn

COVID), members of Twin Cities Slovenians (TCS) are happy to meet in ways that work for us all. We gathered in person in December and stayed masked except for when we enjoyed wonderful treats including two varieties of potica. Hank Thunander played his accordion and Mary Ann Palmer led us in song as beautiful strains of “Sveta noc, blazena noc” and other Slovenian Christmas songs filled the room followed by carols in English. True to form, we Slovenians have some very good singing voices, and we even did some harmonizing!



Members joined in song.

The December member meeting is when we hold our elections. Our officers, who generously agreed to serve for another year, are President: Mike Koski; Vice President: Chuck Podominick; Treasurer: Ruth Pechauer; Recording Secretary: Marian Brezovec; Membership Secretary: Jean Podominick; SUA Member Representative: Mary Ann Setnicker. The vote to reelect them was unanimous. The board also includes the following at-large members: Elaine Barthelemy, Bob Grahek, Miro Medved, Liz Miller, Rick Pisa, Sue Rademacher, Rich Samec, Norm Setnicker, and John Zakelj. This dedicated group meets monthly via Zoom to plan activities and share information.

With Minnesota winter weather as well as the more contagious COVID-19 variant of Omicron, we are reverting to Zoom for our January through March meetings. In January, Joe Valencic will Zoom from Cleveland, Ohio, with his



Festival of Nations participants in 2019.

Spring 2022

program titled *The Flavors of Slovenia*, in which Joe will focus on the food and wine of our homeland. (Is 9:30 a.m., when our meetings are held, too early to enjoy a glass of Slovenian *vino* while sitting in front of my computer?)

Board member Sue Rademacher has led our branch’s participation in the annual Festival of Nations twelve times since 2008. Before COVID caused the FoN to be canceled in 2020, 2021, and 2022, thousands of fairgoers, including many students, would attend from around the Midwest. Each year many stopped at our booth to get a brochure and learn more about Slovenian culture. In February, Sue will talk about the history of our participation and the many themes used through the years.

In March, Ksenija Rener-Sitar, a professor of dentistry at the University of Ljubljana will do a Q and A for our members on current events in Slovenia, including how they are dealing with COVID and how it compares to what we are doing here.



John Perhay

Finally, it is with great sadness that we share the news of John Perhay’s passing in December. John was a wonderful human being, our webmaster, tech guru, longtime TCS board member, champion baker, TCS 2021 Member of the Year, and a great help to so many of us. He was active in the language class, always working to improve his Slovenian. We offer our sincere sympathy to John’s wife, Denise, and their extended family. We’ll miss our friend, and his passing leaves a huge hole in our TCS community.

ELAINE BARTHELEMY

The Women of the Copper Country

I am so grateful to the Slovenian Union of America Book Club for choosing *The Women of the Copper Country* for its October 19, 2021 Zoom Book Club Meeting. I have a vested interest in Calumet, mining, and the making of pasties as my maternal grandfather was a miner in Calumet. My grandmother came to this country in 1913, moved to Calumet, and lived and worked with relatives who had a rooming house similar to Annie Klobuchar Clemenc in the book. She and my grandfather married in 1915. I will need to do more digging in our family history to find out if he was a miner during the strike in 1913, but it would seem so from the dates.

My interest in this book was keen right from the start; I read it and thoroughly enjoyed it. Unfortunately, I was unable to participate in the October Zoom Book Club meeting. However, I belong to a neighborhood book club in my condominium complex. Since I was hosting in January, I chose *The Women of the Copper Country*. I also decided to serve a light supper that included homemade pasties, Slovenian solata, and my homemade potica and apple strudel. It took me three hours to make the pasties without baking; we put this in the timeframe of 1913 when Annie made them for her boarders before they started their morning shift at the mine and were amazed at how hard she and the rest of the women worked in that era.



All six of us enjoyed the book immensely, especially how the author stayed true to so much of the historical facts of the strike, including the Italian Hall disaster. We thought the book to be compelling with so many similarities to the current day. We agreed that the strength of the women was remarkable, that the press was invaluable in helping shape their cause, and that the talent and diversity that the immigrants brought to this country are what has made it strong. We rated this book 4.5 out of a possible 5.0 points.

- Beverly Boyance Marinello
Branch 43

Cultural Interest Groups

A CIG constitutes a group of SUA members with a shared interest in a specific activity, area of knowledge, area of learning, or characteristic. SUA CIGs will usually meet on Zoom or on a similar virtual platform.

Do you have an idea for starting a CIG? SUA CIGs are started by regular members who have a Slovenian cultural interest they want to pursue. Contact an SUA Board member (listed on inside cover of *Zarja*) if you need help getting started OR check out the SUA website's main page where there is a banner with information about SUA CIGs and how to start one!



SUA Zoom Book — Group —

The SUA book club met on Monday, January 24, to discuss *Necropolis* by Boris Pahor (also available as *Pilgrim Among the Shadows* - both are English translations).

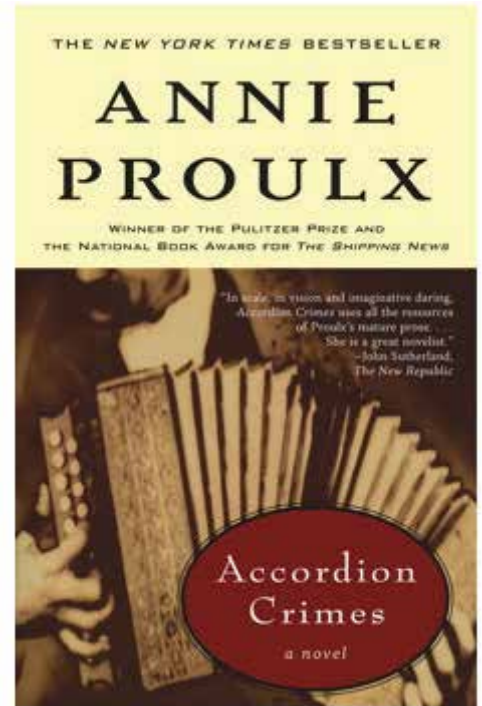


If you are interested in participating, please send an email to suabookclub@gmail.com with your name, branch number, and city.
If you have book suggestions, send those too!

Come Join Us!

The next meeting is
**Tuesday,
April 5, 2022.**

We will discuss *Accordion Crimes* by Annie Proulx.



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