

The Australian Slovenian Review

Summer 1994

Volume 2 Issue 1

Inside

Rapotec
the
Artist

ASR
Anniversary

Regional Profile
Ljubljana

Slovenian
Womans'
Affairs

Slovenian
Summer
School

Christmas In Slovenia

By Lucia Dekleva

We all have our Christmas traditions, the ones we remember from our childhood but, what do we Australian Slovenians have that makes our Christmas celebration different? Which traditions have been handed down by our parents and grandparents? Where did they come from and how is/was Christmas celebrated in Slovenia? These are just a few of the questions we thought you'd like answered as the Christmas season descends on us yet again!

Traditionally Christmas in Slovenia begins well before December 25, it begins with the season of Advent, the four weeks before Christmas. Advent is a time spent by the faithful in preparing for Christmas by attending mass and collecting materials for the "Jaslice" - nativity set.

"Jaslice" as we know them today, date from the 1800's. Slovenians put their "jaslice" in a corner of their home depicting the town of Bethlehem on a hill and a stable below. The most important part of this nativity scene was the figures of shepherds, kings/wisemen and of course, the holy family. These figures were made from a variety of materials such as wood shavings, plastic, wax, paper and hand painted pottery. The most prized however, were those carved from soft wood. There was no home without its "jaslice" in Slovenia, no matter how rich or humble the figurines. Even today, Slovenians living in other countries keep up the "jaslice" tradition, just look under their Christmas trees!

Another popular tradition still upheld by Slovenians scattered across the globe is the visit of "Miklavz" - St. Nicholas, on December 6th. Nowadays this usually

happens in a hall for a group visit. Traditionally however, on the eve of St. Nicholas, all the children of the village were well-behaved, frightened by the impending visit of "Miklavz" and his helpers the angels - "angelci" and devils - "parkelni or hudici". The ringing of church bells heralded the visit and amongst the pealing of the bells, the rattling of chains and raucous shouts (the devils) were heard. "Miklavz", dressed in a priest's long coat, a bishop's hat, white gloves and carrying a bishop's gilded staff also carried a big book with the names of all the children, good or naughty, in it. The angels carried the presents and the devils cavorted, generally jumping,

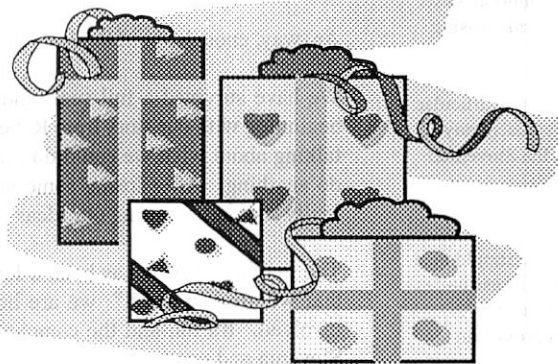
shouting and rattling their chains. Stopping at each house "Miklavz" read the names of the good children first and praised them. The bad children however, were told to be better and kinder. He then asked the children some questions from the Catechism, said some prayers with them and handed out gifts. Those children who usually behaved received gifts of

walnuts, biscuits and the like, while the naughty ones were given only a stick - "Miklavzova Siba" This was usually plain but occasionally it was decorated with a ribbon or the child's name.

The Advent period signalled the beginning of another popular folk devotion. Nine days before Christmas on December 15th, a statue of the Virgin Mary was taken from house to house, staying a day in each of nine specially selected homes. This was a great honour. In each house Advent songs were sung and the joyous part of the rosary prayed. The next day the statue was taken, in a small procession, to a neighbouring home.

The Christmas tree - "Bozicno Drevo" was unheard of in

(Continued on page 3)



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The Australian Slovenian Review is a non-profit venture, which aims to publish quarterly. Production and distribution costs are funded by sponsorship and advertising.

The ASR is not a platform for any particular interest group and does not represent any group or organisation within the Slovenian community.

The ASR team believe that there should be a forum available to inform and discuss issues that are of interest to first and second generation Australians with a Slovenian heritage.

Articles for publications are most welcome. They may be presented hand written, typed or preferably on a MS-DOS format floppy disk. Articles can be sent to :

ASR,
 P.O. Box KL806
 Kings Langley 2147

or faxed to: (02) 674 4583

Sponsorship or advertising enquiries should be directed to :

Robert Suber on (02) 829 1303

If you are interested in joining our team or finding out more about the ASR please contact us at the above address or Fax.



ASR




Editorial



MERRY CHRISTMAS!



What a festive issue! Not only are we celebrating Yuletide but also our first birthday.

It may seem as though you have only just received the Spring Issue and already here is the Summer one. It is not that this one is early, but in fact that the previous one was very very late. The last issue was "The issue from Hell!" Half of our team decided to get a life and go on holidays, and as if that wasn't bad enough, our printer had trouble with his printing machines and kept us dangling for weeks. We all breathed a huge sigh of relief when it eventually got posted off. However it meant that completing this one became an attempt to break the record for the miracle mile!

Not only was our previous issue late, it also varied in the quality of paper. This was done for a variety of reasons. The major one being the cost of postage. As the ASR is increasing in size, so does its weight and difficulty in fitting into standard envelopes. We therefore chose to go a grade lighter in our paper. The ASR team are also environmentally friendly (I was told to say that!). However some of us like the change, and others hate it. What do you think?

Anyway, enough about the last issue. Let's enjoy this one!

We have survived a full year, and to celebrate we are sharing some anecdotes from our beginning with our story from Robert Pecovnik. In the beginning we spent numerous hours talking about what we could do (and what format it would take), but we never seemed to do anything! After losing some motivated people through boredom, we thought that we really should be putting our ideas into action.

The making of ASR has been a long evolution and the process is not complete, but now that we are "on a roll" we are hoping to inspire more interested people into becoming involved. It's fun and the company is great!! Along the way we have learnt a lot about Slovenia and our community as well as meeting some very interesting people. One of our articles was printed in the SLOVENIA Magazine recently (much to our surprise) so now we are being read internationally. Not bad for a group of people who knew nothing about publishing. We are very proud of our achievements and would like to see our team grow. Please give us a ring and join a youthful (some are more than others!), attractive, vibrant, influential, intelligent...and of course modest team. But I digress....

Christmas is a very significant time in Slovenia and indeed within the Slovenian community in Australia. Lucia Dekleva shares with us ways of celebrating this portentous (love the thesaurus!) time. Tradition is focal to the concept of Christmas and we are in a unique position. We have the opportunity to combine the conventions of two cultures and develop the future traditions of Slovenian Australians. I will always treasure memories of opening Christmas presents after midnight mass, so now that's what we do with our children. We even go visiting grandparents at 4am to collect from them! I guess Christmas takes many of us back to our youth (even though we haven't left it) and it would be nice to hear what special memories of Christmas you carry around with you.

Enjoy number 1 of Volume 2 and have a safe, fortuitous and peaceful Christmas. We may even meet at one of the functions advertised in our social page.

P.S. Did you pick up the error on page one in the Spring issue? We were just getting you ready for a future competition we will be running!



Christmas in Slovenia

(Continued from page 1)

Slovenia until World War 1, however, foreigners in Slovenian towns, for example German officers, merchants and tradespeople, were aware of it much earlier. The tree, a small pine, was cut down on Christmas Eve to prevent it drying out too soon. In some places the tree was left undecorated and in others, paper streamers, apples and walnuts were the only ornaments. Nowadays Slovenians at home are like their foreign counterparts, their trees are decorated with tinsel, glass ornaments and all the other paraphernalia available.

At last we arrive at Christmas Eve, here in Australia many of us attend Midnight Mass but how many of us know about the following tradition?

In Slovenia the day before Christmas has many different names depending on which part of Slovenia you're from: "Sveti Post, Badni, Badnik, Bilja, Bila and Bozicna Bilja".

It was on this day that the Christmas bread is baked. The bread was made from the best wheat flour or a mixture of the different grains grown in the home fields. This bread also has many different names: "Poprtnjak, Poprtnik, Bozicnik, Bozic, Zupnik, Miznik, Pomiznik, Stolnik and Mocen Kruh".

The bread was blessed at Midnight Mass, taken home placed on a table and covered with a cloth. Everyone in the house received a piece of the bread, family or guest. What remained of the loaf was put out on two further occasions, New Year's Eve and Twelfth Night. The "Potica" - walnut roll which most of us are familiar with, was in fact only eaten by the wealthiest Slovenian families at Christmastime.

Christmas day, in the Slovenia of old, was a time for family. You went to Mass at 10am then spent the rest of the day at home. Visitors were regarded as a bad omen and only in Prekmurje were they made welcome. A lot has changed since then but Christmas in Slovenia is still mainly dedicated to family. In Australia it is much the same, a family time, but we find that visitors are made welcome in most households as many of us do not have relatives here.

Finally, the "Bozicna Darila" - Christmas presents.... What were their presents you ask? Why were walnuts and hazelnuts distributed with good wishes on Christmas Eve after Midnight Mass? It's hard to believe that they were grateful for these gifts. Society has changed us and materialism has taken over, not only in Australia but in Slovenia as well. Things traditional are making a comeback but are we willing to become as traditional as our forebearers?

We hope this journey down memory lane into the traditions of a Slovenian Christmas creates a warmth in your heart. No other holiday can compare with the day when wise men and shepherds followed the shining star, leading them to a crib and a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes - the place where they learned that God is Love. We still believe it and on Christmas Day we try to practise it.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Sources:

GELT, D. 1985

"Slovenians from the Earliest Times",
Coordinating committee of Slovenian Organisations: Melbourne

CRNILOGAR, O. 1993

Christmas at Home, "Slovenija" Quarterly Magazine VOL. VII
Winter NO. 4/93-94.
Slovenian Emigrants Association: Ljubljana

The Epic Tale of...

The Making Of The ASR

Although the ASR (Australian Slovenian Review) has been in existence for about a year, the idea to publish a magazine/newspaper/newsletter has existed in the minds of its creators since as early as late 1992. A plethora of meetings and discussions were held, which eventually culminated in the publication of the ASR.

Joe Andrejas planted the seed and those of us with plenty of fertiliser in our heads helped it grow. Many a cold (freezing) evening was spent huddled around a small heater at St Rafael's Merrylands. We huddled around this heater for any available heat, just as we were clinging together around a good idea and hoping the group would provide some intellectual heat.

These early meetings of ASR involved many things. Philosophical discussions on what we were going to achieve by such a publication and importantly were we going to write in English? The answer was yes, because the group that we were going to target largely found the publications in Slovenian alienating. Perhaps if we wrote in English then the extended Slovenian family (partners of Slovenian people for example) would have a means of staying in touch with our culture. Never was it the intention of any member of the group to subvert the excellent work done by our older Slovenian community leaders, but simply to add to it in our own way.

The magazine was to be in English and our target group was defined. That was the easy part! Now we had to work out the appearance of our product. Of course we would settle for nothing less than high gloss, full colour, 50 page magazine format. The choice of logo was also a high priority.

At this stage our group consisted of Joe Andrejas, Henry Stariha, Ciril Kosorok, Irene Stariha, Robert Suber, Robert Pecovnik, Marjeti Bolko, Jenny Stariha-Bleesing, Mark Jaksetic, John Kern, Miriam Stariha, Milena Godec and Danica Fortuna. What a large group! We could achieve anything with this number of people. Well, we certainly moved a lot of hot air, but we seemed never to be able to catch our tails. (Perhaps there were just too many of those overpowering Starihas in the group).

The more we chased our tails, the smaller the group became. We definitely couldn't afford gloss, colour or 50 pages but we were determined (some might say stubborn) and we persevered. Then came the light at the end of the tunnel -- John and Dorothy Kobal entered the inner sanctum. John, Ciril and Henry became our computer whizzes while the rest of us were still wondering where to start. John (and some others who were ready to quit) decided that we needed to define roles. Once we all had important sounding titles, we were more inspired to go and do something. Thus came the infiltration of our community and Gestapo like tactics in finding authors, financial contributors and people to inspire the

One Year!

By Robert Pecovnik with Milena Godec and Irene Stariha

dwindling (by now poorly fertilised) team. If you haven't been harassed yet, the day will come!!!

Now that we had the material, where was the money going to come from?

Subscription to the magazine was quickly discarded as a way of providing funds to publish the newsletter. The Slovene Graduates Association was forthcoming with funds and with personal contributions from members of the group the newsletter was printed and folded at Irene Stariha's house on 7 December 1993. ASR was now a reality and it was launched on 11 December 1993.

Early in 1994 Ian Makovec joined the team and he was keen to bring to the organisation his extensive knowledge of business practices. It was Ian and Robert Suber who began canvassing the Slovenian business community for advertising space and its associated revenue. Reader contributions also began arriving as they seemed to appreciate what we were all trying to

"Joe Andrejas planted the seed and those of us with plenty of fertiliser in our heads helped it grow."

achieve.

However it was not all smooth sailing as the controversy surrounding our all English content began to filter through to the editorial staff. Criticism is something we can all accept, provided it is constructive, not destructive.

Other states answered the call (perhaps after the youth concert held in Sydney). Lenti Lenko together with Katrina Vrisk provided information from the Slovenian community based in Melbourne. ASR was expanding.



*You too can join this team!
(Picture shows artist's impression of our busy editor)*

Recognition was forthcoming by way of invitation to a reception given on Slovenian Independence Day hosted by the Honorary Consul Mr Alfred Breznik. Here dignitaries, diplomats and ASR representatives rubbed shoulders. An article also appeared in Rodna Gruda which reviewed the publication favourably. More recently our regional profile of Ptuj appeared in "Slovenija Quarterly Magazine".

It may seem a little premature to write the history of a newsletter which has barely reached its first birthday. However we have such pride in what we have done in such a relatively short time.

Our team is again expanding and includes Jude Bavcar, Metka Cuk, John Kern, John & Dorothy Kobal, Ian Makovec, Robert Pecovnik, Mia Smith, Henry Stariha, Irene Stariha, Jenny Stariha-Bleesing, Ciril Kosorok and Robert Suber. We are also lucky enough to have many others contributing articles, ideas and encouragement.

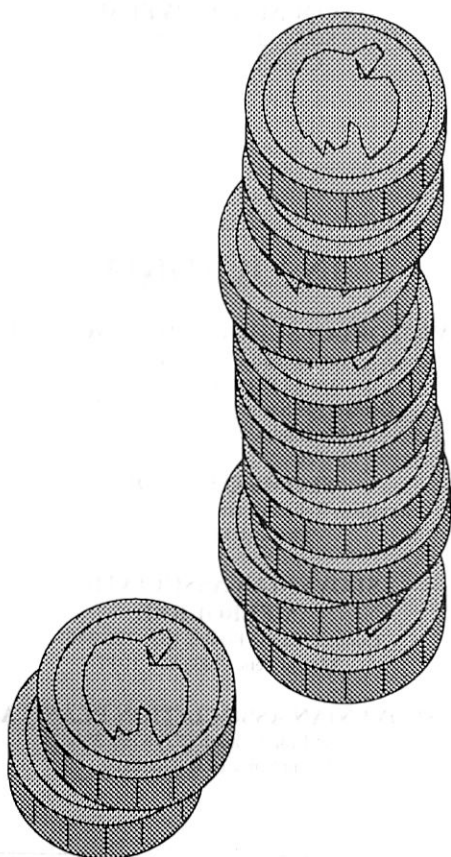
From the writers, organisers and all the dedicated workers in ASR, a big thank you to all who have made the ASR a success.

FINANCE REPORT

By Ian Makovec

ECONOMY SHIFTS INTO THIRD GEAR

With a conscious effort by the Slovenian Treasury to curb inflation and establish credibility in the banking sector, the economy is digesting the massive rationalisation and privatisation of business at a steady pace. The positive trade and investment accounts have increased foreign exchange supply and in turn the value of the Tolar requiring the Central Bank to take preventative action. This is a favourable sign for Slovenians because it means they can buy more goods for their Tolar. The growth of the economy (GDP per capita) expected to increase over by 3.5%. A further sign of increasing activity is an 18% increase in the number of foreign tourists visiting Slovenia in July 1994 compared with July 1993. Its not all good news, however. The rationalisation of business and the inevitable push for productivity and profit has seen the number of people employed drop by over 5% in June 1994, compared with June 1993.



THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BILATERAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT

The direction for trade and investment involving Slovenia became slightly clearer recently with the release on 15 September 1994 of the Slovenian foreign policy strategy document. For the first time, Slovenia has begun to show signs of marketing to the outside world to promote trade and investment.

The strategy document analyses the international situation, defines the position occupied by Slovenia as a small country at a strategically important location in an international context. While it outlines the values Slovenia presents to the world as peace, security, welfare, democracy and protection of human rights, it goes further to set objectives for the nation's development. These objectives are to maintain good neighbourly relations, integration with Europe, emphasis of the country's central European identity and spreading the Slovenian spirit internationally.

We should take this as evidence of Slovenia's move to be recognised in the international business world and desire to encourage bilateral trade and investment. What is the position here in Australia? How do we go about securing these opportunities? If you have enough money behind you, its usually a long and drawn out process with limited information and little you can do with a telephone and fax machine.

With a formal business support group in Melbourne and the "Development Partners" said to be forming later this year, the concept of an Australian Slovenian Business Group is not new. When considering the availability of resources in Australia, the efforts to stimulate trade and investment for Slovenia has been limited and uncoordinated.

The corroboration of interested Australian Slovenian business people is required to promote any involvement in Slovenia. I'd like to pose some questions which may help in determining the strategy for business relations between Australia and Slovenia:

* What is the status of the business relationship between Australia and Slovenia? How

much business is being done?. Is the present trade and investment being maximised?

- * What incentives are required for you to do business with Slovenia (e.g. tax incentives, backing from Austrade, analysis of opportunities)
- * What are the opportunities to be promoted in both countries?
Slovenia - gateway to Eastern Europe, tax incentives, ownership incentives.
Australia - gateway into Asia.
- * What do you think the role of the Australian Slovenian Business Group in facilitating trade and investment between the countries?

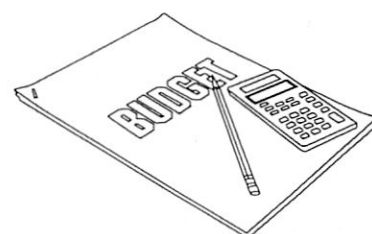
We need to take the initiative to progress this discussion and action to establish the vital links that make business happen. Your responses to the above questions would be appreciated and will be reported next issue.

EXCHANGE RATES

@ 6 September 1994

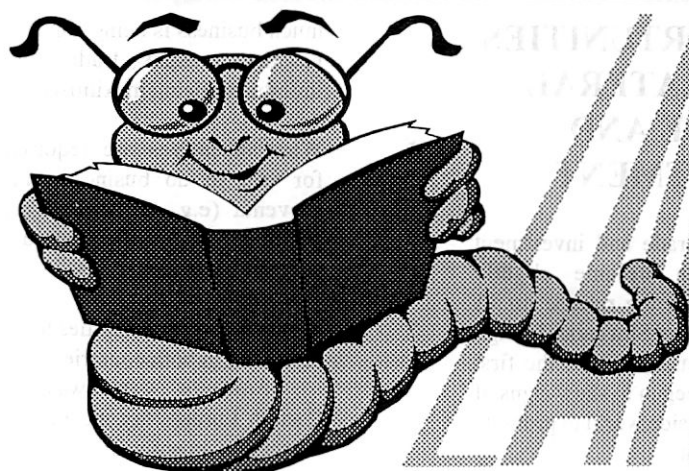
DEM/SIT	80.03
AUD/SIT	91.2

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957 5820
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**SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SHORT TERM STUDIES,
TRAINING OR RESEARCH IN SLOVENIA IN THE
ACADEMIC YEAR 1995/96.**

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia has announced a limited number of Scholarships for the academic year 1995/96.

The majority of scholarships are applied for in global competition, while a few are reserved for citizens of countries which are signatories to a bilateral agreement.

The scholarships are open to foreign students/researchers who wish to come to Slovenia as visiting students or researchers.

Nationality:

There are no national quotas.

Age:

The candidates must be born after January 1960.

Study period:

The duration of the scholarship can range from 3 to 9 months. An extension of the scholarship period can be granted under exceptional circumstances only.

Fields of Study:

The scholarships are granted for all fields of study offered by the Slovenian Universities.

Institutional Contacts:

Priority will be given to the applicants who have already established a contact with a Slovenian university institution / department which is willing to accept the applicant for the proposed term.

Study Level:

The scholarships are intended for students in higher education and for researchers. The scholarships cannot be granted for a complete course of study leading to a degree. The main purpose of the scholarship is to support foreign students / researchers who wish to take certain courses for training and study or to perform research.

Languages:

The candidates should speak Slovenian or the language agreed upon with the instructors / supervisor.

Deadline:

Completed application forms should reach the Slovenian Ministry of Education and Sport before 30th April 1995. Application Forms may be obtained from the Slovenian Embassy in Canberra: their telephone number is (06) 243 4830

The candidates will be notified before the end of June 1995.

CONTACT POINT

*Are you interested in
learning Slovenian?*

IN NSW:

SLOMSKOVA SOLA
St. Raphael Slovene Mission
313 Merrylands Rd. Merrylands
Phone (02) 637 7147

**SATURDAY SCHOOL OF
COMMUNITY LANGUAGES**
(NSW Department
of School Education)
Contact Mrs. Mariza Lican
on (02) 728 3387

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
School of Slavonic Studies
Contact Ms Metka Cuk
on (02) 850 7032

IN VICTORIA

VICTORIAN SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES
Princess Hill Secondary College,
Arnold Street, Carlton North.
Contact Ms Sasha Cererin (03) 802 4326
or Ms Sandi Ceferin (03) 571 9360

SLOMSKOVA SOLA
Slovenian Religious and Cultural Centre, Kew.
Phone (03) 853 8118

**SLOVENIAN ASSOCIATION
MELBOURNE**
Contact Magda Pisotek (03) 726 8465
Marija Penca (03) 894 1017

SLOVENIAN ASSOCIATION PLANICA
Contact Lidija Lapuh (03) 8799 3984,
Lucia Srncic (03) 870 4810

SUMMER IN LJUBLJANA

By Vesna Hatezic

The scene: Ljubljana, July 1994. A scorching summer, reminiscent more of Australian heat than European warmth, has set it. 120 individuals from all corners of the globe descend upon the city to partake in the 13th Annual Summer School of the Slovenian Language. The air is full of anticipation. Will the month be money well spent, or self-inflicted torture?

This participant very quickly came to the conclusion that it was money well spent. The summer school, run by the University of Ljubljana offered more than just classes in the Slovenian language: there were lectures on history and politics, workshops in craft, art, drama, music, journalism and folklore. There were also elective courses in conversation, literature, excursions in and around Ljubljana as well as more distant destinations. In fact, if you were to become involved in all on offer, you would collapse in a frazzled heap and not be able to enjoy simply being in one of the beautiful and surprisingly cultural cities in Central Europe.

As in any good language school, classes are graded so you can be anywhere between a beginner and fluent speaker, and still be placed in a class suited to your needs. All the teachers and lecturers speak English, so even if your understanding of the Slovenian language is extremely basic, you will never be in the dark. (This, however, is a major problem for non-English speakers...). The afternoon elective classes are also graded, ranging from phonetics for beginners, various levels of conversational grades for the mid-range groups, to literature for the advanced groups.

The workshops are a light-hearted and fun way to learn more about the culture of the Slovenian people. Shy creatures who

claimed they had two left feet were dancing the "Stajeriš" in no time. People who thought their artistic ability amounted to creating stick figures were soon designing frescoes. Still, others who believed the best way to make lace was to buy it ready-made, were clicking bobbins and twisting threads with the greatest of ease (... well, almost...) But the true beauty of each of the workshops is that, if you honestly have no desire to join in, there is no pressure placed upon you. They are, however, an opportunity too great to miss.

Aside from the fact that the summer school provides a brilliant opportunity to learn the Slovenian language and culture, it also provides for developing new friendships and broadening horizons by learning about different cultures and lifestyles from these new friends. For example, what is life really like in post-communist Moscow? Why is there unrest and discontent in Rezija (now under Italian rule)? Why do the citizens of Quebec want independence from Canada? and why are some Canadians so passionately opposed to this? The summer school is a place to have many wonderful discussions about anything and everything and a place to have lots of fun, with the common link being that everyone participating has some form of Slovenian connection. With so many people staying on campus (though this is not compulsory) there is never a shortage of people with whom to talk, to explore the city, or to just go out and have fun. You are never alone (unless you want to be, that is!)

So, if you happen to be planning a trip to Slovenia in the European summer, consider enrolling in the summer school. At approximately US\$1000 for tuition, accommodation and meals (half for tuition only) it is money well spent. The knowledge you gain, activities you experience and places you visit will no doubt enhance your holiday and will give you a greater understanding of our heritage. Not to mention the fact that it will leave you with wonderful memories of an action-packed summer.

Seminar for Teachers of the Slovenian Language

The Slovenian Ministry of Education and Sport has announced the next seminar for teachers of the Slovenian language will take place on the 23rd January 1995 and will run for three weeks.

The seminar, which is conducted for Slovenian teachers world-wide, will be in two parts: theoretical lectures (prepared by the Ministry) which will be held at the Dolenske Thermal Springs Resort, and an excursion around Slovenia.

Australia has been invited to send five representatives, who will be lucky enough to be provided with free accommodation and living expenses, together with return airfare to Slovenia. Sounds like a seminar not to be missed!

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Regional Profile

Ljubljana

By Mia Smith

It has been the home of Celts, Illyrians, Romans and Slavs. It has been called Emona, Laibach and Lubiana. Over the last century it has been ruled by Austro-Hungarians, Italians and Yugoslavs. On June 25, 1991 it became the capital of the new, independent Republic of Slovenia.

Ljubljana is located in the central region of Slovenia. In Ljubljana, East meets West and the diversity of cultural features and architecture is a reflection of this city's colourful and turbulent past.

The city and its surrounding suburbs cover an area of 903 square kilometres and with a population of just over 340000 it is a relatively small capital by European standards. At the altitude of 298 metres above sea level, it enjoys a pleasant, Central European climate, receiving its warmth from the Mediterranean Sea. The average day temperature in July is 20.2° C and in January 0.7° C.

Ljubljana is not only Slovenia's administrative and political capital, but also the heart of the nation's culture, trade and education. The city boasts a Philharmonic society, a University with 23000 students including the UNESCO Centre for Chemical Research and the University Clinical Centre. It has a centre for Graphic and International Art, as well as numerous other cultural venues - outdoor theatres, alternative galleries and live performances in the many cafes strung along the embankment of the Ljubljanica River.

Ljubljana takes pride in its history of high culture. It now has four professional theatres, three orchestras and many alternative-style production houses. The Cankar Cultural and Congress Centre (Cankarjev Dom) has 12 auditoriums and

can accommodate 5000 visitors.

Ljubljana also hosts film and music festivals and many jazz and rock concerts. In fact, at the peak of the performing season there are around 30 cultural events happening in Ljubljana each day. The city's diverse range of restaurants and cafes give both the visitor and the locals an opportunity to meet, talk and enjoy the exquisite food and wines produced in the nearby regions.

Ljubljana's architecture is marked



by different styles and cultures. The city was established by the Illyrians in approximately 3000 BC, then ruled by Celts, Romans and finally Slavs. A careful observer will notice that each historical period has left its fingerprints in the streets of Ljubljana.

Remains from the Roman period can be noticed all along the Ljubljanica River. The Roman Wall and the Statue to the Citizens of Emona most noticeably mark this period.

The period of Baroque gave Ljubljana some of its most distinguishing landmarks. The Ljubljana Cathedral and surrounding churches are all furnished with Baroque altars, the Town Hall and fountain of the three Carnolian rivers made by Francesco Robba, represent monuments to this flourishing and fertile period in history.

Ljubljana became internationally renowned in the 19th century during the time of The Congress of Holy Alliances. The newly built railway stimulated business in the region and with the growing population

came the increase of greater cultural awareness. This, in turn, created a demand for more cultural venues, resulting in the building of the Opera House, the National Theatre, the National Museum and the Philharmonic Society, all of which have contributed to the high cultural status that Ljubljana enjoys today.

Architects, such as Plecnik, Fabiani and Vurnik also left their mark on the city. Most of their work can be seen along the

Ljubljanica river with its numerous bridges. Joze Plecnik is also renowned for designing the National and University Library and the Ljubljana Cemetery Zale.

The communist rule after World War II also left its mark on this city. Apartment buildings and industrial zones were built in the typical box-like fashion, accommodating

thousands of families who migrated to Ljubljana during that period.

Since the fall of communism, the appearances of many Eastern European capital cities are changing. Ljubljana is no exception. Tiny shops in the first floors of residential houses are springing up everywhere. The city markets are laden with produce from around the world. Products that one could only dream about in the era of communism are now being sold throughout the city. Even the golden arch has made its way into the streets of Ljubljana. McDonald's surely never misses a sales opportunity...

One can only hope that Ljubljana won't get carried away in the race towards the Americanisation of the global village. It would truly be a crime to bury the unique beauty of this city under a Coca-Cola billboard.

Stanislav Rapotec - the artist

Part 1

Profile on Stanislav Rapotec.
by Irene Stariha & Dorothy Kobal

Walking down a quiet street in Double Bay one cold wintery evening, we finally arrived at the oldest house in the area: a grand white residence. We were greeted very warmly by its occupant: Stanislav Rapotec, who invited us in.

The house, like its owner, was fascinating: dotted with interesting paintings, sculptures and artifacts collected during his lifetime. We were invited to sit on a church pew next to a table which could well have been used at the Last Supper. Not only was the setting a little awe-inspiring, but so was our host.

Now being in his eighties, he still looks remarkably well for his age. He has a Bohemian appearance, and a youthfulness about him (that twinkle in his eye was ever present!). After spending some hours talking about his life and (drinking his tea and eating his yummy pastries), we felt that we had known him all our lives.

Stanislav Rapotec was born in Trieste in



1913, and was raised in Ljubljana. He studied economics and History of Art at the University of Zagreb, where much of his time was spent involved in student politics; his sympathies being with Slovenian Liberals and the unity of Yugoslavia. After moving to Split, he made his living working for the State Mortgage Bank.

During the war, he was involved in the Underground attached to the Allied forces in the Middle East, and taking part in sporadic raids along the Dalmatian Coast. His missions were often highly secretive and dangerous. He spent a total of eight years in the Middle East, which became his second home: "I trembled as I entered Jerusalem. I was so excited, I was young and quite sensitive to all the history that had taken place. Every hilltop had a historical significance. Jerusalem became my second home." During his time in the Middle East, he learnt to love the solitude and the beauty of the desert landscape. It was his love for this environment which attracted him to Adelaide in 1949.

Stanislav Rapotec emigrated to Australia in 1948, and moved to Adelaide a year later. He remained in Adelaide for seven years at which time he visited Sydney for a holiday and to watch the Davis Cup. Chance would have it that he met his future bride and married her within a few months. He settled in Sydney with his new wife and raised 3 children.

On his arrival in Australia, Stanislav Rapotec began painting seriously. Initially, his work reflected his interest in landscapes. The critics, however, found little in his work to impress them. As his art matured over time, his style of painting changed: he found the abstract form better expressed his thoughts and feelings. His new style was warmly received by the art world, and he gained critical acclaim.

Inspiration for his work comes primarily from his frequent trips to Europe and the Middle East: but he also finds himself moved by religious beauty. This is evident in his expressionist work "Meditating on Good Friday" which won the Blake Prize in 1961. The original nature of his abstract way of working caused both a good deal of controversy for the manner in which he

tackled a religious subject and brought him into prominence as a leader of the Sydney Abstract Expressionist School. His reputation was further consolidated by the Vatican's choice of five of his works to hang in the 53 rooms housing contemporary art in the Museum. This is one achievement he is rather proud of, particularly as one of them hangs on the back of the same wall as Michelangelo's fresco "The Last Judgement" in the Sistine Chapel.

His paintings hang proudly in all state and national galleries in Australia, in addition to several Australian embassies including Paris and Washington D.C. Even our own Parliament in Sydney houses one of his paintings "Easter at Notre Dame" in the foyer of the parliamentary offices. This is impressive, if only for its size, which is one thing that you notice about all Rapotec's paintings. "I never paint small". Even if one doesn't appreciate abstract art, one has to agree that his paintings are very powerful: they are the product of a feverish outpouring of emotion. His paintings are by and large started and completed on the same night.

As we sat listening to his life story, he was planning his next trip to Europe. "Travel is in the blood", he said. "With me it started when I was 18 years old with student organisations, attending student congresses across Europe. There was no time to study - that's why it took me 8 years to finish! I could never stay in one place too long." Rapotec makes his pilgrimage to Europe annually, visiting his studios in Austria (Koroska region) and in Rome. Now that Slovenia is independent, he visits his old haunts more regularly (in his little 16 year old Nissan sports car - we have it on good authority that he is a bit of a deviate behind the wheel!). His travels take him away from his Australian home between four to six months every year, and sometimes even longer.

We learnt so much about our host in the time spent with him, that one profile could never do him justice: there are so many facets to his life, particularly his heroic feats during the War, that there is enough for another article in a future edition. The pity is that we are not able to do with words what he can do with a brush.

SLOVENIANS AT PLAY

"The MV JAMES McCABE" host vessel for our Melbourne Cup Cruise

We began with a mission... to have a Melbourne Cup Chicken and Champagne Harbour Cruise. After copious phone calls and mega marketing undertaken by the organisers Jude Bavcar and myself, we finally arrived at the date. The stage was set and anticipation was high among our guests.



Top Right: Hats were definitely the order of the day, Miriam, Jude and Sonia
Above: Patronising the bar... Frank, Tanya and Stojan
Bottom Left: Champagne works differently on different people, Ian and Robert
Bottom Middle: Seen among the crowd, Margaret and friend.
Bottom Right: The "party" in full swing, Martin and friends

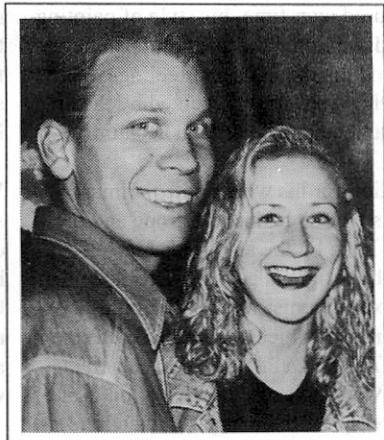
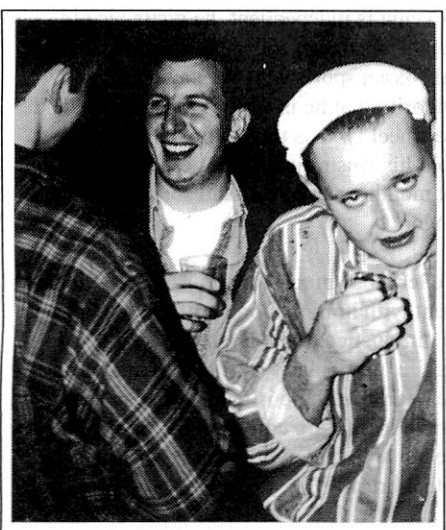
Our vessel arrived and as our guests were embarking, I pulled the Captain to one side and with tongue in cheek asked: "Do you have a licence to skipper a submarine?" - the boat was packed to capacity - similar to a morning commuter train. An announcement indicating use of outside areas quickly relieved the pressure and dispersed the crowd thus creating a good ambience (... not the scent burning type).

Good times were definitely happening and our guests certainly provided a convivial atmosphere. People celebrated birthdays, danced to songs from the current movie "Priscilla", ate to their hearts' content, sang odes from Elvis and gyrated to the varied sounds of today. Prizes were awarded for best "Melbourne Cup" hat and best "bad taste" hat. We also gave out the customary "lucky door" prize - a Magnum of Champagne.

The "party" certainly evolved, people were smiling, laughing and carrying on, time got away quickly and as the end drew near the inevitable question was being asked "where can we kick on from here? In my mind the answer was simple "not very far", as I was literally left holding the bag (receipts for the night) I opted for a quiet coffee and then onto slumber, happy in the thought that as they trudged wearily back to their cars, it was generally agreed, that a good time was had by all.

*By John Kern
Photography Henry Stariha*

*Good times were definitely happening
and our guests certainly provided
a convivial atmosphere.*



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SDS
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Out & About
The Social Scene in Sydney

DATE	PLACE	EVENT	DETAILS
10th December - Saturday	SDS	St. Nicholas Day (Miklavzevanje)	7:00pm Music by Alpski Odmevi
17th December - Saturday	SDS	Christmas Dance	8:00pm Music by Black Baron
18th December - Sunday	Triglav	Carols by Candlelight	8:00pm Music by Black Baron
25th December - Sunday	St. Raphaels Church	Midnight Mass	11:30pm
26th December - Monday	St. Raphaels Church	Boxing Day Dance	8:00pm Music by Black Baron
31st December - Saturday	SDS	New Years Eve Dance	7:30pm Music by Marimba
28th January - Saturday	SDS	Dance	8:00pm Music by Veseli Gorenjci
11th February - Saturday	SDS	Preseren's Day	8:00pm Music by Black Baron
19th February - Sunday	SDS	Picnic	2:00pm Music by Veseli Gorenjci
25th February - Saturday	SDS	Celebration of Lent	8:00pm
18th march - Saturday	SDS	St. Josephs Day	8:00pm Music by Black Baron
16th April - Sunday	SDS	Hunters Picnic	8:00pm Music by Veseli Gorenjci

RE-WEDDING

Suggested Date 27th May 1995

Cost \$55 per person includes
3 course dinner
beer, wine & soft drinks
4 piece band

Venue Emerald Lounge
Reception Centre
Merrylands

Contact M. Stariha 871 8641
J. Bavcar 601 7689

Deposit \$25

For more details on the events listed above contact the organisers

SDS (Slovenian Association Sydney)
2-10 Elizabeth St
Wetherill Park
(02) 756 1658

St Raphaels Slovenian Catholic Church
313 Merrylands Rd
Merrylands
(02) 637 7147

Triglav Club Ltd.
80-84 Brisbane Rd
St Johns Park
(02) 610 1627

Other organisations here & interstate are warmly invited to contribute to our regular Out and About feature.

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• Materinski Dan	May 7	BBQ - 12 Noon	Dance - 2 till 6pm
• Ocetovski Dan	Sept 3	BBQ - 12 Noon	Dance - 2 till 6pm
• Wine Tasting	Nov 12	BBQ - 12 Noon	Dance - 2 till 6pm
• Miklavzevanje	Dec 3	BBQ - 12 Noon	Dance - 2 till 6pm
• New Year's Eve	Dec 31	Dance - 8pm till late into the New Year!	

Ph: 610 1627 Fax: 823 2522

Triglav Club Limited (ACN 001 297 927)
80 - 84 Brisbane Road, St John's Park NSW 2176

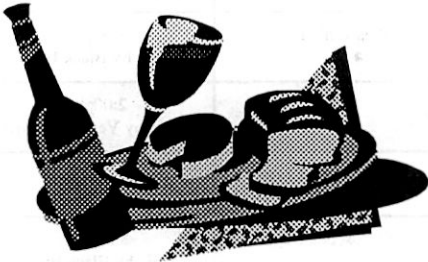
COOKING SLOVENIAN STYLE

Sauteed Potatoes - Tenstan Krompir

This traditional potato dish is eaten as part of a main course. It is a simple dish but it complements all foods especially meat dishes.

Ingredients

Margarine
1 Large Onion - finely chopped
Potatoes (as required)
1 teaspoon Vegeta
Pepper



Method

Place the unpeeled potatoes into a pot of water and bring to a boil. Boil until the potatoes are cooked - about twenty minutes. Meanwhile heat the margarine in a large frying pan and add the onions and cook until a golden brown.

When the potatoes are cooked peel them and slice into circular pieces. Add the potatoes along with the vegeta and pepper to the onions and stir together cooking on medium heat for a further few minutes.

Traditionally, tenstan krompir is served with cooked meat (from the soup, that is served as an entree) and a little mustard, complemented with a bowl of green salad. It also makes a nice side dish for sausages or steak.



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The movement towards an independent Slovenia had been fermenting for hundreds of years prior to the start of the twentieth century. It was the 'Great War' (World War One) which sped up this process of independence. The Balkan Peninsula and the explosive politics of that region, occupied a central position in the short term cause of WW1. The events in this region were the catalyst for one of European history's bloodiest chapters. The link that these events had to Slovenian independence will be carefully illustrated and Slovenian autonomy will be discussed in this context.

Generally speaking the world in the latter part of the 19th century was a much simpler place than it is today. Mass produced goods were still a relatively new commodity, and the industrial revolution had not liberated everyone on the continent. If the Russians had 1 factory the English had 150. Economic inequality was a fact of life and empire building became rampant as old and new orders scrambled for power. Education was still fairly limited and open criticism of political leaders was largely unheard of. Newspapers were read, but in limited amounts, and the most important events of the time would have been passed on by word of mouth. Blind adulation was expected by the ruling elite, but insurrection was rife. All of Europe was looking to extend its powers through the acquisition of colonies. Old Empires like that of the Ottoman Turks were crumbling while newly formed nations like Germany (formed in 1871) thrived in this the 'Spring of Nations'.

What of Slovenia? There was no such thing (in name) before 1918, as the Austro-Hungarian Empire dominated the land we know as Slovenia today. There was some representation in the Austro-Hungarian parliament however, and these men looked towards closer links with representatives of other Slavic states...with Croats and with Serbs from Croatian lands and Vojvodina.(1) The parliament which met in Vienna had many nationalist stirrings to contend with in its vast tracts of land. The government and the Emperor Franz Josef would not have embraced the idea of the Vienna two headed eagle becoming three. An Austro-Hungarian-South Slav nation would be one that Vienna would fiercely resist. As is stated by Kazimir Raposa; "Vienna showed no

disposition to allow the Slovenes to split among four duchies: Styria, Carinthia, Carniola and Gorizia, to unite in a common state, and to give them...the same independence as Hungarians had enjoyed in Austro-Hungary."(2)

In the nineteenth century rebellion broke out against the Turks in Bosnia Herzegovina. In 1877 Russia had helped in the first attempt to end the Turkish rule of that area. Russia was very protective of the people in the Balkans for two main reasons. One was that the

under the one thousand years of oppression by the Austrians. Russia and Serbia were to assert their authority in later years, but for now they seemed a good ally against the Turks and the Austrians.

No new or old nation however was going to give or take their land, which became equated with power, without an almighty struggle.

In 1910, 1,320,000 people lived on the territory of present day Slovenia-the Slovenians engaged in a search for allies.(3) Ivan Cankar a writer at the time

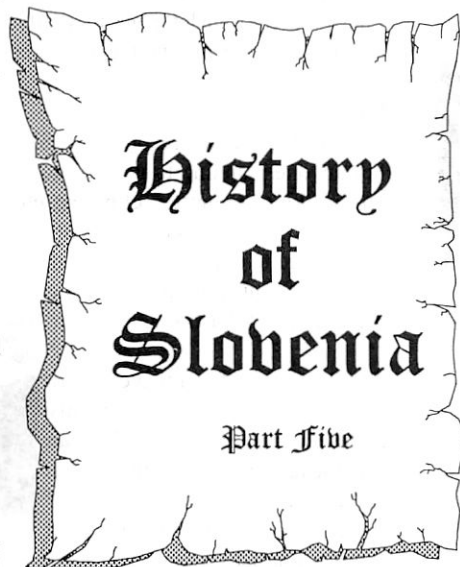
pointed out that there was some similarity between the Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian languages, but the nations were deeply divided in terms of culture, historic tradition and even mentality(4) At this stage however an ally against the old order was much appreciated, and the Slovenians pursued the idea of a united Slav nation, later to be known as Yugoslavia with passion. The Balkan Wars 1912-13 achieved the expulsion of Turkey from south-eastern Europe. It allowed Serbia to assert its dominance in the area, and to have its

territory greatly enlarged.(5)

Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie chose their wedding anniversary, the 28th of June 1914, to visit the Bosnia capital. As Ferdinand was the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, he was seen as an enemy of Serbia and of South Slav nationalists. Bosnia, as this visit indicated was going to remain part of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Gavrilo Princip was a 19 year old student heavily influenced by extreme revolutionaries such as the Black Hand who were committed to independence and nationalism. On Sunday morning 28th of June the Archduke's open car drove along the Appel Quay. Along the route 22 young assassins waited with guns and bombs. This attempt failed miserably and the car proceeded to its Town Hall appointment. The second attempt involved Princip alone, and at the intersection of Appel Quay and Franz Joseph St, the car took a wrong turn, and as the car reversed Princip stepped out and at close range he shot Sophie in the stomach and Franz in the head. The Archduke's last words were reportedly; "It is nothing" This proved to be the understatement of the century, not only did the Archduke die but the event proved to be

(Continued on page 18)



The turn of the Century - WWI

by
Robert Pecovnik

What of Slovenia?

There was no such thing (in name) before 1918, as the Austro-Hungarian Empire dominated...

Russians rightly believed that they had a strong link with the peoples of the Balkans which could have been traced back to the Slavic migration of the sixth century. Czar Nicholas II even referred to the people in the Balkans a little patronisingly as his little Slav brothers. Secondly Russia was looking to extend its sphere of influence in the world and it saw the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Turks as a threat to this ideal. In 1878 the area for so long under Turkish rule came under Austrian occupation (Congress of Berlin) and 30 years later in 1908 Bosnia was annexed. This caused bitter resentment in Serbia who wanted independence for that land as it suited their own political aspirations. Why all the historical details on Slovenia's neighbours? Invariably all of these are linked to the formation of the state of Slovenia, because as Serbia hungered for and got independence so too did this momentum drag Slovenia out from

The Outsider

By Belinda Lewis

I arrived in Ljubljana, Slovenia feeling quite apprehensive. A week with my boyfriend's relatives whom I had never met, a strange language and a country I knew little about. Oh well, it would be a nice break after 4 months of travelling and before continuing on to Italy. Little did I know that my time in Slovenia would be one of the most exciting and exhausting parts of my travels. I'd like to share some of my thoughts and experiences of being an outsider in Slovenia.

The Slovenian People

I was fortunate to be in Slovenia only 18 months after it gained independence from the former Yugoslavia. The Nationalistic pride of the people was obvious. They were so happy to live a new independent country and they saw their future as a nation to be very optimistic.



I also found all the Slovenians I met to be very friendly and extremely energetic. Their love of the great outdoors is infectious. I remember one particular day when we climbed a mountain, Nanos in the Primorska region. This was my first (and last) encounter with a 90 degree cliff-face. It was definitely worth it though to reach the top, sign our names in the log book (we were the only Australians, come to think of it we were the only non-Slovenians) and admire the spectacular dusk view over the Vipava Valley. On reaching the bottom, exhausted and ready to fall into bed, (it was after all 9:30 pm) we were told we were going out dancing - and on a Sunday night! Didn't these people have to go to work the next morning?

Food

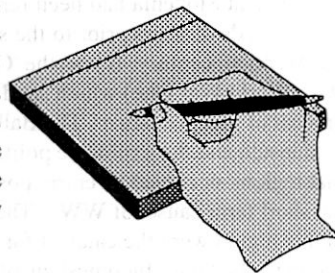
"No one goes hungry in Slovenia". This would fairly accurately describe the eating habits of most Slovenians. No wonder they do so much bushwalking and mountain climbing! One of the local specialties is chicken "juha" (soup) which seemed to be served as a starter to most meals we had in family homes. Other memorable feasts were freshly made donuts and of course the cheese and salami breakfasts which I just couldn't get used to.



I found Slovenians to not only enjoy their food but to be passionate about their wines. It seemed that every home had its own cellar and the families would be so excited and proud to share their wines with overseas visitors. Of course, some of the home brews were better than others. All of them were sampled though - just to be polite! Two rosy-cheeked Australians emerging from the cellar was a common sight in the Vipava valley in August of 1993.

Language

Although English is taught at school, I rarely heard any English spoken when I was in Slovenia. Perhaps in the capital Ljubljana, English is more widely spoken. At times I found the language barrier to be frustrating. There was so much that I wanted to say to my new friends.



Anyway, after being surrounded by the language, I started to pick up a few words, much to the delight of my hosts in Slovenia. I don't think I missed too much of the conversation though. Not only did I have a great translator but its really surprising how much you can understand just from the facial expressions and tone of the voice.

Sights

I would thoroughly recommend Slovenia as a tourist destination. For anyone planning to go to Europe who likes outdoor activities - bushwalking, mountain climbing etc and spectacular scenery in a different untouched environment. I really think that Slovenia will become quite popular as a destination when people realise what it has to offer at quite a reasonable price for most Australians.



The Postojnska Jama (caves) were definitely a highlight of my sightseeing in Slovenia. You can feel the drop in temperature as the rail car takes you into the side of the mountain. The walking guided tour (in English) was very interesting and the limestone formations absolutely spectacular. It was incredible to learn that one of the largest caverns is the venue for an annual classical music concert!

Of course, as with everyone who goes there, I found Bled to be a truly magical place. The glassy waters and rowing boats make it a place for lots of photo opportunities! With such a beautiful outlook and a bell that bestows good fortune to all those who make a wish, its no wonder that this great lake is known around the world.

What a shame the weather wasn't right for us to climb Triglav! At least we got to see the famous three-headed mountain from the national park which surrounds it. Within this Park there is a picturesque picnic area and shorter walks are available for those lacking the energy for a three day hike.

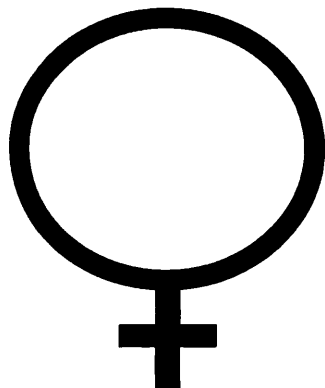
Before visiting the Lipican Horse Stud, I had no idea that Slovenia was the breeding ground for the famous Spanish Dancing horses. Although our timing wasn't right to see any of the performances, it was interesting to wander through the stables and see the horses "backstage" quarters.

Although relatively small in size, Ljubljana has much to offer. It was refreshing to see a city with very few high rise buildings and with a cosmopolitan flavour - outdoor cafes, paved malls and street musicians.

For a country only three quarters the size of Tasmania, Slovenia is truly a great destination. I'm sure it won't be too long before Slovenia is on everyone's list of "must see" countries when visiting Europe. I know I'm looking forward to returning, seeing my new friends and to continue to experience the many sights and activities that Slovenia has to offer.

Slovenian Womans' Affairs

By Irene Stariha.



In Australia, equal rights and opportunities for women have been on the political agenda for many years. Our policy developments in this area are detailed and comprehensive, and women enjoy equality within our social system (by law at least, if not always in practice). Do our sisters in Slovenia share this right, or are they still fighting for recognition?

Equality before the law is the first human right and fundamental freedom guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. This provision guarantees equal human rights and fundamental freedom to all, irrespective of origin, race, sex, language, religion, political or other belief, financial status, birth, education, social status or other personal circumstance.

To ensure that equality between the sexes is properly exercised, the Office of Women's Politics was established. The Office was founded by a Decree of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the 1st of July 1992. It operates as an independent professional service of the Government and is headed by Ms. Vera Kozmik. Its aims are to:

- promote the position of women and of the exercise of their rights guaranteed by the constitution, laws and international conventions;
- deliberate on regulations, decrees and measures passed by the Government and various ministries, cooperate with relevant bodies at the time of drafting of such legislation and communicate initiatives, suggestions and measures related to it, or the ones conceived on the job or inspired by new experiences and needs;
- prepare analyses, reports and other

documentation;

- discuss initiatives presented by women's organisations, groups and movements.

In order to achieve these aims, the office (in conjunction with other Slovenian organisations) is providing aid and assistance to battered women and children, developing Women's Education projects, implementing seminars on Career and Entrepreneurship, publishing literature on women's issues, sending delegates to international conventions on Women's Rights, conducting research on the Position of Women in Slovenia's Political Parties, uniting Slovenian businesswomen and organising conferences with them, etc.

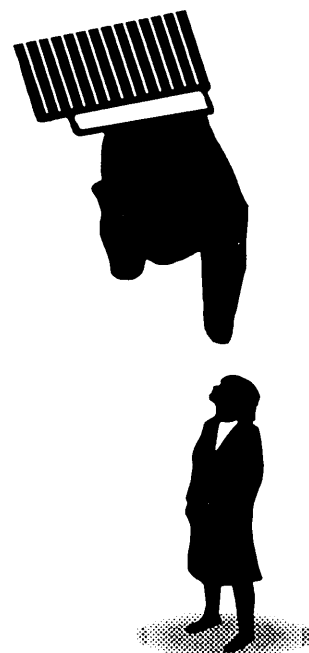
However even with all the work the Office is doing, what is the position of women in Slovenia as compared to the position of women in other Eastern and Western European countries? The director of the Office of Women's Politics, Ms. Vera Kozmik suggests that there is an absence of any real legal and administrative mechanisms for the handling of women's affairs in all Eastern European countries. However in Western Europe there is a solid administrative basis for women's rights (which are not fully implemented in practice) and the awareness of the general public of women's issues ensures that these rights are constantly being evaluated.

The Office's data suggests that in comparison to some Eastern European countries, the position in Slovenia is somewhat better. In 1992, more women in Slovenia (than in other Eastern European countries) were enrolled in schools and faculties and of the total workforce, 47% were women. The proportion of unemployed women was also smaller than the proportion of unemployed men. Unfortunately though, the future of employment for Slovenian women is not altogether rosy. Women are becoming less competitive under the new conditions of a market economy, which means that the proportion of employment for women in the future will decline. Slovenian legislation is also changing and Ms. Kozmik fears that the new laws might endanger the position of women in Slovenia. Her Office must work hard to maintain the current level of women's rights and to strive for qualitative changes, to achieve the ratification of new legal and administrative regulations which would guarantee personal dignity (as regards violence exercised over women), freedom

and security for women, and thus achieving legal equality, and equality in democracy.

Her belief is that the advantages that Western European women have are due only to the fact that wealthier countries can afford a legislation that improves the position of women. However, the representation of women in Parliament in Slovenia and politics is extremely limited. This is due to the belief in the 'natural' division of work and the firmly established stereotypes of women and their roles in Slovenian society. Slovenian women (in general) feel that they have nothing to worry about and that they are in fact awarded the same rights as men. The media in Slovenia do nothing to question the systems in place and the lack of women's involvement in real decision making processes.

The Slovenian Government is tackling the issues of women's affairs and with the establishment of the Office of Women's Politics, it is ensuring the continued involvement of women in this arena. However until women in Slovenia see the need to become involved in making real change through legislation and involvement in Politics, then change in Slovenia will be slow and half-hearted. Real change is hard to implement even when legislation is in place. There needs to be a turn around in society's thinking to make real change occur. Slovenian women do not as yet see the need for real change to be put in motion, but at least when they do, they will have avenues open to them, through the Office of Women's Politics.



The Gold Feathered Bird

- a fable

In Gorjanci, there were three extraordinary things. Hidden valley grew a tree that was a strong beech at the bottom, a mighty oak in the middle, and a high and lean birch at its top. The birch part was enveloped by a white mist so that no one could see it from the foot.

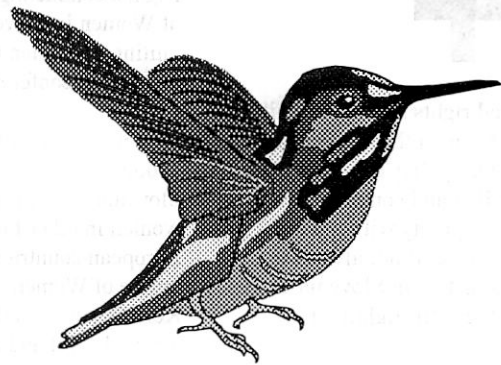
The large tree was covered from its bottom to its top by vines. The vines were thick as rope, their leaves never fell off, and the grapes kept rippling throughout the four seasons, be it in the summer or in winter. The third and greatest marvel, however, was the Goldfeathered bird who nested in the white mist, on the thinnest branches of the high birch tree. This bird didn't peck grain or drink water like all other birds, it lived on gold grapes that hung around its nest, and on heavenly rain that fell on the birch tree. It was called the Goldfeathered bird because in its right wing it had a gold feather. There were unusual powers to that feather. If anybody wrote three pleas with it, all three would be granted, even if they were directed to the emperor, pope, or one's worst enemy. Many a brave man had tried to climb the birch tree and pluck the precious feather, but nobody had ever reached the nest. All of them had lost balance on the slippery birch tree, fallen off onto the oak and beech branches, and was killed.

In the same valley, there lived a saintly hermit, who knew all the secrets of the Gold feathered bird. People kept visiting him and asking how to get the gold feather. He, however, only laughed and replied: "With the help of a scythe and three saints." People didn't understand his words, and thought the saintly man was pulling their leg. *Podgorec* Mikec heard his advice too. Mikec, like all *Podgorci*, was sometimes quite a bright lad, but at other times he could be quite thick as well. This is to say that God had given Mikec a good brain, but Mikec didn't always bother to consult his brain and listen to it. This time, however, he put two and two together, and knew quite well what was to be done. He said: "It serves them right, poor beggars. Only he who can climb and understands the hermit like me should try his luck." Mikec took his scythe and Gorjanci. When he found the unusual tree, and white mist above it, he started cutting grass: he cutting and cutting until all the fields in the and above it were cut. He built the hay into a stack that reached high above the oak and beech tree level, up to the birch tree and the white mist. Seven times he climbed the birch tree, and seven times he slipped. But as he always fell on the soft hay, he never got hurt. Nevertheless, he began to worry that all his efforts were in vain. Then, however, he remembered that he followed only half the hermit's advice only by half. He used his scythe correctly, but neglected the three saints. So he went down to his knees and asked the three saints that guarded Gorjanci - St Elija, St Miklav and St Jedrt - for protection. After his prayers he started climbing for the eighth time, and this time he reached the nest of the Goldfeathered bird without any difficulty. The bird was waiting for him, and fearlessly let him pluck the gold feather. Mikec, happy and merry, took the feather and went home. He was beside himself, so happy he was, and didn't quite know what to do next. In his dizziness, he couldn't be bothered to consult his brain into account. Instead, he acted upon his *Podgora* simple-mindedness, thus it is no wonder he got such a bad deal.

He went to ask scholars who was the mightiest emperor in the world. When he got their answer, he wrote this emperor a letter, asking his daughter's hand in marriage. The emperor was surprised, but couldn't deny his wish. He called for his daughter and told her, there and then, that she had to marry Mikec. The Imperial daughter got very angry and swore Mikec would be sorry. But she had to obey her father, and she went to *Podgora* and married Mikec. She was ugly as a spook,

annoying as an elf, poor as a beggar, and yet greedy for everything, she set her mind on spending Mikec's money as there had been no end to their wealth. Mikec had got two farms after his deceased father. He kept one for himself, the other he gave to his Imperial wife. But the woman quickly wasted away her land, and then went on to indebt his as well. Such wild spending, however, frightened Mikec. He took his gold feather again, and wrote the emperor the second plea: he asked him to give his daughter an imperial dowry so that she could live in the manner she was accustomed to. The emperor of course granted his wish straight away, and sent his daughter an enormous dowry: a few carriages full of gold and silver, and so many beautiful dresses that every day she could wear another. The young empress indeed paid off her debts, but she didn't give Mikec a dime. She laughed at him and scorned him in front of other people. She rode an expensive coach,

while he had to go on foot behind. As he ran, out of breath, behind the coach, she would cry: "Men and youth of *Podgora*, look! My husband, the famous Mikec, the emperor's



son-in-law, is my escort!"

Her scorn hurt Mikec the most. Again he took the gold feather, and wrote the emperor his third and last plea: he begged him to take his daughter back. The emperor laughed and gladly fulfilled his third and last wish. Mikec bitterly regretted the stupid loss of his good farm, but even more he rejoiced and praised God for getting rid of the arrogant and ugly imperial daughter. Since then, he had never failed to respect guidance his clever *Podgora* mind could give him. Among local girls he picked his second wife, who was pretty and hard-working, and brought with her a handsome dowry. With her, he lived quietly and happily till the end of his days. As the neighbours teased him with the emperor's daughter, he moved from *Podgora* to *Bela Krajina* where nobody knew him. He took the gold feather with him, and kept it in a safe place. Only when his hair grew grey, and he passed his farms on to his son, did he show it. "Here, my son, I give you your happiness or unhappiness, your honour or your shame - it is up to you to choose. For me, it brought unhappiness and shame because I didn't know how to use it. You should do better than I. Don't ask for a wife, or wealth, or honours. If you want to know your father's advice, write to our Head, our Pope in Rome, and ask him to read a mass for you. Thus God will enlighten you, and give you wisdom to find peace in the afterward, and wealth in this one too."

The son listened to the old man's advice and wrote a letter to the Pope. The Pope granted his holy wish with pleasure and read a mass for him. God, then, presented him with such wisdom and clear-mindedness that he made a large fortune, and after his death he was pronounced a saint. Even his children and grandchildren were known for their exquisite honesty and cleverness.

The magic gold feather is still somewhere in *Bela Krajina*, and the rumour goes it is regularly and successfully used. I know an old and respected lady who would swear, if necessary, that the presence of mind, virility and skilfulness of the people in *Bela Krajina* come directly from the beneficiary powers of the gold feather.

Translated by Metka Cuk

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SPORTS PROFILE

Robert Mikuletic

by Jenny Stariha-Blessing

ROBERT MIKULETIC is another of our young sports stars. His chosen sport is somewhat unusual for one so young. Robert plays Bocce, which is the European form of lawn bowls. The only real noticeable difference is that Bocce is played on sand not lawn.

Robert is 15 years old and attends Year 10 at Parramatta Marist High School.

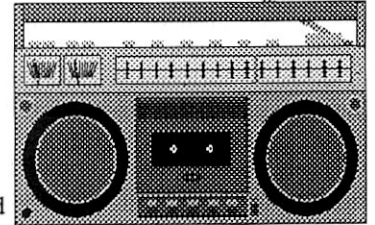
Robert has now been playing Bocce for 2-3 years after his father got him involved in the game at SDS club Sydney. In the short time that he has been involved in Bocce he has represented NSW in the Australian Nationals in Queensland in 1993 and in Western Australia in 1994. In Western Australia, the NSW team just missed out on the final. Robert was selected on his performance in this tournament, to represent Australia in the Junior World Championships to be played in Italy. Twelve nations competed in Italy with Australia finishing 5th in the world. Robert hopes to keep representing Australia with the aim of getting in the top 4.

What do his friends think of him playing Bocce? Well at first he received a lot of stirring but once he got selected to play for Australia they realised that Robert was going places and that it is not just a sport for the "oldies".

Congratulations Robert on your achievements. We wish you all the success in future tournaments.

Media Watch

Spotted in The Bulletin recently: an advertisement for BMW - The Ultimate Driving Machine. The advertisement explained that BMW sources its components from around the world, only selecting the best for its vehicles.



It went on to say: "Leather is sourced from Australia and the USA. Seat covers from the Czech Republic and South Africa. Headrests from Slovenia, while seat heating comes from Canada and Malta."

It seems that Australia and Slovenia have something in common. It's nice to know that both countries can produce quality products which meet BMW's high standards.

Seen in the Sunday Telegraph, October 23rd, an article about one of our Slovenian Students sitting for the HSC this year. Helena Kos is one of two students sitting for the exam, and it seems that studying Slovenian is a bit of a family tradition as both her brother Michael (14) and sister Tanya (12) are doing the same. Helena has achieved what is probably a first in our community - a whole quarter page with photo in one of our mainstream newspapers - Congratulations Helena! The ASR wishes you and all our readers who are sitting for the HSC this year the very best of luck.

Overheard recently on a Sydney FM radio station one morning:

"What is the most unpopular subject in the HSC this year?"

"Slovenian?"

"No, it's actually Dutch - while Slovenian has two students sitting for the exam, Dutch has a grand total of one!" (laughter...)

Well...it could be worse...

Congratulations to our Sports Writer Jenny, who gave birth to son Luke on the 14th November. Mother and Son are both doing well.

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(Continued from page 13)

the catalyst for WW1. The Austrian government had decided it was time to eliminate the Serbian menace once and for all. The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand gave them the pretext they needed. Serbia refused to be part of any ultimatum handed down by the Austrians and due to the extensive system of alliances which involved every major European power, the area was involved in a total war. By the 6th of August 1914 Germany, Russia, Austria, France, Italy, Britain, Serbia and all of their associated colonies and allies were at war. A war that would directly lead to the death of 12 million men in battle.

From 1914 to 1918 the Serbs fought bravely against overwhelming odds, their ultimate aim being the reunion with the South Slavs of Austria-Hungary, an aim they shared with many of their South Slav brothers across the border(6). On October the 29th 1918 the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire was greeted with great enthusiasm by the Slovenians.(7) In December of the same year, at a joint session of the Serbian Skupstina and a South Slav Council set up in Zagreb, Peter Karadjordjevic became king of the new Tribune Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians(8) Although they all spoke different versions of the same South Slav language they were united by race for the first time in history.(9)

The Treaty of St Germain (10 Sept 1919) required Austria to recognise The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenian independence. The map of Europe changed dramatically. Russia could not exercise any control over its 'little Slav brothers' due to the Communist revolution of 1917. Serbia therefore asserted its control over the area, and it

began to defend these precariously new and unstable borders. One such example of the new animosity in the region is the conflict with Italy who immediately after the collapse of Austria-Hungary started to occupy the territory promised to them by the Entente's 1915 London treaty as a reward for engagement in war(10). The fight for many had begun again.

The new Yugoslav state proved a disappointment from the beginning as the 'Slovenians expected primarily the realisation of their national independence.(11) As Peter Vodopivec also recognised in his excellent article on the historical context of Slovenian autonomy; "From the beginning, a dilemma which the old nor the new Yugoslavia ever managed to overcome, (was) that between centralism and federalism (which), polarized opinion." (12) This dilemma polarized opinion then and now. This means there were many problems in this newly created nation. Serbia because of its war efforts demanded the seat of power. The tension which this created is clearly evident in the Civil War which dominates this area in 1994. A tension that Slovenia no longer feels.

At the beginning of the war in 1914, Serbia had declared that they were fighting for the liberation of all South Slavs. South Slavs however experienced only as their annexation by Serbia.(13) Croatia obtained autonomy in 1939, while the Bosnians and the Slovenians were dispatched with promises of something similar another time.(14) The outcome of World War One was unsatisfactory for many nations including Slovenia, as yet again it

came to be dominated by an external nation. It had joined the alliance with Serbia as a means to an end, unfortunately it would be dominated by this nation for the best part of the twentieth century. In the next edition it will be illustrated how the struggle for independence was not over. In fact a new chapter was just about to start. With the inter-war years the rise of Communism, and the coming of WW2 the fight was to go on and Slovenia had no choice but to fight as hard as it possibly could.

1. Kazimir. R Discover Slovenia 1992 p22
2. ibid p22
3. Vodopivec P The Historical Background to 'the Slovene question' cited in Grafenauer N(ed) the case of Slovenia Ljubljana 1991 p27
4. ibid p27
5. Maclean F Tito London 1980 p24
6. ibid p24
7. Vodopivec P op cit p27
8. Maclean op cit p24
9. ibid p24
10. Vodopivec op cit p28
11. ibid p28
12. ibid p28
13. Raposa K op cit p24
14. ibid p24



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Letters

Dear Editor

I am writing out of concern for the younger generation Australian Slovenians. Occasionally I go to Slovensko Drustvo and can't help noticing that there are insufficient facilities/events etc. for the Youth.

Could something be done? For example, an Australian Slovenian Soccer team or other popular sporting teams, discos, walkathons (like Merrylands used to have every year). Money raised could be used to make sporting fields or sponsor a team etc.

We hope something can be done soon.

Julia and Michelle Brcar

We understand that a new Committee has been elected at SAS and they are enthusiastic about introducing new ideas to cater for all age groups.

Perhaps now is the time to become involved with the Clubs as they are more open to suggestions from the younger age groups.

If anyone has any suggestions to help Julie and Michelle stir up the clubs to provide more sporting facilities etc. let us know..

Ed.

Dear Editor

First of all I wish to thank you for the "Australian Slovenian Review", which I have been receiving regularly.

With the fourth issue the ASR has become one year old and my congratulations on the occasion of the first anniversary. Congratulations also to all those responsible for the choice of content and format.

ASR has by now proven itself to be a worthwhile addition to the Slovenian publishing media in Australia, catering for an important section of the community. And, I wish the publication a long lasting and successful future.

As we are fast approaching the festive season, I would like to use this opportunity to wish you all at the ASR, as well as all your readers, a Merry Christmas and all the very best for the new year 1995.

PS Enclosed is a cheque, being a small contribution towards the publishing expenses.

*Alfred Breznik
Honorary Consul of the Republic of Slovenia*

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Reconditioning! Now there's a word that produces a variety of responses from people ... not all of them flattering. Martin's Clutch & Brake Pty Ltd specialises in the reconditioning of clutches, using whenever possible Australian produced components. Clutches are reconditioned to original factory specifications and carry a full 12 month or 20,000km warranty.

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Martin tells us that the company can handle all clutch needs, new or reconditioned, whether it be a precious vintage car or a current exotic invention, or indeed anything in between. Bus, tractor, truck, off road, rally or racing cars, and of course industrial applications - they are all catered for at Martin's Clutch & Brake.

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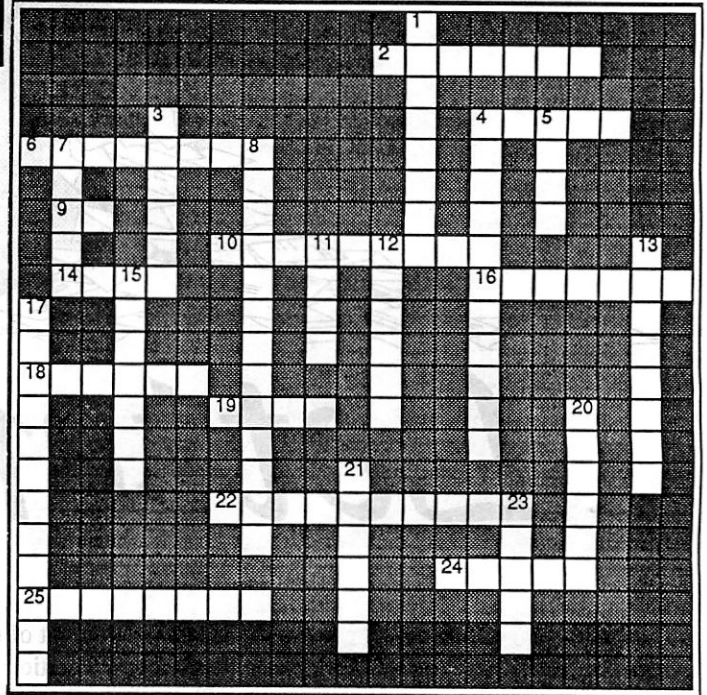
Crossword

ACROSS

- 2. A long tailed clawed shell fish.
- 4. What is the general name given to an animal with two legs.
- 6. A line that divides a circle in half.
- 9. That is.
- 10. Roseanne's husband
- 14. A unit of measurement often found on ones wrist.
- 16. If you are born at the end of October you would be this star sign.
- 18. Time in music.
- 19. What colour is the sky on mars.
- 22. The first performer at the Sydney Opera House.
- 24. What is the heaviest internal organ of the body.
- 25. Australian bird with the male having a colourful bird.

DOWN

- 1. A kind of hair pin.
- 3. Fills the cloaca
- 4. Colourful underwear (two words)
- 5. The sport Prince Charles plays
- 7. A stupid person
- 8. Mr. Bean
- 11. A fresh water fish.
- 12. Who discovered logarithms.
- 13. The most abundant gas in air.
- 15. A cocktail with Gin, Vermoth and Bitters.
- 17. A tonic made from dried roots.
- 20. A young calf.
- 21. A place of worship.
- 23. How many stipes does the American flag have.



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Word List

le Rhythm Lgyrbird Boxer-shorts Carp
Sarsaparilla Seven Lobster Dancenor
Pink Bobby-pin Polo Napier Heifer
Biped Time Rolf-Harris Szewagz Idiot
Nitrogen Church Diamter Scorpio
Liver Rowan-Nikinson Martini

In the next Issue ...

Slovenian Easter Traditions

As Easter approaches we take a look at how Slovenians celebrate this special time of year.

Who's bugging Slovenia now?!

We look at the ongoing problems between Slovenia and Italy in their historical context.

Stanislav Rapotec - the Artist

In the second part of our special article of a famous and prolific Australian Slovenian Artist we look at his adventures during the World War II

The Structure of Government in Slovenia.

We take a brief look at how the political system of Government works in the newly democratised nation...