

\$8.99 U.S./\$15.99 International

Zarja

Official Publication Slovenian Union of America
Uradno Glasilo Slovenske Zveze v Ameriki

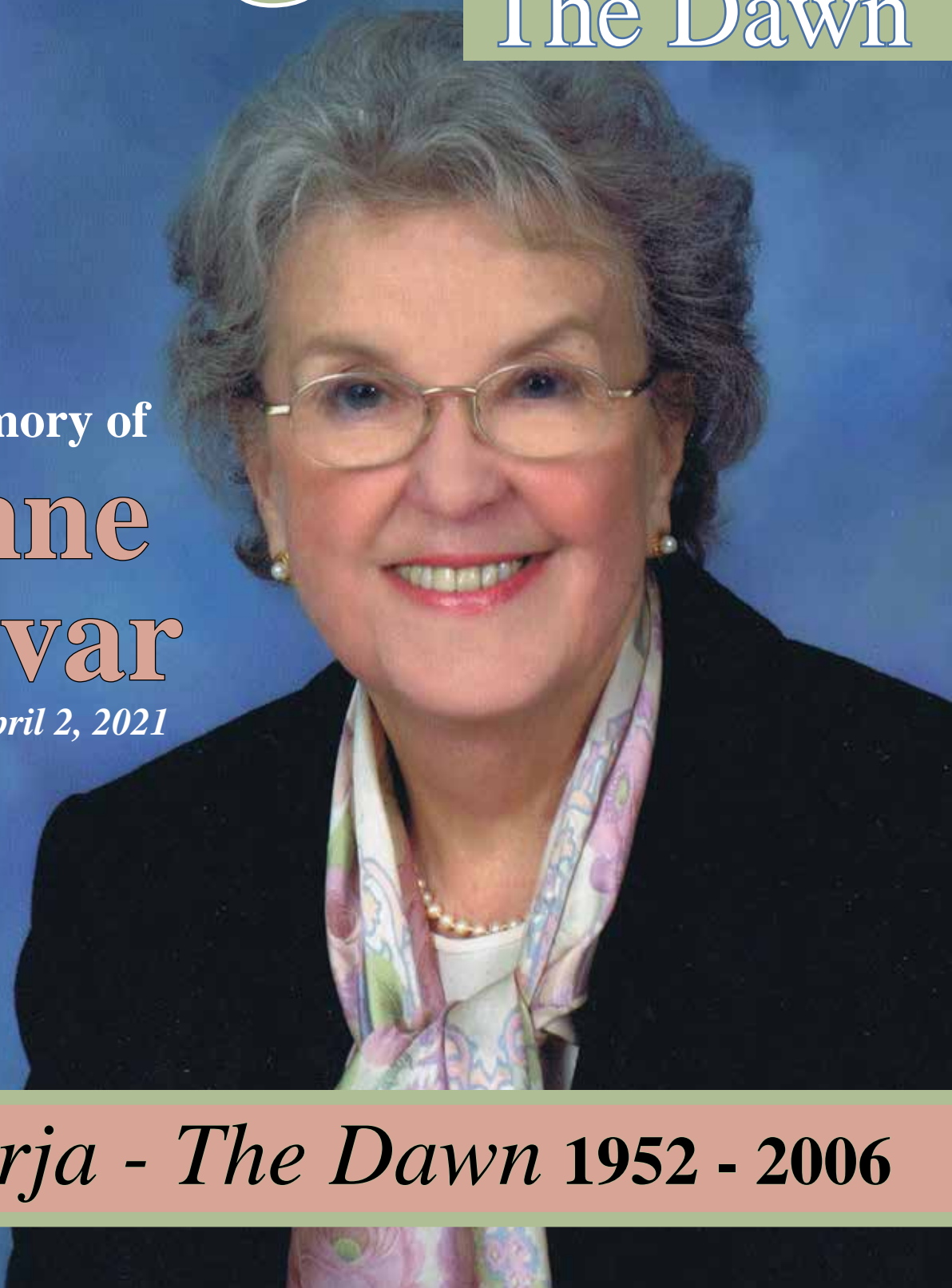
Volume 93 Issue 2
Summer 2021

The Dawn

In loving memory of

**Corinne
Leskovar**

October 9, 1927 - April 2, 2021



Editor *Zarja - The Dawn* 1952 - 2006

Slovenian Union of America

431 N. Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432-1703

TELEPHONE: 815.727.1926

WEBSITE: slovenianunion.org

2015-2019 National Board of Directors

PRESIDENT: **Mary Lou Deyak Voelk**

(Branch 23) marylouv174@gmail.com

VP OF OUTREACH: **Annette Charron**

(Branch 3) amtcharron@gmail.com

VP OF HOME OFFICE: **Richard Grill**

(Branch 99) rlgrill@hotmail.com

VP OF MARKETING & FUNDRAISING: **Stephanie Owens**

(Branch 93) nycslovenianunion@gmail.com

VP OF CULTURE & HERITAGE: **Beverly Kochmann**

(Branch 109) bbkochman@msn.com

NATIONAL TREASURER: **Robert J. Kuhel**

(Branch 16) rjkuhel@sbcglobal.net

CORR./RECORDING SECRETARY: **Mary Risner Glaize**

(Branch 30) tankandfrog1@yahoo.com

STANDING COMMITTEES

RESEARCH & ADVISORY

Chuck Debevec (Branch 109) cfdebevec@live.com

Richard Terselic (Branch 103) rat1@verizon.net

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL GRANTS

Debbie Duris (Branch 111) dcduris@gmail.com

Frances Kovatovich (Branch 35) velike2000@yahoo.com

Carol Rutkiewicz (Branch 109) crutkiewicz@live.com

Bill Zerial (Branch 99) billzer@sbcglobal.net

MEMBERSHIP

Sandra Brierton (Branch 102) sb24774@dce.k12.wi.us

Christine Charron (Branch 3) christinedcharron@gmail.com

James Lah (Branch 23) jlal@ely.k12.mn.us

Richard Mutz (Branch 20) sua.members@gmail.com

Lynn Zalokar (Branch 93) lzalokar@yahoo.com

PRESERVATION

Carol Novak (Branch 20) sua@slovenianunion.org

Carole Terlep (Branch 20) sua@slovenianunion.org

Georgene Agnich (Branch 20) sua@slovenianunion.org

FACEBOOK EDITOR:

Mary Risner Glaize (Branch 30) tankandfrog1@yahoo.com

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS:

Denise P. Bartlett (Branch 43) denisebartlett@wi.rr.com

MEMBERSHIP MANAGER:

Rick Mutz sua.members@gmail.com

(ISSN 0044-1848)

Postmaster: Send all changes of address to this location:

SLOVENIAN UNION OF AMERICA

431 N. Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432-1703

© Copyright All Rights Reserved

LAURIE LEHMAN



Afternoon Outing 12"x16" (scene of Piran, Slovenia)

Original Paintings of **Slovenia**

laurielehmanartist.com

989-560-1645

Zarja - The Dawn

EDITOR: **Bonnie Pohar Prokup**

DIRECTOR OF DESIGN: **Debbie Pohar**

CONSULTING EDITORS: **Annette Charron and**

Bernadette K. Fitzsimmons

EDITORIAL OFFICE: **3119 Carrie St., Peru, IL 61354**

PUBLISHER: **Slovenian Union of America**

Vol. 93, No. 2 Summer 2021 Published quarterly

Periodicals Postage paid at Joliet, IL and additional mailing offices.

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 Fall issue must be received by July 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.

Corinne Leskovar

October 9, 1927 - April 2, 2021

Corinne Leskovar passed away peacefully in her sleep on Good Friday, April 2, 2021, surrounded by the love of her family. She was born in the St. Vitus parish, in Cleveland, Ohio, on October 9, 1927, the oldest child of the late Albina and Rudolph Novak. Corinne graduated from the University of Colorado, Boulder. In the early 1950s, Corinne, her mother, and sister Gloria moved to Chicago and quickly assimilated into the local Slovenian community. There she met her future husband, Ludwig A. Leskovar, and they were married in 1955.

Lud and Corinne were instrumental in strengthening the Slovenian heritage in the Heart of Chicago community and St. Stephen's parish. For more than 35 years, Lud and Corinne hosted the Slovenian Radio Program, a weekly radio program featuring favorite Slovenian music, community news, and listener requests from which they organized the Slovenian American Radio Club. They were the guiding vision and force behind countless cultural and civic events, including the annual Slovenian Day festivities. After Lud's death, Corinne continued to contribute her energy and creativity to the growing Slovenian community, especially as it established the vital Slovenian Cultural Center, in Lemont, Illinois.

In 1952, Corinne succeeded her mother as Editor of *Zarja - The Dawn*, the magazine of the Slovenian Union of America, formerly the Slovenian Women's Union of America, a post she held for more than 50 years. Corinne enjoyed traveling, especially her numerous trips to Slovenia to visit family and friends. She also loved music and enjoyed singing in the church choir. And even though Corinne was not a native Chicagoan, she loved the city and its spectacular lakefront.

Corinne's creative passion was Slovenian folk dance. She (fondly, "Mrs. L.") was the founder of the Slovenian American Folk Dancers. She was adamant that the dancers be outfitted in authentic costumes from Slovenia's regions and scoured for material and accessories on her trips to Slovenia and through her Slovenian connections. Her dance groups performed at cultural events across the United States and Canada. Corinne will be remembered for her undying energy and creativity in support of her Slovenian heritage.

SUA and the entire *Zarja - The Dawn* staff express our deepest condolences.

Corinne, počivaj v miru!

Summer 2021



Sixteen years ago, Corinne invited us to the Croatian Press in Chicago for what would be the beginning of the transition into a new age for *Zarja*. Little did we realize then the journey that we were about to embark on. Corinne was a Slovenian Women's Union of America icon. She had almost single-handedly overseen the growth and re-creation of the magazine for over fifty years, doing everything from writing and editing to layout and production. We left that day in awe. The two-hour ride home was filled with conversation about how could she do it all! And more importantly, how could we possibly fill her shoes?

Luckily, Corinne stayed on for several years to guide and mentor us. Her passion and Slovenian spirit were catchy. To this day, when we are laying out and producing an issue, we think back about all the conversations and lessons that we learned from Corinne. Her passion and love for all things Slovenian never wavered.

In 2006, at the beginning of the transition, when Corinne was interviewed, she said "When I put my last issue to bed, it was hard to let go. I wondered, 'how can I make anyone understand the spirit I have?' But I am just going to continue to offer them anything I've got." We hope that Corinne's Slovenian spirit has been portrayed in the past sixteen years and will continue for many more years to come. Corinne's advice is immeasurable to the design of *Zarja* today.

Rest in Peace Corinne,
Bonnie Pohar Prokup, Editor and
Debbie Pohar, Director of Design

The Beginning of a Country

Republic of Slovenia

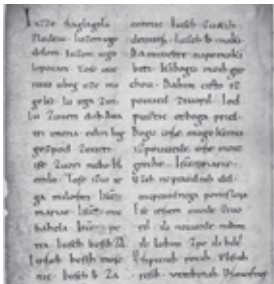
The Slovenian Union of America sends applause to Slovenia in celebration of its 30th anniversary of independence on June 25, 2021.

The timeline documents historical turning points which lead to the 21st century. A chapter of Slovenian life stands most prominent. It was the years 1941 - 1945 when entire villages were burned, when thousands were sent to concentration camps, imprisoned, euthanized, and executed. Such atrocities continued after the war. Thousands were massacred. May these peaceful people never be forgotten.*

Throughout history Slovenes have been known as peaceful people. Today, the annual Peace Index places Slovenia in the eighth place out of 163 nations. Its greatest single attribute is the Slovenes themselves: quietly conservative, deeply self-confident, remarkably broad-minded, especially tolerant, and very, very hospitable.

As you read through this timeline, do it with intense attention and reverence. These were our family ancestors. As members of the Slovenian Union of America, you and I are carrying on their story.

* Steve Fallon



The Freising Manuscript, earliest known writing in the Slovenian language.



The Duke's Enthronement.

Živijo Slovenci!



Trubar's Catechismvs

Slavs begin settling the valleys of the Sava, Drava and Mura rivers. Written records originate in the Slovene language. An independent state of Slovenes was established in which dukes-to-be had to promise fair treatment to peasants. A world first democratic ritual.

500 - 900

The Hapsburg monarchy incorporates all the Slovene regions. Trubar, father of the Slovenian language, publishes the first book written in the Slovene language, CATECHISMVS.

1300 - 1600

1918 With the end of WWI and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire, a geographic area identified as Slovenia joins in the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

1918

Slovenia is occupied by Nazi Germany and Italy during WWII. Slovenia was the only present-day European nation and the only part of Yugoslavia that was completely absorbed and annexed into neighboring Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Hungary during World War II. In 1945, when WWII ends Slovenia is incorporated as a constituent republic in socialist Yugoslavia.

1941 - 1945

1989

1989 Slovene parliament confirms the right of the republic to secede from the Yugoslav federation.



Poet Tone Pavček reads the May Declaration in Ljubljana at a public protest meeting in Kongresni Trg Square in Ljubljana.

1990

In multi-party elections, the majority of Slovenes vote for independence.



RAZGLAS (Proclamation for Plebiscite)

1991

Slovenia and Croatia declare their independence from the Yugoslav federation. Yugoslav federal army intervenes. After a brief period of fighting, the European Union brokers a ceasefire, and the Yugoslav army withdraws.

The flag is raised on Mount Triglav.



1992 - 2004

Slovenia joins world community as a member of NATO and EU as well as other international bodies.



Becoming an independent state and an aspiring member of the European Union, Slovenia began the transition from a socialist to a market economy from a regional to a national economy. The newly-written constitution formed the foundation for their social system: pension and invalidity insurance; health insurance and health care; unemployment insurance; parent insurance, family benefits, and social assistance. Reform policies in regard to the privatization of state-owned assets, the financial system, public utilities, the pension and tax system, and the social welfare system were written.

In October 1991, Slovenia announced the Tolar (TOL), the new monetary exchange. At the time, the new Bank of Slovenia was faced with double digit inflation, a low confidence level in the TOL and the new bank, and no reserves, to name a few. In 2007, Slovenian became the first formerly communist country to join the Eurozone.

In 2010 it joined the OECD, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, a global association of high-income developed countries, an organization that works to build better policies for better lives. Slovenia is a developed country with an advanced high-income economy and a very high Human Development Index. It can be said that Slovenia is both economically and institutionally successful.



Credits: Chuck Debevec & Richard Terselic, SUA Research and Advisory; Helena Janežič, NUK; Mary Lou Voelk SUA President.

Donations Thank you! - Hvala lepa!

\$1,000 Donation

Frances M. Anderson, 033,
+Frances & Paul Kochar

\$115 Donation

Lesnik, Joseph, +Joan Lesnik

\$100 Donation

Barbara Friesenhahn, 005,
+Mary Frances Mohr
Benjamin Koskiniemi, 030,
+George James Plautz
Bernadette Blatnik, 111,
Educational Grant
Charles Dolinar, 023, SUA
Cindy Kreisl, 016,
+The Sebahar Sisters
Connie Newberg, 023,
Cultural Grant
+Mary Emily (Slogar) Rodich
Connie Newberg, 023,
Building Improvements
Edward Primozic, 108,
Educational Grant
Elaine Taylor, 099,
+Annabelle & Edward Svete
Frank Markelc, 043,
Educational Grant
Gary L. Sever, 108, +Luke Sever
Germaine (Grdina) Amato, 111,
+Amato & Grdina Families
Karen DelRaso, 020,
+James & Lois Lausch
Marie Frisch, 003,
Educational Grant
Maxine Schmidl, 100, Cultural
Grant +Margaret Schmidl
Stasha Furlan Seaton, 108,
+Boris, Ana, Borut, &
Aljoša Furlan
Vidmar, John E, SUA
Vidmar, John E,
+John L & Amelia Vidmar

\$75 Donation

Jo Ann Dryden, 102, +George Plautz
Mary Glaize, 030, +George Plautz

\$70 Donation

Kathleen Clime, 093, SUA
Anthony Kambich, 020,
Educational Grant
+Helen & Anton Kambich
Jozica Tompa, 043,
+Omerzu Family

Leslie Ferguson, 020, SUA
Linda Sand, 100,
+Frank, Anne, & John Kapel
Marie Frisch, 003,
+Frank & Fanny Skul
Peggy Argubright, 100, SUA
Rosemary Kostansek, 111,
+Rose Gerlica Zuzek

\$60 Donation

Anne K. Stratton, 108,
+ Louise T. Hagan

\$50 Donation

Agnes Gaber, 002,
Educational Grant
Agnes Gaber, 002, SUA
David Setnicker, 109, Cultural Grant
Elizabeth Gross, 093,
+Alfonz Polajner
Frances Susa, 026,
+Mary Zunic Susa & Judith Susa
Hermine Blatnik Morrow, 111,
+Albin J. Blatnik
Jean Robertson, 043,
Educational Grant
Jill Caldwell Augustine, 108,
+Pauline Grum Caldwell
Joyce M. Ferlic Arredondo, 111,
+George & Mary Ferlic
Kathleen J. Ferrante, 111,
+Corinne Leskovar
Linda Fon Rusie, 005,
+Mary Vertacnik Fon
Lockport Woman's Club,
+Joan Lesnik
Madeline Debevec, 111,
+Dorothy Urbancich
Mary Ann Teitelbaum, 111,
Educational Grant +Mary Ferlic
& Mary Mlach
Mary Elizabeth Argubright, 089,
H/O Flossie Argubright
Mary Jane Vidmar Williamson, 108,
+John, Jane & John Vidmar
Mary M. Ravnikar, 023,
Educational Grant
Nada Weber, 093, +Deceased
Members of the Slavec Family
Peter R. Janes, 111,
+Peter & Dorothy Janes
Renata Weber, 093,
+Ivana Zele Slavec
Richard Smolich, 020,
+Rudy Smolich

\$45 Donation

Jean Robertson, 043, SUA
Vlasta Knapic, 030, SUA

\$40 Donation

Nancy E. Bartholomew, 111,
+Ann Potochar Elliot

\$35 Donation

Margy Whitmore, 108, SUA
Robert E. Born, 109,
H/O Gladys Perko Born
Robert E. Born, 109,
+Gladys Perko Born
Vida Lanari, 035, SUA

\$30 Donation

Aggie Haslup, 111,
+Teresa (Vrcek) Gorup
Ana Sonc Jevtic, 108,
Educational Grant
Donald Dvornik, 020, SUA
Geraldine Beha, 111,
+Josephine Arko
Jack Haslup, 111,
+Teresa (Vrcek) Gorup
Jean Robertson, 043,
+Louis M. Kovach
Jean Robertson, 043,
H/O Jasquelyn A Smith
Linda Edgington, 100, SUA
Paul Barbarich, 005,
+Pete Barbarich
Paul M. Sever, 003,
+Clara Menart Sever
Roseanne Kirk Potla, 111,
+Anna Fortuna & Dorothy Kirk
Sienna Haslup, 111,
+Teresa (Vrcek) Gorup
Stephanie A. Dagg, 111, SUA
Susan Dvornik, 020, SUA
Virginia Ivancich, 023,
Educational Grant

\$25 Donation

Barbara Perpich Schoonover, 035,
H/O Jean Korsman
(Past President SWUA)
Bernadine Gudac, 020,
Building Improvements
Deborah Voelk Good, 033,
Educational Grant
+Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Voelk
Edward A. Tesovnik, 001,
+Anna Tesovnik

Eileen M. Deverich, 003,
+Michael Deverich
Frank Wegerson, 002, SUA
Geri Shouba, 089,
Educational Grant
+The Kernz Family
Helen Baumann, 001,
+John Hlade Jr.
Janet Morrissey, 100,
+Rose Sleyko McCarthy
Janez Lomshek, 100, SUA
Kathleen DeMuth, 002,
Educational Grant
Kathleen Schroeder, 001,
Educational Grant
+Dorothy Brezonik
Linda Grisham, 020, SUA
Mary Lauritzen, 024, SUA
Miriam Burkland, 099,
Educational Grant
Nancy Jagodnik, 111, +Marie Beck
Paula Condon, 030, SUA
Roberta Palmer, 002, +Helen Zadel
Terri Kashman, 005, +Rosie Dugar
Vida F. Habjan, 111, SUA
William Ferguson, 020, SUA
William Petric, 020,
+Raymond J. Petric

\$20 Donation

Barbara Greenwood, 003,
+Mary Gersick
Beth Ann Manion, 002,
Cultural Grant
Carol Novak, 020,
Building Improvements
Catherine Maxin, 111,
+May F. Maxin
Laurie Lehman, 020, SUA
Cynthia Tanita, 100,
+Frances Kinkopf
Diane Sakolosky Weber, 099,
+Widmar Family
Francine Pulkinen, 035,
+Frank & Angeline Brula
Jacqueline Nisporic, 109,
+MP Ryan Branch 1 Sheboygan
Janice M. Krebs, 111,
+Jane Berkopoc & Mary Hrovat
Jennie Kovacic, 002, Cultural Grant
Joan K. Daniel, 001,
+Agnes Gergisch
(Br. 1 charter member), mother
Joan Steinman, 002, Cultural Grant
John Zemlan, 024, SUA
Judith and Christina Grozdanik, 111,
+Eleanore & William Grozdanik
Kathleen J. Ferrante, 111,
Educational Grant

Kathleen J. Ferrante, 111,
Cultural Grant
Kristi A. Luzar, 043, SUA
Marcelline Mills, 111,
+Jean Jernejcic
Margaret Bokar, 111,
+Anna Kozan (mother) &
JoAnne Oberman (daughter),
deceased members of Br. 50
Margaret Pryately, 109,
Cultural Grant
Marilyn Frances Vidmar, 111,
+Julia Zak (Mother)
Marilyn J. Hendricks, 001,
+Frank & Martha Kotnick
Martha A. Pecharich, 099,
H/O Maria Vlasic
Mary Ann Greiner, 111, SUA
Mary Ann M. Tarro, 030,
+All the Shelko Family Relatives
Mary Anne Kwiecinski, 035,
+Mary Krebs & Johanna Belay
Mary Lou Vidergar, 100,
+Frank J. Vidergar, Mary
Lipovec, Glad & Mary Vidergar
Mary Louise Terselic, 108,
Educational Grant
+Mathilda Terselic
Michelle Holderbaum, MD, 111,
+ Frances Zakrajsek Spech
Nika B. Kovacic, 108,
+Eric A. Kovacic
Patricia F. Hakala, 035,
+Frances R Anzenc
Richard Terselic, 108, Cultural Grant
Renata Weber, 093,
Educational Grant
Robert J. Kuhel, 016,
+Mary Skal-Kuhel, Branch 16
Rosanne Savol, 020,
+Josephine Ramuta Sumic/Ann
Ramuta Savol
Rosemary Giarrante, 020,
+Lillian Gale
Valerie Sorensen, 003,
Educational Grant
Victoria Wade, 111,
+Victor Paul Ocepek,
H/O My Father
Wayne Krempach, 099,
+Joan Kaczmarek
William Rogina, 020, SUA

\$15 Donation

Susan Glavan, 020,
+Joseph & Albina Glavan Family

\$10 Donation

Anton Malensek, 093, SUA

Carole Terlep, 020, +Tom Terlep
Charlene A. Larson, 020, SUA
Charles N. Skully, 030,
Educational Grant
Charles N. Skully, 030, SUA
Charlotte Russ, 035,
+Jennie Taramelli
Charlotte Russ, 035, +Mary Russ
Cyndi Dodick, 002,
Educational Grant
Cyndi Dodick, 002, SUA
Daniel Ivanich, 020,
+Mayme Ivanich
Daniel Ivanich, 020, SUA
Dolores Hennelly, 016,
Building Improvements
Elsie Shine, 111, SUA
James Lah, 023,
+Theresa (Laboda) Lah
Karl Ocepek, 108, Cultural Grant
Karl Ocepek, 108,
Educational Grant
Krista Grambow, 043,
+Ann Grambow & Julia Pesec
Kristina Steller, 100, +Ann Kapel
Laura E. Tomba, 111,
+Mary Kociancic
Leopolda Schutte, 023,
Educational Grant
Margaret Pryately, 109,
+Joan Srpan Lee
Marie Tiedmann, 002,
+Mary Koscak
Mary Ferkul, 035, SUA
Mary Kay Bossard, 111,
+Mary Kociancic
Mia Branc, 093, +Nezka Novak
Mira Kosem, 111, +Paule Borstnik
Robert Staresinic, 026,
Educational Grant
Rosemarie Duh, 111, SUA
Sandra Rodeghero, 020, H/O Marie
Gulas & Dorothy A Brown
Sandra Rodeghero, 020,
Building Improvements
Sandra Rodeghero, 020,
+Marie Juricic
Sue Ann Yovanovich, PhD, 005,
+Fran Yovanovich
William F. Koncar, 109,
+John & Dorothy Koncar

\$5 Donation

Bernice Ceglar, 035,
+Pauline Plevell
Dorothy Regis, 020,
Educational Grant
Margaret Batis, 111, SUA
Patricia Ulisse, 003, +Eilen Erjavec

Member of the Year

Slovenian Union of America

ALL THE JUNIOR MEMBERS BRANCH 5 - INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Our Members of the Year for 2021 are the wonderful Branch 5 Junior Members! As small children, they attended meetings with parents and grandparents. As they get older, they participate in events, share their Slovenian heritage at school international festivals, interview grandparents for family tree projects, and proudly share their Slovenian traditions. In the kitchen, they watch as family gather to make potica, strudel, and other treats. They put their hands to work making homemade sausage from the longtime secret family recipes and flour up to make scratch noodles for the homemade soup. At Slovenian events at the Slovenian National Home, they are the “setter-uppers” and “taker-downers” for dances and parties. They are the Easter egg hunters and the Christmas decorators. Most importantly, they are the future of our Slovenian culture, the keepers of our Slovenian traditions, no matter where they live. May they continue to pass on their Slovenian heritage for many generations to come! Thank you to all Junior Members, past, present, and future!!!



SUA National Board ELECTION!

The deadline for SUA board position nominations is **June 12, 2021**.

Three (3) positions on the SUA National Board are now due for election according to the staggered procedure in our corporate bylaws.

The positions and the current office holders are

- VP of Outreach (Annette Charron, Branch 3)
- VP of Culture and Heritage (Beverly Kochmann, Branch 109)
- National Treasurer (Robert J. Kuhel, Branch 16)

All three have accepted being placed in nomination for their positions. Members wishing to add their name to the slate may do so by contacting Bylaws Chairperson Denise Bartlett at denisebartlett@wi.rr.com. A secret ballot is required for more than one (1) candidate per position.

The election will be held on June 19, 2021, at the Member Representatives meeting. Only Member Representatives are authorized to vote. They are encouraged to consult with their branch members as they are representing their branches with their vote.

JOHN PERHAY

BRANCH 109 - TWIN CITIES, MINNESOTA

Member of the Year John Perhay followed a circuitous route to the key role he now plays in Branch 109. John knew that his grandparents had immigrated to the US around 1901 and that his father, while proud of his Slovenian roots, had moved out of the family home at a young age and lost those connections. His mother was German and Czech, so the food served in the home included kolaches and other Eastern European fare, but nothing really Slovenian.



John's Irish, Swedish, French-Canadian, Native American wife Denise became interested in genealogy, and in 2013 they traveled to Slovenia to do research on John's family history in the Archbishop's Archives in Ljubljana.

During the research, John found an address of the farm that had been in the family from 1773-2010. Their guide then took them to see the home of his great-great-grandfather from 1815. A knock at the door was answered by a friendly Slovenian. To everyone's surprise, the owner turned out to be a distant cousin who invited them in to see the house. During that trip, they also connected with other cousins whose friendships they maintain.

Upon their return, a casual remark made by a friend who was a priest led John to learn about Slovenian language classes offered by Twin Cities Slovenians at St. Francis Cabrini Church in Minneapolis. John joined the classes, subsequently becoming part of Twin Cities Slovenians and a member of SUA Branch 109. For several years, John has served on the board as Webmaster maintaining our classy Branch 109 website. During COVID-19, he has been instrumental in facilitating our monthly Zoom member meetings, board meetings, and Saturday coffee hours, helping our branch stay as active as possible.

John spent his career as a designer and consultant for large corporations working on electronic equipment. One highlight of many was analyzing moon rocks with an electron microscope. For years his hobby was continental motorcycling, traveling in every state but Hawaii, in all the territories and provinces of Canada, and through seven European countries for a total of 450,000 miles over the course of thirty years. After John suffered a stroke in 2002, his biking days ended, but his bread-baking days began. Since then John has amassed dozens of ribbons from the Minnesota State Fair for a variety of breads. His Seeded Harvest Bread was named best yeast bread in 2019 and still holds that honor since there was no fair in 2020.

These days John celebrates his Slovenian heritage by making stuffed cabbage, potica, and gibanica. In 2019, John attained his Slovenian citizenship and was sworn in by Consul General, Alenka Jerak. Congratulations to John Perhay, our 2021 Member of the Year!

New Members

Welcome - Dobrodošli

LaVanway, Don D., 002
Centa, Linda, 003
Lester, Joanna, 003
Perko, Brandi Ljeto, 003
Slaten, Michael, 003
Yaklich, Mark, 003
Cesnik, Mark, 005
Velikan, Jim, 005
Cerovac, Helena, 020
Lakner, Sandy, 023
Austin, Cera, 030
Brown, Ellen, 030
Burke, Diana, 030
Condon, Paula, 030
Dervisevic, AnaKatarina, 030
Douglas, Cheryl, 030
Dudley, Evan, 030
Edwards, Cheryl, 030
Fitz, Bobbie Suzanne, 030
Fradel, Amy M., 030
Gorenz, Kathryn Sue, 030
Koskiniemi, Benjamin, 030
Lesnik, Joseph, 030
Mahalovich, Mary F., 030
Merz, Diana, 030
Nystrom, Jennifer, 030
Padilla, Annette, 030
Rialdi, Kerrie, 030
Sustaric Marychild, Denise, 030
Vertacnik, Wendy, 030
Ward, Susan, 030
Pivonski, Carla, 093
Mulcahey, Linda, 099
DeCapite, Chelsea, 100
Hames, Peter, 100
Herman, Mojca, 100
Kenney, Kristin, 100
Neal, Jonathan David, 100
Scarborough, Virginia Lee, 100
Sunde, Deanna, 100
Trempus, Alexander, 100
Zefran, Nicholas, 108
Heitz, Theresa, 109
Marinello, Andrew, 109
Blood, Alexandra (Lexi), 111
Blood, Amalia, 111
Blood, Veronika, 111
Edgar, Elaine, 111
Kane, George, 111
Kunc, Milena, 111
Tyler, William, 111
Wade, Emma, 111
Waid, Karen, 111
Zakrajsek, Adam, 111

Slovenia's Relations with Slovenians around the World

When the editors of *Zarja - The Dawn* were informed that I was appointed State Secretary for Slovenians Abroad for the Slovenian government, they asked me to write an ar-



My visit at SUA headquarters in Joliet in July 2018.

ticle regarding my new position. I will use this opportunity not only to present my job but also to give insights into Slovenia's relation towards Slovenians living around the world. Before I took a government position in March 2020, I was dealing with Slovenians abroad as a researcher and academic. I also visited Slovenians in the United States seven times over the last five years, including the SUA National Conventions in Chicago and Cleveland in 2015 and 2019. Now I have the opportunity and challenge to try to transfer my ideas from academia into practice.

In 1990, Slovenia was in an intense process of democratization and at that point still a part of Yugoslavia. In April, the first democratic elections took place with more political parties participating, and afterwards the first democratic government was established. One of the main goals of this government (called Demos) was to make Slovenia an independent country. One of 26 ministers that were appointed as part of the government was also a special minister responsible for the relations with Slovenians living abroad. That was something new. The new government made it clear: They wanted all Slovenians to be included in this big political project. After independence was achieved on July 25, 1991, a new constitution was adopted. Article 5 reads as follows: "[Slovenia] shall maintain concern for the autochthonous Slovene national minorities in neighboring countries and for Slovene emigrants and workers abroad and shall foster their contacts with the homeland. Slovenes not holding Slovene citizenship may enjoy special rights and privileges in Slovenia. The nature and extent of such rights and privileges shall be regulated by law."

Nevertheless, it seems that the topic kind of lost part of its importance in the upcoming years. The next government still maintained a special ministry for Slovenians abroad. Afterwards, it was abolished and became a department

under the framework of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The department was led by a State Secretary. A special law regulating the relations of Slovenia towards Slovenians abroad, which was promised in the constitution, was adopted only in 2006 (You know how they say: Government has first to take care of the big problems... since the Slovenians abroad didn't cause any problems, they had to wait.)

One of the provisions of the law from 2006 also says that the department (Governmental Office for Slovenians Abroad) is led by a minister. As a result, ever since 2008 when the next government was sworn in, one of the sixteen ministers in the Slovenian government has been responsible for Slovenians abroad. Each minister in the government has a deputy called the State Secretary. Currently, the minister is Helena Jaklitsch, a historian, who is an expert in Slovenian displaced persons after World War II. She was employed as a civil servant before becoming a minister, and I serve as her State Secretary.



Minister Helena Jaklitsch and State Secretary Dejan Valentinčič in Austria, on a meeting with the governor of Carinthia, where Slovenian minority lives.

Our office maintains ties with the organizations of Slovenian national minorities in the neighboring countries and



My meeting with Amy Klobuchar, D-senator from Minnesota. She is of Slovenian origin.

Slovenians living or working around the world, focusing on the promotion of their heritage and Slovenian identity, as well as their cultural, economic, and other relations with Slovenia. We help them organize consultations, seminars, competitions, and other events. The Government Office for Slovenians Abroad wants Slovenians abroad to remain part of the single Slovenian global cultural space and be actively involved in our intellectual, cultural, economic, scientific, and social development. The Government Office, therefore, supports activities that contribute to the preservation and consolidation of the identity of Slovenians abroad, programs for learning the Slovenian language, and the preservation and enrichment of Slovenian culture. The office cooperates closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with Slovenia's diplomatic and consular missions.



My meeting with Paul Gosar, R-congressman from Arizona. He is of Slovenian origin.

The office also offers financial assistance for the organizations and activities of these communities as well as for the organizations in Slovenia that cooperate with them. Financial support for programs and projects is provided through yearly public calls for tenders. Most of the money goes to the autochthonous Slovene national minorities in neighboring countries (Italy, Austria, Hungary, Croatia). These areas are bilingual, and Slovenians there have guaranteed minority rights; however, the countries where they live often don't give them enough money for the minorities to realize these rights, so Slovenia helps. Still some money is reserved every year for the Slovenian diaspora communities, especially for some special events and anniversaries.

As you can imagine, every administration also has its own special focuses. One of our main goals is for people in Slovenia to be more aware of the Slovenian diaspora as an important cultural value and also of all the opportunities



Minister Helena Jaklitsch and I in Rijeka, Croatia, at the meeting with the leaders of the Union of Slovenian societies in Croatia.

Summer 2021

that this offers. Consequently, we are trying to have these stories more present in Slovenian media so that children in schools will learn more about Slovenian emigration. We are very proud also of our new webpage (<https://slovenci.si/>) which offers descriptions of Slovenian communities around the world, news about events in the diaspora, and useful information about Slovenia. The page also operates in English.

A very important tie between our office and Slovenian communities around the world is the Governmental Council of the Slovenians Abroad. This is a collective consultative body that meets in Slovenia once a year. Representatives with five-year terms come from all the

countries where Slovenian emigrants and their descendants live. At yearly meetings they present the situation in their communities to the current Slovenian government and advise what Slovenia should do for tighter connections between the state and its diaspora. Not only the minister for the diaspora is present, but also the prime minister and other ministers. American Slovenians have two representatives in the council. One is Jure Leskovec, professor at Stanford University in California and co-funder of American Slovenian Education Foundation ASEF, and the other is Joe Valencic, a historian, presenter, and researcher of Slovenian heritage from Cleveland, Ohio. (In the previous term, the two members were Milan Ribič from Cleveland and Ivan Kamin from New York).

Our office, of course, also has to adjust its measures according to the times in which we live. The modern trends that we have to address include the dilemmas of brain drain/brain circulation (the current emigration of highly educated Slovenians), the question of identity in the area of globalization, and the challenges and chances of the internet, especially for attracting a young population. A special current challenge is the COVID-19 pandemic. This puts Slovenian communities around the world in a special situation. Since they haven't been able to gather for a long period (or rent their premises to other users), many are put in financial difficulties, and their future is unsure. A lot of work and challenges for us exist, but most importantly, we have to stay positive!

Dejan Valentinčič
State Secretary for Slovenians Abroad
dejan.valenticic@gov.si

by Staff Writer David Sodac
Branch 89 Oglesby, IL

Do Not Tell a Soul

Smuggler for the Pope

Fifteen years ago, Frances Yenko Chilcoat gave SUA President Mary Lou Voelk an autographed copy of a book that she had written and had published in 2006. The book had not yet been released to the general public nor were any publicity announcements made. The story focused on her 1954 trip into Marshall Tito's communist regime of Yugoslavia following World War II, where she took part in an illicit rendezvous. For years Frances had feared for her life. She instructed Mary Lou, "Please, do not tell a soul." At the time, Mary Lou was on the SUA's Board of Directors. She had never met Mrs. Chilcoat previously but figured the book was presented to her possibly because of her role as VP of Slovenian Culture and Heritage. She placed the book on her shelves, and it remained there until just recently. She was rearranging books on her bookshelves and opened the cardinal red-covered book to look through it. The book piqued her interest, and she went online to do some further research. She found an article written back

in December 2008 that appeared in the online magazine *Catholic San Francisco*. The article was entitled "Local parishioner records adventure as smuggler for the Pope." The book was entitled "*Smuggler for the Pope: A True Story*." Mary Lou attempted several times to contact Frances Yenko Chilcoat through her email address printed with the article, but no response came. Mary Lou turned the task over to me to research further and see what I could find on Frances' intriguing experience. What I found was truly an amazing series of events that miraculously came together during the 1950s. The events fashioned the backdrop to Frances' role as a smuggler on behalf of a courier for Pope Pious XII.



Pope Pious XII

Zarja - The Dawn

In 1927, Frances was born in Rock Springs, Wyoming, the oldest daughter of Ciril Yenko and Angela Bozner Yenko. Ciril was born in Pungert, in the municipality of Škofja Loka, Slovenia in 1897, the son of Franc and Marijana Kalan Yenko. Her father immigrated to Wyoming to work the mines in 1921. He married the former Angela Bozner in Rock Springs, Wyoming, in 1926. Angela's parents had emigrated from the Slovenian village of Cerni Vrh. Ciril and Angela raised three daughters: Frances (Mrs. Aaron Chilcoat of Burlingame, California), Angela (Mrs. Patrick Thompson of Rancho Cordova, California), and Molly (Mrs. Jim Hobbs of Santa Barbara, California). The family was raised following Slovenian customs and traditions. They were also expected to speak Slovene. Thanks to her persistent father, Frances was able to read, sing, and speak her parents' native tongue. The children were constantly involved in the activities offered by the Rock Springs Slovenian Dom. Ciril and Angela always kept in close contact with their ancestral relatives and hoped for the day the family could all travel back for a visit.

After graduating from high school, Frances was accepted into a competitive training program with the United Airlines Company and took her employment exams in Chicago, Illinois. She received her Federal Communication Commission (FCC) certification and was offered employment. Working with the airlines, she eventually was transferred to Utah and then to San Francisco. Frances' Wyoming church pastor, Fr. Albin Gnidovec, quickly put her in touch with Fr. Vital Vodusek, pastor of the Church of the Nativity in San Francisco, who promised to take her under his wing. They remained good friends, and he played a major part in her life. Frances would meet Aaron Chilcoat, a Merchant Marine, and they married in 1951. She resigned from her position with United Airlines three years later and received a thirty-day travel pass to anywhere in the world. Having always wanted to travel to her parents' homeland in Slovenia to meet the relatives she had never seen, Slovenia became the obvious choice for Frances' free tour destination. Given the post-war political unrest in Yugoslavia, Frances' husband, Aaron Chilcoat, did not feel the communist-controlled country would be welcoming to an American military affiliate, so he chose to stay at home. Frances then invited her

coworker and good friend, Grace Martin, to travel with her. Grace willingly agreed under one condition: that they also visit Rome.

There were several key players involved in turning Frances' planned fun travel adventure into a clandestine and dangerous intrigue. Fr. Vidal Vodusek asked the Chilcoats to consider taking in a refugee boarder, a young Croatian man by the name of Ivan Ivankovich. Ivan had recently arrived in San Francisco after his escape from communist-controlled Croatia.



Ivan Ivankovich, the escapee.

The Chilcoats willingly accepted. Ivan introduced Frances through mail correspondence to a Croatian priest, Fr. Ivan Thomas. Fr. Thomas was assigned to the Vatican Office in Rome. He was well known as a newscaster for Croatian Radio Broadcasting and aided in the escape of numerous Croatians during the occupation, including Ivan Ivankovich. Fr. Thomas arranged to meet Frances when she and Grace arrived in Rome and offered to be their tour guide. Unknown to Frances was Fr. Thomas' true intent: to

persuade her to smuggle a cardinal's red robe into communist Yugoslavia. Then there was the intended recipient of the robe: the recently elevated cardinal, Alojzije Stepinac, who was indicted for war crimes against the communist regime of Tito. In a 1946 public show trial, the then Archbishop Stepinac was sentenced to sixteen years of hard labor in the Lepoglava prison camp. After serving five years, due to public outcry from millions of Catholics and the intervention by heads of numerous governments, Stepinac was re-assigned to finish out his sentence in the confinement of a church rectory in his home village of Krasic. He was forbidden to perform his priestly duties. Guards were present outside the residence 24 hours a day. In 1953, Pope Pious XII made him a cardinal, but Stepinac was never allowed to participate in the official ceremonial festivities at the Vatican nor be presented with the cardinal's galero (red hat) and robe.



Cardinal in "House Arrest."

In preparation for her trip, Frances scheduled her appointment with the Yugoslav Consulate's Office in San

Francisco to obtain clearance for her visa into communist Yugoslavia. She was reminded to be extremely careful and sternly warned to not do anything foolish and to abide by communist rule. The Consul General pointed out that as the daughter of an Austro-Hungarian-born father, she could be considered as property of Yugoslavia under communist rule. Despite the fear, Frances was not going to let anything deny her dream of visiting her family's homeland. The day finally arrived to begin their adventure, and Frances and Grace boarded their plane to Rome.



Frances and Grace depart for the Vatican.

As promised, Fr. Ivan Thomas met them at the airport and helped plan their four-day visit to Rome. He insisted on being their official escort. He wined and dined them and was a wonderful tourist guide. On their last evening in Rome, Fr. Thomas called Frances' hotel room and wanted to meet her in the lobby. He looked different and was wearing a black hat with the brim pulled down and the collar turned up on his full-length black overcoat. He wanted to discuss the perilous situation of an imprisoned Croatian, Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac. Fr. Thomas then presented a black suitcase that contained the cardinal's robe that was intended for its sequestered recipient. The cardinal's confinement prevented him from traveling out of the communist country. Father Thomas requested that she smuggle the case

into the country where she would be met by an arranged courier to transfer the suitcase. She realized the ramifications if she carried out the request and got caught. She shook with fear and cried, visualizing herself in a communist prison or worse. Father Thomas assured her that the bishops,



Frances, Fr. Thomas, and Grace.

cardinals, and the Pope would all be praying for her success. Like a true literary heroine, she saw the risk was worth taking. Through any uncertainty, she agreed and whispered, "Give me the robe." Fr. Thomas advised her to never tell anyone of her actions when she returned home for fear of retaliation to her Slovenian relatives. Then he turned to Frances, blessed her, and said, "You shall be rewarded."

Anxiously, Frances and Grace boarded the train taking them to Trieste, then transferred trains to Ljubljana where Frances' Uncle Ivan Jenko would meet them and take them to Škofja Loka. It was a joyous and tearful reunion! On their first evening in Frances' aunt and uncle's home, after their meal and evening conversations winded down and just before they all retired, Aunt Manca arrived. She had never married and lived and worked with the nuns that lived nearby. She seemed anxious to see Frances and pulled her aside saying, "You have something for me?" When Frances



His cardinal's robe.

looked puzzled, Aunt Manca explained, “You brought something from Rome?” Aunt Manca told the family members that she and Frances were going out for a short walk to get some fresh air. Manca took her by the arm and they went out into the pitch-black night. After some twenty minutes of walking with no communication other than singing Slovene songs, Frances heard a male voice. She froze in place. She felt her Aunt Manca’s arm reach out into the darkness and pass off the case holding the smuggled robe. Then Manca softly said, “Now we can return to the house.” Nothing more was ever said. Frances and Grace made the decision to cut their trip short, made their flight changes, and returned home to San Francisco. Fearful that word of her actions would get back to the communist country and that her Slovenian relatives would be punished, Frances shared her experiences only with her husband.

After a short time passed, Frances received a postcard from Fr. Ivan Thomas of the Vatican with the only written words being **“Mission accomplished.”**

The Chilcoats’ boarder, Ivan Ivanovich, became an American citizen with Frances and Aaron in attendance. He, his wife, and family were finally reunited and remained in San Francisco.

Cardinal Alojzije Viktor Stepinac was declared a martyr and beatified by Pope John Paul II before some 450,000 faithful at the National Catholic Shrine of Our Lady of Bistrice in October, 1998. The church complex where he was imprisoned and died has become both a museum and a heavily visited shrine. Blessed Cardinal Alojzije Viktor Stepinac is now awaiting canonization, the final step in declaring sainthood.

The scarlet cardinal robe (ferraiuolo) that Frances smuggled into Slovenia now hangs in Blessed Stepinac’s museum.

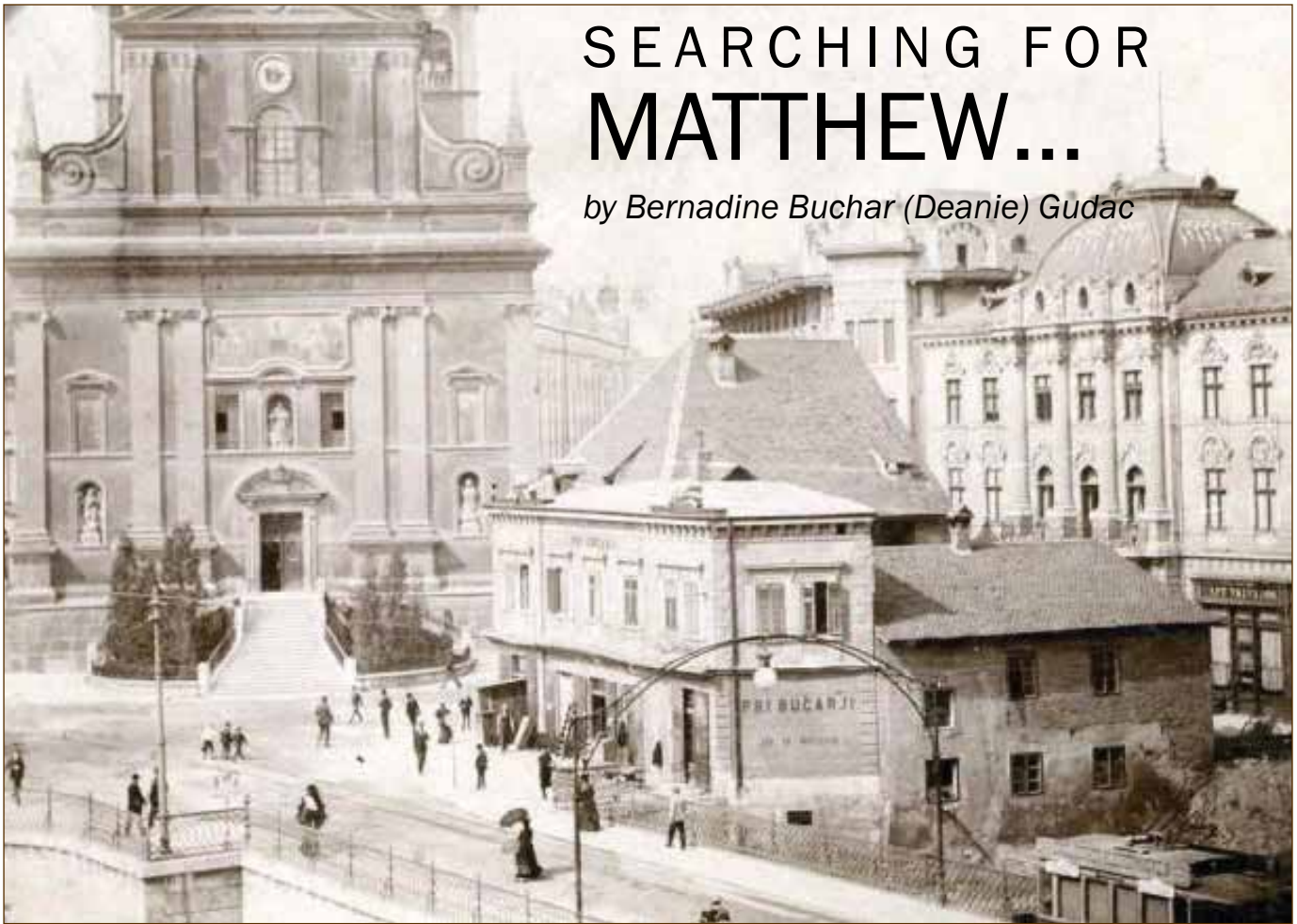
Forty-four years later, Frances was ready to share her experiences on how all the strands of coincidences joined together that made her a smuggler for the cause of a future Catholic saint. Frances always felt the events that occurred were more than just happenstance. She sincerely believed they were divine interventions that led her to become the courier of a ceremonial robe for an imprisoned cardinal. Her strong religious faith gave her the courage to embark on this unforgettable act of kindness in the face of communism. Throughout her life, Frances remained deeply religious and extremely active in her church. We had hoped to contact Frances to gain more about her life since her clandestine smuggling incident; sadly, she had passed away at the age of 93 in January 2021. Maybe it wasn’t a coincidence... but... her passing was around the very same time that SUA President Mary Lou Voelk had rediscovered Frances’ book nestled all these years on her bookshelves. The writer of this article was able to reach Frances’ son, Michael, the week after her death. We’re beginning to believe that our search to learn more about her story was possibly another one of Frances’ little coincidences through divine intervention. Obviously, she was now ready to share her amazing story in the *Zarja* magazine.



Francis Yenko Chilcoat

SEARCHING FOR MATTHEW...

by Bernadine Buchar (Deanie) Gudac



The Buchars of Broadway Street were a close-knit clan that didn't tolerate much foolishness. As a child, I was often intimidated by their lack of humor and their strict rules when my dad brought me to visit. I often wondered how they came to be this way as they were so unlike my mother's lively Croatian family.

My Slovenian grandparents *never* talked about their old life in Slovenia or their early years in America. They spoke only in Slovenian, a language none of the younger grandchildren understood. When I'd ask questions, I was told that "everything had been lost." *And, this was what I believed.*

The only visible evidence of my grandparents' former lives was displayed prominently above the transom leading from the kitchen into the dining room. There hung two very old portraits of my grandparents taken shortly after their arrival in America, judging from their clothing and my grandmother's hair arrangement.

Both appeared to be in their 20s or 30s. Matthew was quite handsome with his wavy blonde hair and slight mustache. Anna was more severe, with darker



hair that was cropped on the sides. Her left eyebrow was arched, giving the grandchildren the impression that she was always “checking us out.” This was all I remember of my grandparents when they were “young-ish.” The portraits were so unlike the actual grandparents I knew as a child.

The Grandpa Buchar I knew was an old withered man, obviously worn by years of backbreaking labor at the Joliet Wire Mill. He was born in 1862, died in 1958, and was more than 80 years old when I was born in 1943. He spoke little to no English. His usual greeting when a grandchild walked in was a wink and a nod. And his parting remark was always “Lahko noc” or “Have a good night.”



Grandpa Buchar spent most days in the kitchen of the family home on North Broadway in Joliet, his feet propped on a chair as he surveyed his garden from the back window. Sometimes he smoked a pipe, and sometimes he sharpened his yard tools. He usually sipped a beer with his lunch of homemade bread and what appeared to be raw bacon that he sliced with a sharp knife. I later learned it was probably “rezina” or Austrian “Speck.” Every evening he enjoyed a “high ball” of brandy and 7-Up while he and my grandmother watched a black and white Admiral TV from their matching Stickley chairs in the dining room. Oddly, wrestling was their favorite program!

Summer 2021

Also living in the Broadway Street home were my dad’s two single brothers, Alexander and Robert Buchar, and their two unmarried sisters, Stephanie and Josephine Buchar. Robert was a circuit court judge and Aunt Steff operated a beauty shop in the front porch of the home. Aunt Jo worked at Hines Veteran’s Hospital and Uncle Alex (aka “Jake”) for the City of Joliet.



I was 15 the summer of 1958 when both Anna and Matthew died after short illnesses. She was 85, and he was 96. They would have been married 65 years had Anna lived another month. They were always an important part of my life, yet I hardly knew them. Matthew was the big mystery. I knew nothing of his early life except what my father shared with me. Recently, I came across an issue of *Zarja* from 1958 on the Slovenian Genealogy Facebook Group (2000). Josephine Erjavec wrote a glowing obituary on Matthew and Anna Buchar. This is where I learned that Matthew was St. Joseph’s oldest parishioner when he died and the oldest member of the K.S.K.J., where he served as Secretary of the SS. Cyril and Methodius Society for over 40 years. *Not bad for a semi-literate immigrant, I’d say!*

Still, I knew nothing for certain about the family my grandfather left behind in the Old Country or *Stari Kraj*: not the names of his parents, nor his siblings, nor the place of his birth. I did meet his nephew, John Buchar, from Lorain, Ohio, at family gatherings. In fact, my grandparents sponsored John and another relative, John Kovacic, when



they arrived in 1902. So, grandpa *did* have relatives in the Old Country, but who were they?

When any of us asked about relationships, we grandchildren were told that both our grandparents were the youngest in their families and that they were the only ones who emigrated to the U.S. How they met and married was always a mystery.

In return, I never bothered to ask much. I just accepted what my dad recounted about life in the Old Country. It was very difficult, and Grandpa left for America after serving ten years in the Austrian Army. He ended up in Joliet at age 30 and felt welcome among an already established Austrian/Slovenian community. Plus, there were many jobs in Joliet. He worked at the wire mill, got married to my grandmother, raised a family of five sons and four daughters (two babies died in infancy), then lived in the same house until he and his wife died. It was a typical immigrant's tale.

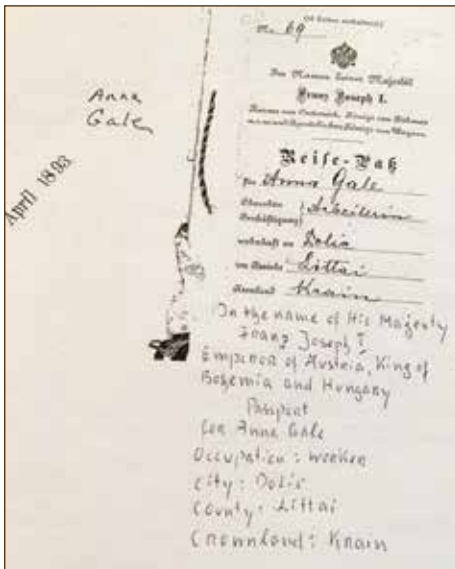
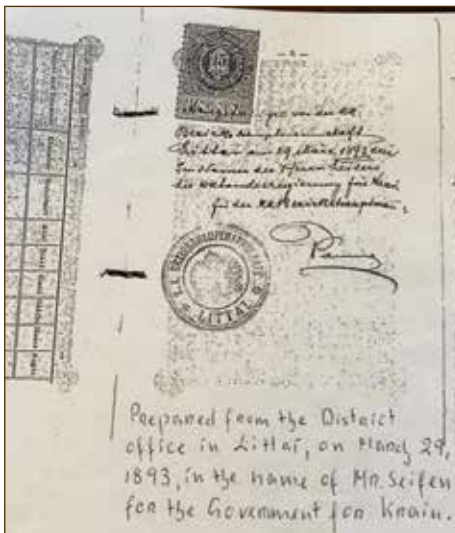
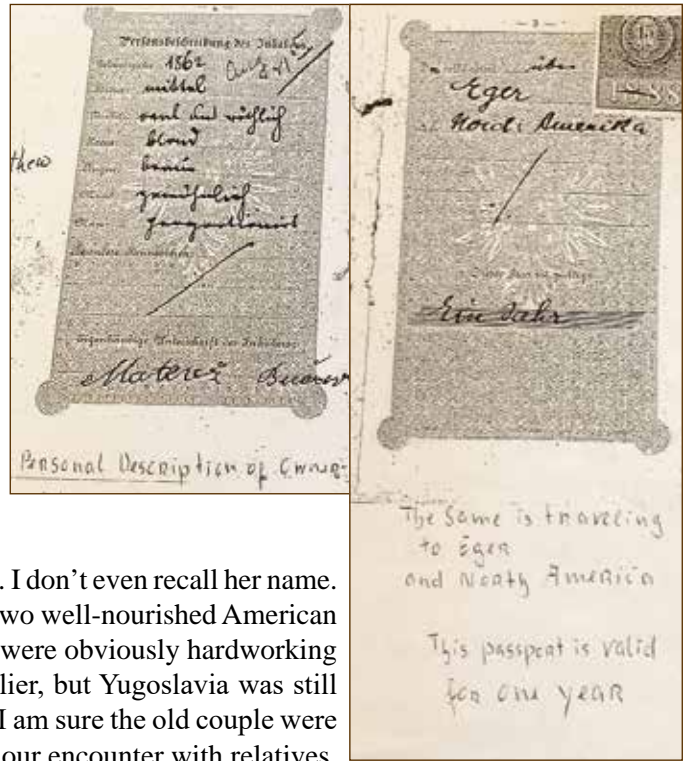


My father Thomas, born in 1903, was the oldest of the boys. He lived the longest of all his siblings when he passed in 2002. Dad was gregarious and always had stories to tell about the “old days.” I was never quite sure whether everything he told me was true or if it was an embellishment spun from his vivid imagination to keep his only child (me) entertained.

As a curious child, I always tried to absorb the family stories I heard from the aunts and uncles. I even accompanied my mother on a visit to Slovenia (then part of Yugoslavia) in 1959. We stayed in Ljubljana with friends of Josephine Erjavec, a pioneer of the SWUA/SUA. The Koracin family were very gracious and drove us to both grandparents’ home villages, but there were no documents to be found nor gravesites to visit. The only relative we met was a shriveled little woman who was introduced as my grandfather’s niece. I don’t even recall her name. I suspect she and her husband were stunned at the sight of two well-nourished American women and probably wondered who we were. The couple were obviously hardworking but extremely poor. World War II had ended 14 years earlier, but Yugoslavia was still recovering. We did not expect to be entertained or fed, and I am sure the old couple were relieved. We said our “goodbyes,” and that was the end of our encounter with relatives.

We returned home, and I didn’t think much about this until many years later.

In February 1989, my Aunt Josephine Buchar died, taking most of the family history with her. Aunt Jo was active in the SWUA/SUA, and I always suspected she knew more about everything and everybody; however, she studiously didn’t share any intimate family details that I remember. After she died, my Uncle Alex was sifting through family papers intending to clear the clutter when his brother, Ben, and his daughter, Leanne Buchar Feuerborn, stopped in. They noticed what appeared to be our grandparents’ passports issued by the Austrian Crown that were stamped 1888, 1893, and 1896. Handwritten in Old German, they were barely decipherable. There were also two boarding passes: One from E. Missler, Bremen, Germany, the other from Red Star Line, Antwerp, Belgium. Neither had the name of the ship on it. This was the first time anyone of my generation saw documents bearing our grandparents’ names, and both Leanne and I found it amazing that they lay hidden all these years.



But this discovery couldn't have come at a worse time as one by one the tight-knit Buchar clan began to die off. There were at least seven family funerals over the next 13 years. Down they went, like trees in a forest – Josephine, Mary, Bill, Bob, Al, Ben, and finally, Tom, my dad.

It was 2005 before I could resume my search for Grandpa Matthew without interruption. Armed with the passports and passage documents, I began my quest. Luckily, my younger son, Dean, worked with a German woman who could translate Old German documents into English. She must have liked my son because she never charged for the translations.

Now I could piece together detailed information about both grandparents: where and when they were born, what kind of work they did, even what their features looked like. Most importantly their travel dates were there.

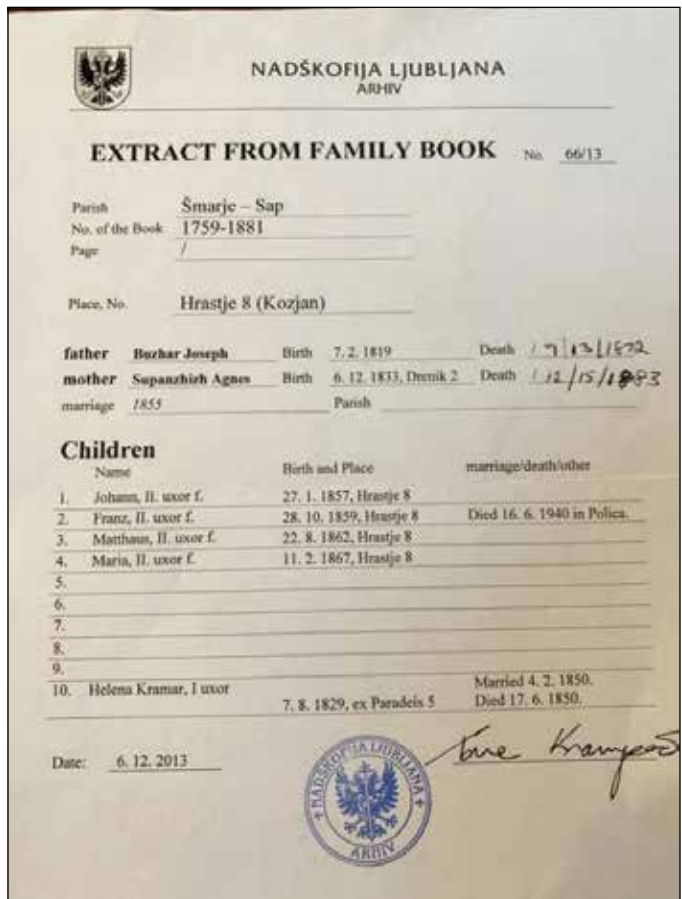
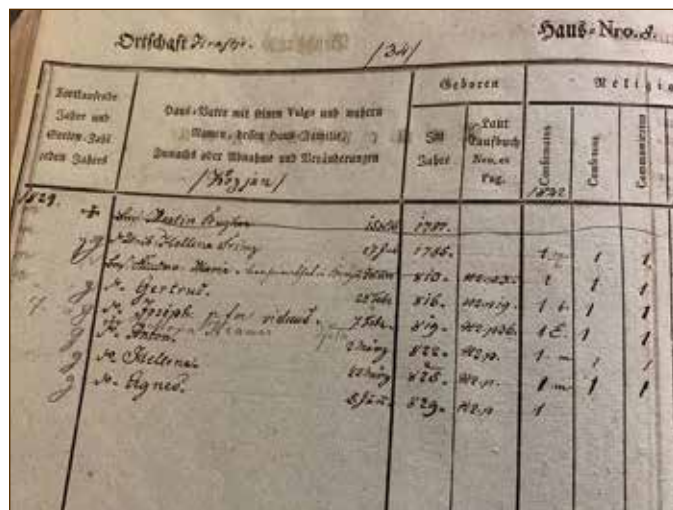
For additional information, a friend referred me to the Nadskofijia Arhiv Ljubljana where all of Slovenia's vital records are stored. Since I had no plans to travel there anytime soon, I contacted the late George Plautz who wrote a genealogy column for *Zarja* at the time. George referred me to Slovenian Genealogist Peter Hawlina, who I contracted with to find records on my grandmother's family, the Gales. After some false starts, he did find the Josephus Gale Family from Polica, near Visnja Gora and sent me their official Family Extract.

Mr. Hawlina did some basic research and then sent me a GEDCOM file tracing my Bucar family to 1781. He suggested I download it onto a family tree program; I chose the MyHeritage website because it was free at the time and easy to access. I figured this would do for a start. Mr. Hawlina also informed me that my father's grandfather was named Joseph, and his great-grandfather was named Martin. This was all news to me since my father never mentioned these names as I was growing up. Admittedly, Hawlina's information was a bit sketchy as he insisted that

my grandfather, Matthew, was an only child. I knew this was incorrect as I had met my grandfather's nephew, John Buchar from Lorain, Ohio, many times as a child. I also suspected grandfather Matthew had more siblings, so I decided I'd find them myself now that I knew where to look.

Around this same time my good friend, Jonita Erjavec Ruth, heard that I was researching my family, so she suggested I contact her niece, Vera (Ancel) Muir. Vera had been to Slovenia to trace their Erjavec roots, which just happened to be in the same village my Buchar family came from, Smarje Sap. Vera was very familiar with Slovenia and was fluent in German and Slovenian; plus, she had obtained her own documents from the Arhiv. She quickly encouraged me to do my own research and to purchase my own documents from the Arhiv, too. All I needed were the correct names, birthdates, and places of birth for the family members I was looking for; then I could request them via email from the Arhiv. "Easy-peasy," I thought. But I soon learned the most difficult part would be to pay for them as the Arhiv only accepted cash or Western Union. My other option was to go in person with a fistful of Euros and buy the records. I settled on Western Union.

Vera quickly became my indispensable "genealogy buddy" when I ran into my first "brick wall." After giving the Arhiv staff Matthew's father's name, Jozef Bucar, the Arhiv workers said they couldn't find him. So, Vera suggested I try the German spelling of Bucar, which was "Buzhar."



And “voila!” There was Joseph Buzhar, his wife, Agnes Supanzhizh, their three sons, Johann, Franz, and Matthaus, and their daughter, Maria. They also found Joseph’s first wife, Helena Kramar, whom no one ever mentioned and who died just six months into their marriage in 1850.

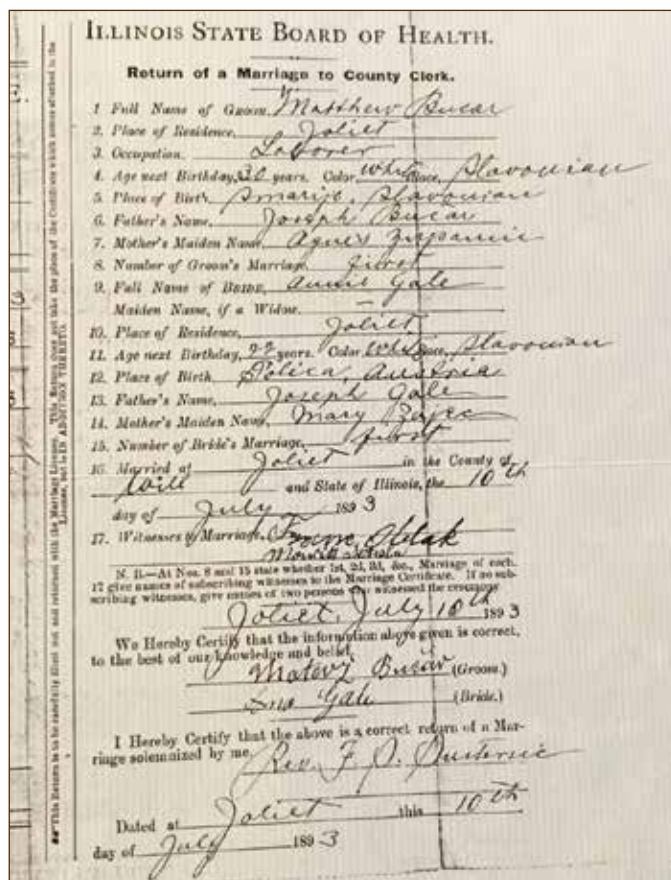
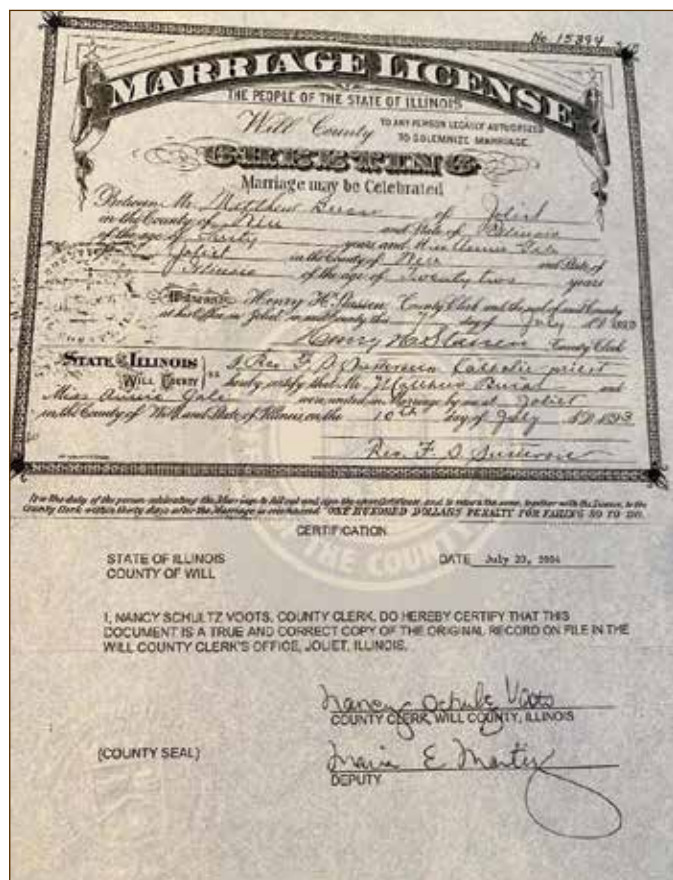
It would take my great-grandfather, now spelled Jozef Bucar, ten years to find a new wife, namely, my great-grandmother, Neza (Agnes) Zupancic from Drenik, 2, near Grosuplje. The couple produced just four children, and only one would immigrate to America. That was my grandfather Matevz, born August 21, 1862 Hrastje 8, Smarje Sap, near Grosuplje, Austria. He was the third son in the family and would be known in America as Matthew Buchar. If this sounds confusing, it is because German was used on all legal documents in Slovenia well into the late 19th century, when the Slovenian language was introduced. I have death certificates for Helena Kramar Buzhar, who died in 1850, and for Josef Bucar, who died in 1872, showing how the official language changed during this period.

With further guidance from Vera, I located my grandparents’ marriage certificate, too. She advised me to bypass St. Joseph’s Church, where a skeleton staff could take forever to find it, and order it from the Will County Circuit Clerk’s Archive Center in Joliet. When I gave the clerk at the archive 1893 as the year of the marriage, she gasped saying, “Oh, my! That could take some time, and we may not even have it.” Regardless, I sent a formal request with

all pertinent information, enclosed a check for \$18.00, and six weeks later a copy of my grandparents’ marriage certificate was in my mailbox in Florida.

I was stunned at the information the marriage certificate contained. With this document, and the translated passports and travel documents, I was certain it would be much easier to “search for Matthew.” Vera provided even more encouragement by gifting me a T-shirt reading, *I Seek Dead People... Genealogist*.

Thanks to Vera, I now had documentation that my grandparents’ marriage took place on July 10, 1893 at the “old” St. Joseph Church built in 1891 on North Chicago Street. Matevz was 31 and Ana just 22. They may have been



among the earliest couples to be wed there. Rev. Francis P. Sustersich, founding pastor, officiated. Maria Setina and Franc Oblak were witnesses.

Besides the passports and the marriage certificate, my next best historical reference was the worn burgundy directory published by St. Joseph’s Parish in 1916 for the church’s Silver Anniversary. I had borrowed it years earlier from the Buchar home and dubbed it “my Slovenian Bible” as it lists every church member then living in the Joliet area, along with their place of birth in the Old Country and in the “New.” Called *Spominška Knjiga* in Slovenian, it has been indispensable to my research as it has solved many relationship questions like “no,” we were not related to the other Bucar families in Joliet. The other Buchars were from Smartno pri Litiji and Prezganje, both located close to Ljubljana, while my family was from Smarje Sap, southeast in Dolenjsko. When visiting Slovenia with my husband and son in 2019, we stopped in Smarje Sap and learned that “Sap” was a descriptive added in the 18th century, meaning “embankment” in Slovenian. We also discovered how lovely and green those rolling hills are.

With these facts now settled, I could request additional records from the Arhiv. The Jozef Bucar records were dated to 1819 and included birth and death records for Matevz’s parents and all three of his siblings. The extracts were a combination of Latin, Old German, and Slovenian. After having them translated, I can say with certainty that life was not easy or glamorous for a Slovenian *kmet* or peasant in the 19th century.



My grandmother’s family, also listed in the *Knjiga*, confirmed that she, her brother, Frank Gale, and her nephew, Aloysius Gale, all came from Polica, near Visnja Gora. The Gale Family Extract was dated to 1833 and was in Old German and Latin. Even the town name of Polica was still called by its German name,



“Pollitz,” as recently as the mid-1800s. All the documents needed translating, which the Arhiv staff will do as a courtesy, if requested. The Gale extract noted that my grandmother “Ana” left for “Amerika” in 1893, suggesting she may have been a “mail-order” bride. This enabled me to find her immigration record on the Ellis Island Website. After several attempts, the name Anna Gall miraculously popped up. That was my grandmother! Ana sailed to New York from Bremen aboard the *Fulda* on April 25, 1893, and married Matevz only three months later on July 10, 1893. We were never told if they knew each other in the Old Country, but since she was 10 years his junior, I seriously doubt it. But more importantly, I was finally able to confirm that she sailed from Bremen, thus confirming it had to be Matevz who sailed from Antwerp, as documented on that barely legible passage packet my uncles found years ago.



Finally Solving the Mystery of Matevz

Regrettably, Matevz's journey to America was proving much more difficult to trace than Ana's. After years of fruitless searches of the manifests from ships arriving all up and down the East Coast, Antwerp seldom came up. And after trying every conceivable variation of Matevz Bucar (which is how his passport read) my grandfather's name never appeared either. I was about to give up when my cousin Leanne (Ben's daughter) sent me an old clipping from *Glasiło*, the original name for the KSKJ newspaper that just about every Slovenian family in America had in their home years ago. The clipping, dated July 1943, was in Slovenian, but I could read enough of it to tell that it was published in honor of my grandparents' Golden Wedding Anniversary. There was a photo of the celebratory couple and a narrative on both. I immediately went to the section on Matthew that confirmed his birthplace as Hrastje 8, Postal Address, Grosuplje. It also confirmed his date of arrival in the U.S. as February 16, 1890. But, the name of his ship was not given, and I knew immediately, that it would be nearly impossible to figure this out. The Red Star Line owned many ships that brought immigrants from Antwerp to New York and Philadelphia. Its fleet was a mix of older, chartered ships used for immigrant runs and newer ones built for Red Star's more lucrative routes.

However, to give it a try, I went to www.theshipslist.com where I found five ships that may have sailed from Antwerp to New York in 1890. The most likely were the *Rhynland*, built in 1879, and the *Indiana*, chartered from American Lines in 1889 for one voyage only. I checked both of their manifests and did not find my grandfather's name even though the Belgians kept decent records. But, there is one thing I know for sure: The Atlantic was notoriously rough in February, so it must have been an awful experience for my grandfather. I thank God he made it here safely.... otherwise, there would be no "me."

Still, I wondered how he got to Antwerp and what he did between his mother's death in 1883 and his presumed departure in 1890. Then I remembered his military service. Maybe that would help explain where he spent time before coming to America? Years earlier I had clipped a piece in *Zarja* with instructions on accessing military records from Vienna's Kriegersarchiv. Now that I finally had most of the documentation, I asked my son, Dean, who was working in Germany at the time, to get on a train to Vienna to investigate. Dean knew his way around Europe well and was only too happy to go visit the military archives in Vienna. He was awed by the amount of records kept there. Soon, he emailed to tell me he found records on a "Mateusz Bucar" who was attached to a regiment in Eger located in northern Hungary or possibly at Eger in Bohemia; both were a part of the Hapsburg Empire. The latter Eger is

now known as Cheb, a town in the Czech Republic near the German border.

Unfortunately, Dean was only allowed to view the records; he couldn't photograph them, so he left empty-handed. But we both believe the records were accurate since the name Eger appears on the last page of Matevz's passport and clearly states he was "traveling to Eger and then to Amerika." The passport was good for only "ein Jahre," or one year.

This pretty much fits with my dad's story about his father serving occupation duty in Herzegovina before coming to America. I even checked Wikipedia and found that the former Ottoman province was administered by Austria-Hungary from 1878 to 1908 when it was officially annexed by Austria-Hungary. This was the same period my grandfather most likely served in the Austrian Army, so I do believe that those records in Vienna were Matevz's; however, I will never know for sure unless I travel to Vienna in person and buy them if they are still there. *This is just one more thing to add to my "bucket list" once travel restrictions are lifted and another excuse to visit Slovenia again.*

Meanwhile, Census Records tell the tale....

The earliest official U.S. record I located for my grandparents was the 1910 Census. They were living at 706 N. Broadway Street in Joliet and were listed as "Matti and Annie Butcher." I knew this was their correct address since they bought the house in 1903 when my dad was born.

"Grandpa Matti's" records listed his year of arrival as 1890, just as the *Glasiło* article said. But, why was their name spelled "Butcher?" I suspect it was a result of Joliet's "ethnic neighborhood" scheme. This section of Broadway near Bridge Street was a German neighborhood planted between two German churches: one Catholic, one Lutheran. "Bucar" was often Germanized to "Butcher" even when I was a kid. Perhaps they did it to better fit into the neighborhood? Or, maybe, the census taker was German? *It's as good a story as any, I guess.*

I found more information on the 1920 census, except my grandfather's year of arrival was listed as 1892, and our name was spelled in its Slovenian form, "Bucar." When I found the 1930 census, Matthew again listed his arrival as 1890, and our family name was spelled phonetically as "Buchar," the same as it is today. *(Note: This whole exercise shows how often immigrants' names were changed or mangled by census takers and various government agencies over the years.)*

In the end, isn't this what the “

Regrettably, I still had no clue as to my grandparents' living arrangement between Matthew's arrival in 1890 and the 1900 census. I presumed he shared a rooming house with other single men as was common at the time. But, where did he and Ana live after they married in 1893? Over the next 12 years I searched thousands of census records using every variable of the name "Bucar" I could conceive of but was never successful.

Then one day I met a professional researcher who offered to help me find my elusive family on the 1900 Census. I can't go into detail, but I know she used the deduction method by first zeroing in on the neighborhood where most Austrians settled in Joliet and then focusing on the one child in the family with the most unusual name.....STEPHANIE! After a few key strokes, she found my family under a last name I never in a million years would have guessed, nor would I have found.....**BUJAC!**

My grandparents were living with their three oldest daughters, Mary, Anna, and Stephanie at 1115 N. Chicago Street, not far from the wire mill and were listed as "Mat and Annie Bujac." They also had eight male boarders living with them to help supplement my grandfather's meager wages. This was not uncommon at the time, and records show that many families did this to survive. Matthew's year of arrival was also confirmed as 1890, plus he was listed as "NA" for "Naturalized!" I couldn't believe it. He was only in the country for ten years, had six years of schooling in the Old Country, did not speak very much English, and yet he was naturalized before 1900? *Totally incredible!*

In my research, I learned there are two documents that all immigrant families treasure to this day: The manifest from the ship on which the ancestor sailed to his new home and his Certificate of Naturalization. I had already accepted that I'd never find the ship manifest for Matthew. My "genealogy buddy" and friend, Vera Muir, told me early on that records from Castle Garden, New York were notoriously lacking and that I shouldn't be surprised if I don't find him; therefore, I considered this part of my search over.

Now that I knew Matthew was listed as naturalized as early as 1900, I was determined to at least find his naturalization documents. Vera suggested I contact the Will County Archive once again and provide every possible variant of the Buchar name I could think of. But, disappointingly, no record was found for Matthew Bucar although I did find my maternal grandfather's record and my husband's grandfather's record. Plus, I subscribed to Ancestry.com

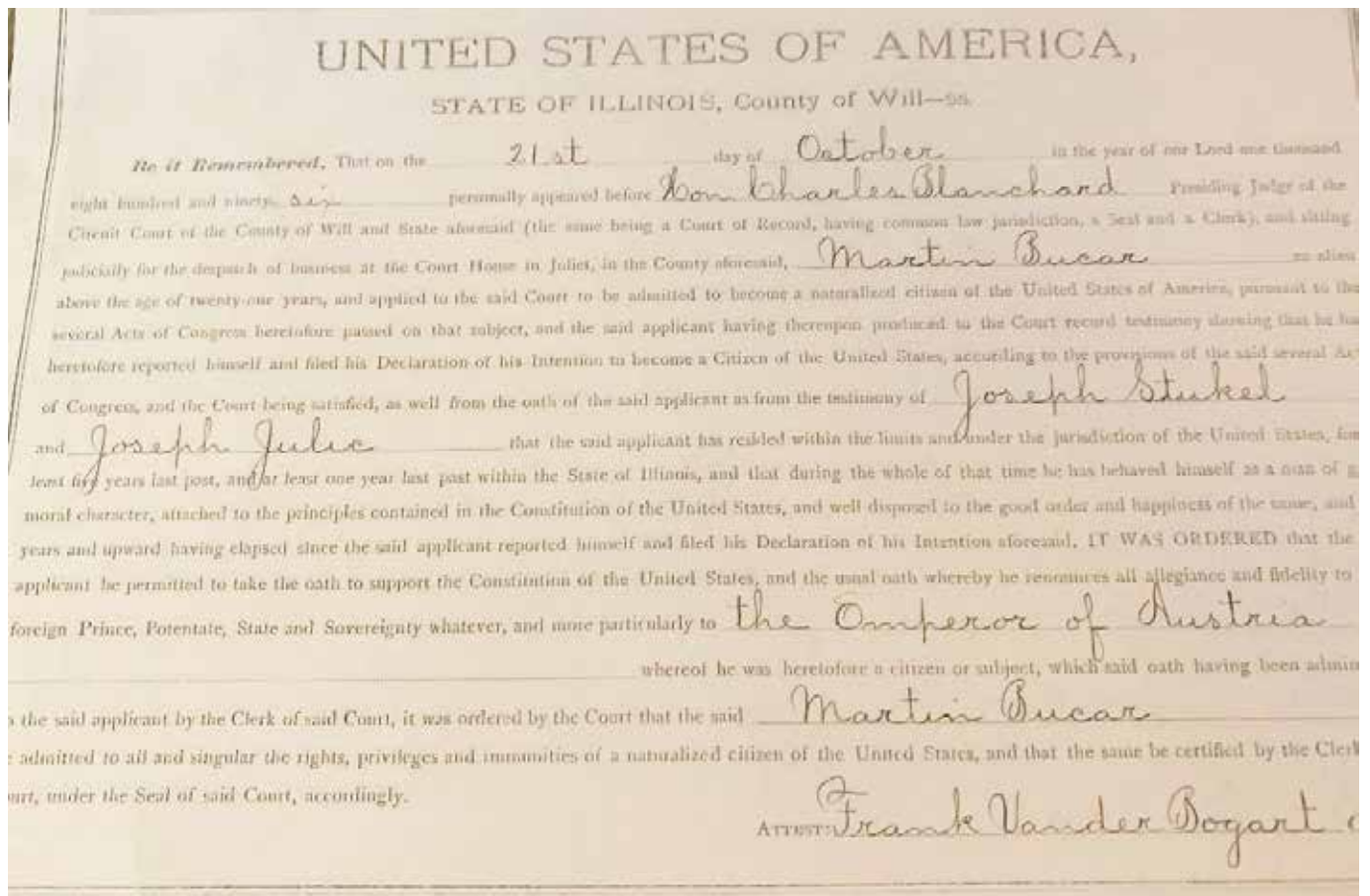
which gave me online access to thousands of naturalization and census records nationwide; however, once again success eluded me.

Then, in 2019, there was a massive "document dump" on the Ancestry.com website. New immigration records miraculously appeared, and some were from Antwerp, Belgium. After much anticipation, and serious sleuthing, I found nothing that could vaguely be attached to Matevz Bucar. But, I did find the *SS Rhyndland* and learned that it sailed regularly from Antwerp to Castle Garden, which was New York's docking point for immigrant ships before Ellis Island opened in 1893. There were a few Austrian passengers on its 1890 sailing, but none were my grandfather. So, I gave up again. I hoped the naturalization records released by Ancestry.com would be more promising. There were several entries for Bucar, but none were named Matthew or anything close. Disappointed again, I studied each given name repeatedly before zeroing in on "Martin" Bucar's index card from the Will County (IL) collection. It contained scant personal information, but the swearing-in date was there: October 21, 1896. Plus, "Martin" was sponsored by two Slovenians, Joseph Stukel and Joseph Julic. *But, why "Martin?"*

Truthfully, I don't know anything for sure, but I'd like to believe that this was my grandfather. After all Martin was his grandfather's name, and it was certainly easier on the American ear than Matevz. What's more, I could find no Martin Bucar listed in the 1916 *Knjiga*; furthermore, after checking numerous census records for that period, I found there were very few Martin Bucars living in the U.S. in 1896, and none lived in Joliet.

So, maybe "Martin Bucar" *was* my grandpa, or maybe not? But, the timeframe matches with my dad's account of how his father got his citizenship. "From McKinley," dad said, as I sat incredulous. As my dad explained it, the 1896 election between Republican William McKinley and Democrat William Jennings Bryan was quite contentious. Some of McKinley's supporters came to the wire mill one day and took a group of men to the courthouse to help them sign up for citizenship so they could vote in the upcoming election. That same group returned in November and paraded everyone to the polling station to make sure they voted the "right way." (The McKinley men would have been called "ward healers," and Joliet's Second Ward was filled with immigrants in need of a lot of healing. The drinks were "on the house," dad said.)

'American Dream' is all about?



Regardless what they were called, I was recently paging through a coffee table book I gave my dad for his 83rd birthday in 1986. *A Pictorial History of Joliet* was written by Dr. Robert Sterling, Chair of Joliet Junior College's Social Studies Department. On page 86, there is a photo of McKinley's campaign manager, Mark Hanna, holding a rally at the American Steel and Wire Company in Joliet that appears to corroborate my dad's story. Sterling recounts that "these rallies were held all over the country and that some industrial bosses would warn their employees that if Bryan was elected, they would probably lose their jobs." Well, it worked, and McKinley won by a landslide!

Whether Grandpa Matthew was ever truly naturalized doesn't really matter to me or my family anymore. His youngest child, Judge Robert R. Buchar, went on to preside over Illinois' 12th Judicial Circuit for many years. This is the very same court that swore in countless numbers of new American citizens just like my grandfather. They were all immigrants looking for a better life for themselves and for their families. *In the end, isn't this what the "American Dream" is all about?*



Judge Robert R. Buchar.

My Slovene Language Journey

by Julia Borden

“Katera je tvoja najljubša barva?”
(What’s your favorite color?)

“Zelenjava!”
(Vegetable!)

The correct answer is *zelena*, meaning *green*. But believe it or not, this was progress.

My journey to learning Slovene has not been straight-forward or easy. I am not Slovene, but my fiancé is a native-born Slovenian. I wanted to learn the language to better communicate with his family. His parents speak shaky English and grandparents none at all. And, you know, I wanted to understand what they were saying over the phone. *Julij - Are they talking about me, or the month of July?* I started to search for a course. I quickly discovered that there is no Duolingo course; no course in the Slavic department at UC Berkeley, where I am a graduate student; no beginner course in San Francisco (which has a strong Slovenian community and offered an intermediate course); no private teachers. For a couple of years I couldn’t find any course teaching the language until in 2018 I learned that the Slovenian Union of America NYC Chapter was offering an online beginner course. Finally!

The course met once a week. There were seven or eight of us originally, and the number soon dropped to four or five. We began with the basics: alphabet, numbers, greetings. I speak decent Spanish and have a good understanding of Latin languages, but Slovene was unlike anything I’d ever encountered. The first hurdle was pronunciation. I stumbled through sentences, my brain pausing at every convoluted collection of consonants. *Nahrbtnik?! Ljudje?! Rdeč?! I had a major breakthrough when I learned that c is pronounced like ts!*

Slovene is a Slavic language and carries a rich (read: complex and confusing) grammatical structure. Andrej, our Slovene teacher, introduced us to the grammar by giving us a large chart of various word endings. He didn’t explain it. Instead, he told us to just be aware that as we learn vocabulary, we might hear words appear in different forms. *Medved* (bear) might appear as *medvedi*, *medveda*, or *medvedov*, but they all mean *bear* or *bears*. In other words, they decline nouns. Nouns! I was prepared for verb charts, but not for this. In Slovene, the word ending changes depending on the context of the word in the sentence. This is extremely hard to learn as an English speaker since we don’t have this kind of grammar in English. For

example, take the two sentences, “The woman holds the pen” and “The woman writes with the pen.” In Slovene, this would sound like “The woman holds the pen-o [Slovene: *pero*]” and “The woman writes with the pen-om [Slovene: *peresom*].” It’s super confusing. Couple that with the fact that there are three genders (male, female, plural), three numerals (singular, dual, and plural), and six cases, and you have 54 possible endings to learn. That’s not counting adjectives and irregulars. Fun!

A second semester of online Slovene felt like wading through a muddy swamp of grammar and endless vocabulary. But slowly, something started to click. The shifting noun forms became more recognizable. I started retaining vocabulary. By this point, there were only two of us in the class: myself and Paul, a San-Franciscan who is impressively good at grammar, and who was learning in order to reconnect with his Slovenian ancestry. That year I also met a young woman named Sheila who, like me, was trying to learn Slovene because she has a Slovenian partner. When the semester ended with no plans for a continuing course, Paul, Sheila, and I adventurously and a bit naively started our own learning group. We gave ourselves homework out of a workbook and met online once a week. We’d chat, catch up, and then puzzle over Slovene vocab and grammar. Despite not having a Slovene teacher, with Paul and Sheila I made significant progress in learning the language. Maybe it was the extra effort I put in to study, but having friends accompany you on a difficult journey can sometimes make all the difference.

I am by no means fluent. I’d say I’m an “advanced beginner.” I now qualify for the intermediate course taught in SF that I discovered years before, and our first class was this January 2021. I’m losing my fear of speaking and am slowly continuing to build vocabulary and practice the grammar. I hope that when I next travel to Slovenia, I’ll be able to speak with my fiancé’s parents and grandparents and maybe order a *kavico* (cup of coffee) at a local café. I’m lucky that my fiancé speaks fluent Slovene, so we sometimes practice together though I understand that it can be hard to tolerate a conversation with my elementary Slovene. But he is patient and asks “Katera je tvoja najljubša barva?” and I reply confidently, “Zelena!”

Julia Borden is a graduate student at UC Berkeley pursuing a Ph.D. in Molecular & Cellular Biology. She is the author of the twitter account ŽivjoLuka which chronicles funny and interesting things that she learns about the Slovenian Language.

Julia's Favorite Resources to Learn Slovene:

- PONS dictionary (www.pons.com) – This is THE BEST Slovene <-> English dictionary out there.
- Amebis Besana (<https://besana.amebis.si/preg-ibanje/>) – The Slovenian language not only conjugates verbs, it also declines nouns. These can be hard to keep track of and memorize! Amebis provides conjugation / declination charts for your Slovene word of choice. Though the website is in Slovene, it's conceptually easy to use: just type in the word you're curious about and it will return various conjugation charts.
- Google Translate (<https://translate.google.com/>) – Google translate is of course great, but BEWARE! It performs well when given a lot of context, such as a paragraph of text. It is often wrong when translating a single word or pair of words. Use PONS instead for single word definitions.
- Slovene Learning Online (<https://www.slonline.si/>) – Start here if you are a beginner and want an introduction to the language and vocabulary.
- Anna In Slovenia (<https://annainslovenia.wordpress.com/>) – Anna is a Canadian who has lived in Slovenia since 2013. She has a great collection of resources on her website.
- Slovenian Word of the Day (<https://slovenian-wordoftheday.com/>) – This blog posts new words frequently and does a deep dive into their pronunciation, meaning, and usage in a sentence. Examples and even audio are included!
- Otroski Portal (<https://otroski.rtv slo.si/televizija>) – This is the kids arm of the national Slovene television network RTVSlo. They have kids shows in Slovene, some with subtitles.
- Časoris (<https://casoris.si/>) – This is an online newspaper for kids. Great for advanced beginners or intermediate level.
- Slovene-English Dual Text (<https://www.total-slovenia-news.com/how-to-slovenia>) – This Slovene news website has a great collection of articles written in Slovene with an included English translation.
- ŽivjoLuka (<https://twitter.com/ZivjoLuka>) – ŽivjoLuka is a twitter account that points out interesting, funny, and quirky things about the Slovenian language as seen from an English speaker's point of view. Full disclosure: I write this account and hope that it helps other learners find the fun in learning this language!
- Lastly, my favorite and best resource is talking to Slovenians or Slovene speakers! Take a class, make a friend, anything to practice speaking and listening to the language!

Slovenian Surnames Are Interesting Things!

by Richard Terselic rat1@verizon.net

There are definitely interesting things about Slovene surnames. Growing up in Cleveland, Ohio, I knew that I was of Slovene heritage, but I didn't know much about my last name, Terselic. A longtime hobby of mine has been looking for information about my name – something I found I share in common with other Slovenes.

Janez Keber, who has studied Slovene surnames professionally, wrote a series of articles in a discontinued English language magazine, *Slovenija*, titled “The Origin of Slovene Names.” With the aid of government publications that listed and counted people living in Slovenia by surname, as well as letters he received from readers of his articles, Keber carefully listed and analyzed the more common names and their variants.

The origins of Slovene surnames, like those of many other countries, have many influences. Keber said that they first came into fashion in the 9th century among the wealthy and then started to be used in the general population in later centuries. Name origins can be influenced

by a number of different factors: where someone lived; a nearby geologic feature; the type of work they did; after birds and animals; a quality or trait of the person (tall, short, honest, quick, slow, etc.), or any number of other things. Keber's source references (the most recent one I recall was 1991) listed the most frequently occurring surnames in Slovenia: Novak (11,658), Horvat (10,456) and Krajnc (5,964). He also mentioned the towns where the names were found. (Note: “Terselic” was not one of the names he researched.)

In my own experience, the only people I knew growing up that shared my surname, Terselic, were relatives, all of whom lived several hundred miles to the west of Cleveland. As far as I knew, when my family emigrated from Slovenia all family members came, so I didn't know if there were other Terselics left in Slovenia. The name seemed very rare, if not unique, which was a point of pride for me.

As an aside, it was interesting how much the pronunciation of our name differed within the family. The Cleveland branch used “Ter-sell-ick” while the Midwestern branch used “Ter-sa-lick.” At some point I learned the name meant “robust.”

As I aged, I was keenly interested in public appearances of the family name. The first involved a mention by a family friend who said he had heard that a Terselic lived somewhere on the east side of Cleveland although I was unable to find such a person listed in the local phone directory. In fact, phone directories were my main means of searching for many years. Every time I travelled to a new area or state I would check the local directories for other Terselics.

As years passed, I began receiving the newspaper of a Slovenian fraternal society, and I saw mentions of a Terselich family that lived in Chicago, Illinois. This burst my surname uniqueness “balloon!”

My next bit of knowledge about others sharing my surname came via a letter I received from the wife of a Terselic who lived in northern Illinois. She included a misdirected bill from a credit card firm that was intended for an uncle of mine who lived in southern Wisconsin. This led to discovery of a large, apparently unrelated, Terselic family in Illinois.

In 1972, my job required that I take a trip to Yugoslavia. While there I searched for and located an extended family of Trselics. My uncle Frank confirmed that they were related to us, saying, “no one ever asked if we had family still living in Slovenia.” He had maintained communication with these relatives in the village of Vihre since he left Slovenia. I found the difference in name spelling to be a common among Slovene families. The Vihre family pronounced its name “Ter-shay-litch”.

The Internet made possible new searches that expanded my awareness of other Terselic / Terselich / Trselic families who lived in the US, Canada, and Columbia (South America). Among the several families I discovered, other than my own and the family in Vihre, none appeared to be related. The name was found in Slovenia in only the southeastern Lower Posavje area bordered by the cities Brezice-Krsko-Sevnica. The family in northern Illinois had its origin in Gorenje Skopice, a village close to Vihre.

If your surname sounds Slovene but doesn't quite match similar names that you have reason to believe are Slovene, you might find that officials at Ellis Island or other points of entry of European immigrants were responsible for changing the spelling in the official record. Many immigrants were illiterate, did not know English, may

have had handwritten travel documents that were hard to read or became torn or stained, or had accents that were difficult to understand for any number of reasons. Since immigration officials may have depended upon phonetic answers to the “what is your name?” question, changes and errors were made.

Sometimes, changing names into different languages prior to coming to the USA can be the culprit. For example, the family name of Mickey Dolenz of the group The Monkees is a case in point: A glance at his last name might suggest it was of Hispanic origin, but his father was born Jure Dolenc in the Slovene section of Trieste, Italy, and immigrated to the USA under the name Giorgio Dolenz.

Another factor is the presence of three additional letters in the Slovene alphabet, which impact pronunciation. Č, Š, and Ž are separate letters from C, S, and Z. USA keyboards don't have an easy way to type these, so a name may change in the written form if the mark above one of those letters is missing.

Surnames, such as that of my mother's Slana family, were validly Slovene. However, one can't automatically depend upon seeing the name somewhere and presume it is of Slovene origin. In the Slana example, the same name can be found occurring among persons with other national origins, such as the Czech Republic. (I believe this is the case for the naming of a Slana Lake in Alaska.) Further, Slovene lands long had strong influences from Germanic sources. Thus, many Slovene names trace back to those sources, as in the case of the surnames Maurer, Mandel, and Simon.

The likelihood that Slovene surnames persist into the future depends upon a number of conditions, including the following: the tendency of male children to be born, thus carrying on of the name; the willingness of children to carry on a name and not to modify it for ease of pronunciation; and the last member of a family dying without having children. In my own case, I have sons who carry on the Terselic name and a daughter who chose not to change to the German surname of her husband (Butsch).

If Slovene surnames are also interesting to you, the Internet can be a source of great assistance. You can also follow surnames by joining a Slovene organization such as the Slovenian Union of America or the Slovenian Genealogical Society International.

My thanks to my daughter, Nancy Terselic Butsch, for help in editing this article.



Slovenian Union of America

Across America - Branch Reports

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Mary Ann Schellinger 920.457.7946/rhmas@yahoo.com

It is hard to believe that it has now been over a year since we have had to deal with all the challenges we have been facing due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are so many things that we have missed - a simple hand shake, a hug, or a simple smile. It makes us realize how many things we have been taking for granted, even sometimes our own families. I heard somewhere that our family is a link to the past and a key to our future. This is so true when it comes to our Slovenian heritage. If it weren't for our parents and their ancestors, we wouldn't be part of this wonderful organization called the Slovenian Union of America. When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure. Each one of our deceased members had special treasures that they have shared with our branch.

Now, at this time, since we have not gotten together to honor a member of the year due to social distancing and other restrictions, our branch has decided to pay a special tribute to all the deceased members of Branch 1. Here are a few photos: (1) Frank Kotnick in his garden in Sheboygan (2) Dick Jelovnik at the mountains in Slovenia (3) Dorothy Brezonik (4) Pauline Rupar and (5) Mary Pat Ryan.



When we gather together in December for our Christmas celebration, a memory angel is given to the family of a deceased member. Angels are always present to watch over us and



keep us in their loving care; once you love someone, they are in your heart forever. So, as we are still dealing with the issues of the pandemic, we need to remember to hold on tightly every day to all the memories that we have made and those that we will make in the future.

MARY ANN SCHELLINGER



BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information:

719.569.7125/amtcharron@gmail.com

Branch 3 is planning to resume regular branch meetings in the fall of 2021 provided that the pandemic is under control. As of April 15, Governor Polis lifted state restrictions relating to the virus; going forward, local counties will decide any Coronavirus restrictions, as needed. In the meantime, our branch hopes to have an outdoor branch meeting in the summer of 2021. Details will be announced by early June. The branch is also hoping to honor our 2020 Member of the Year, Diane Slaten, with a luncheon in August or September. Best wishes to all SUA Members for a wonderful summer filled with family and friends!

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON
& M.T. KARLINGER

BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana

Greetings Branch 5 Members! It was wonderful to be able to celebrate Easter as a family again this year. It truly was a Season of Rebirth! Hopefully the vaccines will do a great job of keeping the virus at bay, and this summer season will be one full of health and healing for all.

I went on a baking spree during Lent using old handwritten family recipes that I found in an envelope. The good news is they turned out great! The bad news is I now have krofi, potica, and strudel ready to eat in my freezer! I'm getting better at figuring out substitutions for "lard" and "yeast cakes," not always with beautiful results, but they usually still taste great! Are you lucky enough to have grandma's or mom's original cookbook? Give some of their recipes a try... guaranteed to bring back memories!!

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of Frank Velikan, who died March 17. Frank dedicated his life to teaching at Catholic high schools in Indianapolis for over 40 years and also to teaching in Religious Education at church. Frank will be missed by all in the Indy Slovenian community.

The bricks are in! The beautiful brick pavers purchased as a fundraiser for the erection of the Holy Trinity Bell Tower have been installed underneath the bells. Many Slovenian names on the bricks bring back memories of Haughville and earlier times in our Slovenian community. Stop by St Malachy Catholic Church in Brownsburg and see if you can find the SWU Branch 5 1927 brick! Contact the church office if you would like to purchase a brick!!

I'd like to express my sadness at the recent passing of Corinne Leskovar, longtime host of the Slovenian Radio Program, *Zarja - The Dawn* editor for 50+ years, and one of the forces behind the Slovenian Cultural Center in Lemont, Illinois. I have many memories of Corinne, some involving family or fundraising, but mostly her beloved SWU and *Zarja*. Corinne could coerce you into doing anything and make you feel it was your idea! That's how Branch 5 hosted one of the SWU Indiana/Illinois conventions! After

a long day of food, meetings, elections, and visiting, as the Chicago-area ladies were boarding their bus for the long ride home, Corinne told me that she was going home to bake potica because she needed to give it to the Governor of Illinois as a gift the next morning! After ascertaining that Corinne had never made potica before, we contacted our famous Holy Trinity Potica Ladies, and they brought over two poticas to the bus for Corinne to present to the Governor. I didn't remember until later that each Holy Trinity potica was double wrapped, with an inside label stating that the potica was made in Indianapolis! Corinne always had a big hug and a smile! I will miss her.

Have a safe and relaxing summer!

MARY, KAREN & PHYLLIS

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Contact Information: Georgene Agnich

773.205.1326/georgeneagnich@gmail.com

We mourn the loss of Corinne Leskovar on April 2, 2021 (Good Friday) and extend our sympathy to her family. Corinne was a towering figure in SWUA/SUA who served as *Zarja - The Dawn* editor for 50 years.

We also extend our sympathy to the family of John Lukancic, who passed away on January 20, 2021, and to the family of Lillian M. DiBartolomeo, who passed away February 10, 2021. We also extend our sympathy to Bea Fothergill in the loss of her daughter, former member Diana Hoffman, on January 30, 2021.

Because of the ongoing pandemic, we have rescheduled our Member of the Year banquet to May 2022, at which time we will honor Sandra Rodeghero. If conditions change to allow us to resume normal branch activities in Fall 2021, we will mail Activity Calendars to members and place notices in St. Joseph Church's bulletin and in the *Herald-News*.

This summer, the steel historical markers all along the I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor from Chicago to LaSalle will be upgraded and modernized; we hope that the two Mary Setina historical plaques that were destroyed last March by vandals will be replaced. *Zarja* reporters Diane Data (Branch 24) and Georgene Agnich are co-authoring an article about these historical markers for the Fall 2021 issue of *Zarja*.

The Planinsek store at the corner of Elizabeth and Russell has been gifted to the Joliet Area Historical Museum by Ken and Irene (Planinsek) Odorizzi and will become a Slovenian heritage tourist attraction sometime this year. Several members of Branch 20 are on the planning committee and may become guides at this exciting new site. Watch future *Zarjas* for more information.

The SUA Heritage Museum windows featured Lenten displays again this year, one year after the Catholic Diocese of Joliet closed all churches because of the pandemic. This Easter, churches in the Diocese of Joliet and across America held Lenten services with restrictions, in sharp contrast

Zarja - The Dawn

NEWS ON THE MUSEUM

Again this year, the windows of our Slovenian Heritage Museum in downtown Joliet presented Slovenian Lenten customs. One window highlighted Pust, the Slovenian pre-Lenten celebration akin to Carnival and Mardi Gras. On Ash Wednesday, that window then held a large wooden Cross draped in purple, with a crown of thorns upon it, and also displayed St. Joseph Church's Lenten schedule.

The other window displayed a small poster of artist Lucille Dragovan's Joliet mural of a Palm Sunday procession in Slovenia; a small poster created from *The Slovenian-American Table* about the butarice that Slovenians carry on Palm Sunday; and actual butarice from the museum's collection. It included Maxim Gaspari's folk painting of Slovenians carrying baskets of Easter foods to church to be blessed on Holy Saturday (Žegen), along with a small poster from *The Slovenian-American Table* about those Easter foods, and a *Zarja* cover showing Slovenian Easter eggs. The window display was enhanced by a crucifix from the museum's collection, candles, vases of tiny cloth flowers, and *The Slovenian-American Table* cookbook opened to "Velika Noc" (Easter).

to last year, when all churches were closed in mid-March because of the pandemic. We must continue to hope and pray for an end to the pandemic and a return to normal life.

GEORGENE AGNICH



BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Zivijo! It is a beautiful spring day as I am writing this report. Some of you probably have been looking through seed catalogs dreaming about getting your hands dirty planting something new and colorful in your garden. I have been involved with a few other SUA members in a bee initiative to help Slovenia get the word out about World Bee Day on May 20. WBD is a call to action – “No Bees, No Life.” One of the five important things we can do for the bees is to plant honey plants in our gardens. In Illinois, a few of the best perennials for pollinators (bees) are coneflowers, sedum, phlox, butterfly bush, lavender, and salvia. By the time you receive this issue, I hope you are enjoying what you planted and are watching the bees buzzing around from plant to plant doing their jobs.

With sadness, we report the passing of Muriel Jermenc, age 93, on February 11. A few of our members, following Covid-19 guidelines, attended her visitation, said prayers, and placed a carnation in her honor. She was a nurse for over 33 years and volunteered at the Red Cross after retiring. She enjoyed playing cards with friends and is survived by a daughter, son, and grand and great-grandchildren. RIP Muriel. Branch 24 would like to extend their sympathy to the family of Corinne Leskovar. I had the pleasure of visiting with her in 2014 on a *Zarja* trip to Slovenia and at a few picnics at the Slovenian Catholic Center in Lemont. I will never forget her correcting my mispronunciation of Slovenian names. I never could get the emphasis on the

correct syllable. She was a lovely lady who was proud to share her Slovenian heritage throughout her lifetime.

Recently, I was at Lily Pads Resale Boutique in Peru and bought a 9-inch silhouette of Mary Setina, the silhouette that is in front of our Home Office in Joliet, Illinois. I assumed the silhouette belonged to the SUA and wondered how this miniature version got to a thrift store in Peru, Illinois. I called Georgene Agnich, Branch 20, to ask her if she had a clue. Of course, she did. She informed me that the silhouette belonged to the Heritage Corridor. Our area, here in LaSalle, is a part of the Illinois & Michigan Canal Heritage Corridor where 13 steel silhouettes depict canal workers and passengers. I had never given a thought that these pieces of art were related. I talked to our local HCC director who gave me information about the artist and the process of choosing what images to use and the history of each silhouette. Look for more information on the Heritage Corridor in a future article in *Zarja*. Proceeds from sales at Lily Pads Resale Boutique support Illinois Valley PADS which provides shelter, food, and services to people in need. Branch 24 donates annually to IV PADS, and a few of our members volunteer their services at both places.

DIANE DATA



BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Jan Gehm
414.321.1413/twogames@wi.rr.com

Here we are into our second year of Covid-19 restrictions. Hopefully, little by little, they will be lifted but only if the public is careful.

Branch 43 is trying to stay active during these trying times, and it was evident by all who participated in the Palm Sunday *Cvetna Nedelja* Mass. Many Slovenians attended the 8:00 a.m. Mass at St. John the Evangelist carrying their *butare* and wearing *narodna noša's* or our Slovenian flower, the beautiful red carnation.

Little 2½ year old Joseph, son of Branch 43 member Katie Berlin and grandson of Kathy Kaye, proudly walked up the aisle with his mom, wearing his *noša* and carrying his *butara*. He stole the show! Many thanks to all who participated and to Helen Frohna for making sure this beautiful remembrance happened. I hope all had a Blessed Easter, and I hope the coming of spring brings new hope to all.

Best Wishes to all, and remember: "PATIENCE" is the motto. This pandemic will end. Storm the heavens.

MICI BREGANT

BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

Contact Information: Terry Kamnikar
815-481-3552/tlkamn92@gmail.com

Hello to All! Branch 89 held their first meeting of 2021 on March 8th by Zoom. If all goes well with people getting vaccinated and the Covid-19 cases declining, we hope to attend a Mass for all Branch 89 members, living and deceased, in late October. However, we have a lot of fun-in-the-sun to enjoy before the next meeting date in October. By now, I'm sure many folks have planted gardens, purchased beautiful flowers, maybe planted a new tree, cut grass, and dusted off the patio furniture. It was a long winter, and now we can enjoy all the amazing sights and sounds of spring and summer. Hopefully, you will be able to attend a Memorial Day Service, 4th of July fireworks, picnics, maybe a baseball game, or just sit outside to soak up the sunshine (don't forget the sunscreen!).

A huge shout-out to Branch 89 Sunshine Committee (of one), Julie Harback. Julie does a fantastic job remembering all of our members near and far with birthday, holiday, and thinking of you cards. If you are a member of Branch 89 and have not received a birthday card or if you know a member who would benefit from receiving a "thinking of you" card, please drop an email to Julie at suabranh89@yahoo.com.

To all our members: Be well, stay safe, and enjoy the sunshine!

TERRY KAMNIKAR



BRANCH 93 - New York, New York

Contact Information: Kathleen Simmonds
917.780.9412/kathleensimmo@gmail.com

Happy Spring! Branch 93 is excited for the warmer weather, as New York City finally opens its restaurant doors and theatre spaces after a year of closures. We are planning a dinner at the new Slovenian restaurant *Perkarna* (hopefully we will get to meet Slovenian chef Alma Rekić!) - look out for the more information in our upcoming monthly newsletters.

In February, the President and Secretary of NYC Branch 93 of Slovenian Union of America, Stephanie Owens and Alyssa Owens, organized a special surprise for our community – they worked with the office of the President of the Republic of Slovenia to bring our New York community a special address in acknowledgement and celebration of Prešeren Day. President Pahor spoke about the importance of preserving our cultural identity, being neighborly, and reconciliation – the significance of which is heightened in these current times of isolation. We at Branch 93 are so incredibly grateful for the contributions that our members make, and we celebrate the artists within our community who continue to bring us together (even remotely!). If you haven't had the pleasure of viewing President Pahor's address, you can find it on the SUA's Facebook site.

For fans of our favorite band, Slavo Rican Assembly, you'll be excited to hear that they have just released their new epic single "Zrejlo je žito" ("The grain is ready")! This Caribbeanized version of the Slovenian harvesting song is

a powerful remix of their crowd favorite. Last summer, the group collaborated with Slovenian director Nina Kovačič and her incredible film crew for a special live performance video, which they shot at the magical 13th century castle, Grad Rihemberk in Branik, Slovenia. Follow @slavorican on the socials to see the video!

Our resident artist, Eva Petric, has been honored by Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as her artwork entitled "Being a Man" was chosen to be part of the new contemporary art collection which will be distributed to Slovene embassies around the world. Congratulations Eva!

Finally, this is a shout out to our Branch 93 community... As the city opens up and we seek out connection with each other, we would ask that you send us your ideas for future events! Whether it be online cooking classes or venues for our monthly social get-togethers – whatever your ideas, we would love to hear them!

KATHLEEN SIMMONDS

BRANCH 100 - Fontana, California

Our first meeting of 2021 was called to order by President Teresa Koci on Sunday, April 11, at 1 p.m. We had a lot of competition for attendance: It was a beautiful spring day and also the last round of the Masters golf tournament in Augusta, Georgia. Twelve members attended, and we had a nice time exchanging greetings before the meeting officially began.

The minutes of the December 2020 meeting were read by Recording Secretary, Jean Turnbull, bringing back memories of all that was shared that day about family traditions during the Christmas season. Members also exchanged information about getting their COVID-19 vaccines and how everyone was feeling now: Liberated! Less afraid to go out! Still cautious about going certain places. Still wearing our masks!

The biggest discussion was when to have our next meeting and what to do to attract attendance. Since we have had several food demonstrations in the past which were a success, we decided to do another. Suggestions were thrown out and consensus zeroed in on a demonstration making kolache. A trip to the computer and with help from google.com and Wikipedia, here's a little information about kolache.

"Kolaches are Czech pastries made of a yeast dough and usually filled with fruit, but sometimes cheese. As Czech immigrants founded communities during the 1880s in rural Texas, later known as the Texas Czech Belt, the flavors and fillings evolved."

The date, Saturday, June 26, was selected, and Teresa and Ken Koci volunteered their home in Laguna Niguel for the event. By that date most members should have been vaccinated, and it should be safe to gather. Windows will be open, and we can wear masks to assure everyone's safety. Teresa will still provide a Zoom link for the event in case some members are not vaccinated, live out of the area, or would just prefer to attend virtually. Please RSVP



Eva Petric's "Being a Man"

to Teresa (tkoci@cox.net or 949.363.1513) if you plan to attend in-person by June 23rd. Jean Koci's recipe for kolache will be used.

It was fun for everyone to be together again, even just on Zoom. We wish all members of SUA a wonderful summer, possibly like the summer of 2019.

MYRA ANDRES FISHER

Branch 100 sadly reports the passing of Frances Ambrozich in January 2021 of Huntington Beach in Southern California. Frances was a longtime member and attended most of our meetings and events along with her children who were also active in our branch. She enjoyed getting together with others of Slovenian heritage and especially enjoyed the songs and music of her background. It was fun to hear her chat with others from Minnesota who had similar childhoods in the Iron Range. She was originally from Gilbert, Minnesota. Frances had a lovely voice and knew the Slovenian language well enough to express her love of the music and old folk songs and shared that talent with those around her. If a group would gather at an event in Fontana at the Slovene Hall or elsewhere, they would often get together, and soon we would all be entertained with the old folk songs. Frances also took part in church choirs where she attended services, so it was not only with Slovenians that her voice was heard; others also had that privilege to listen to her lovely voice. Her son, Gary, was usually in attendance at the events where I remember her.



Frances Ambrozich

Summer 2021

They shared a close relationship. Thank you, Frances, for being such a wonderful part of our SUA Branch in Southern California and for your friendship. We miss you, and you will always be remembered. Rest in peace, dear lady.

JEAN KOCI

BRANCH 108 - National Capitol Area

We hope that our branch members and members across the US have been staying well and are getting out more to socialize this summer.

The traditional Honey Breakfast at Jonna Sanders home will be happening in a couple of weeks. This traditional event with our resident beekeeper is something we are all very much looking forward to attending in-person, outside in Jonna's backyard, equipped with the AZ hive system.

This summer Branch 108 is highlighting two of our young, longtime members we've seen grow from young children to young adults, now pursuing their dreams and aspirations.

Daniel Hester



Daniel Hester enjoying his free time relaxing by the water.

Daniel has been a member of Branch 108, attending activities and meetings as a young child with his mother, Lisa, and Grandma May Kokal. He has volunteered at the Embassy Open House in Washington, DC and enjoys learning about his Slovenian heritage. He hopes by his

high school graduation, summer of 2022, Covid-19 will be under control.

Daniel attended Linganore High School in Frederick, Maryland last year. This year he is excited to be part of a group selected for a unique opportunity to earn an associate degree along with a high school diploma in two years. The *Early College* program will enable Daniel the opportunity to attend a local community college during his junior and senior year of high school as a full-time undergraduate student. Besides being a college student at age 15 and a member of the National Honor Society, Daniel enjoys sailing, basketball, lacrosse, and tennis.



Daniel Hester with his grandmother May Kokal at a past Embassy of Slovenia Open House.

Daniel is proud of his Slovenian heritage and plans to explore his Slovenian heritage and visit Trzič and Ljubljana for the first time, in the footsteps of his grandfather, Daniel Kokal, after whom he is named. We congratulate Daniel and wish him continued success in his academic pursuits!

Juliana Fitzsimmons

Congratulations to Juliana, a 2017 Slovenian Union of America Scholarship Foundation winner, on her college graduation this year! She completed her studies with a BS Degree in Architecture and Planning from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. After graduating a semester early, she landed a full-time position in February as a Project Engineer with Davis Construction Co. in Rockville, Maryland. She is thrilled there will be an in-person graduation ceremony at Fed Ex Field in Maryland in mid-May for the Class of 2021. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions in Washington, DC, the CUA outdoor graduation ceremony will not take place on the picturesque campus as in the past with the backdrop of

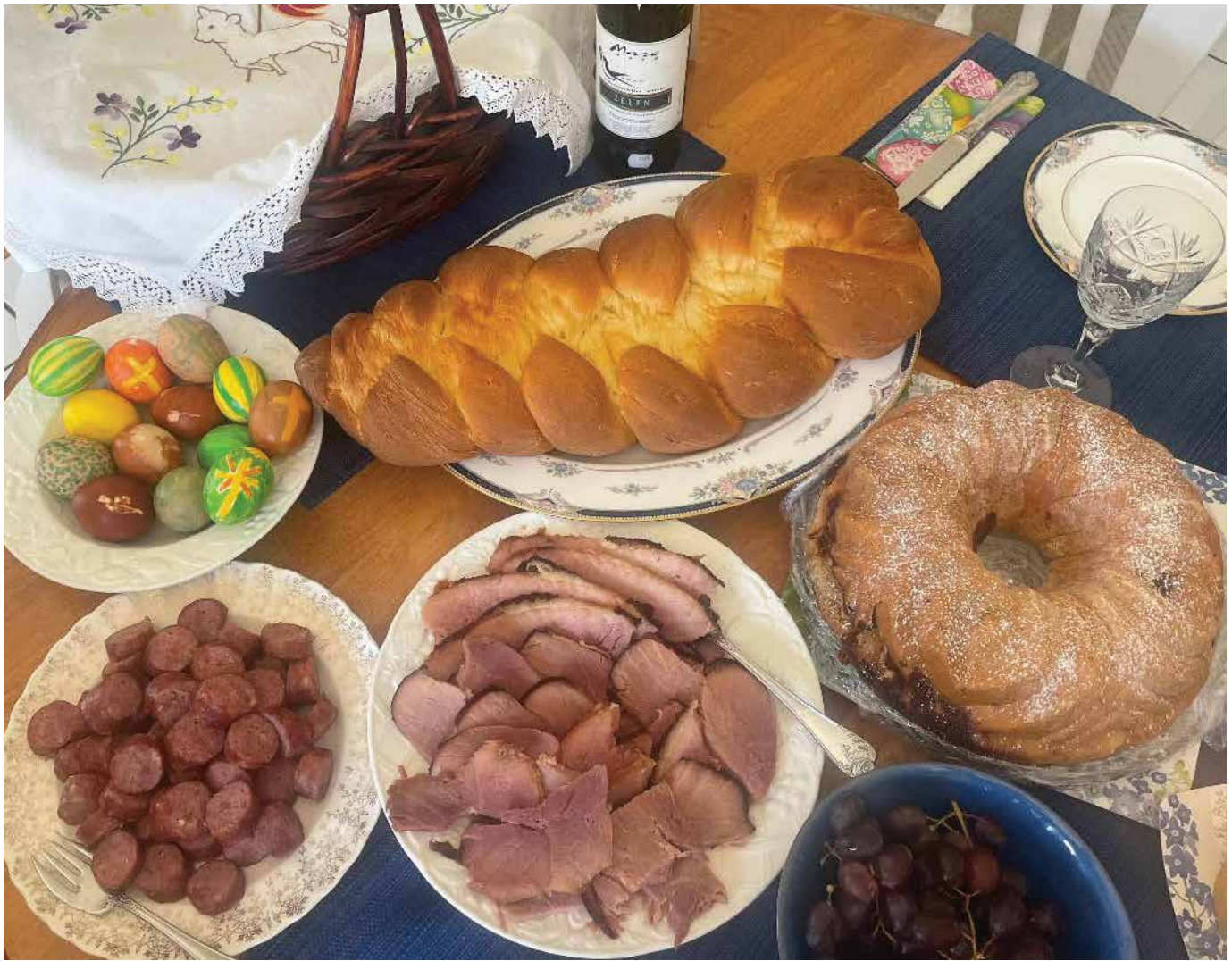
The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, but at an outdoor arena in Maryland to honor the graduates.



Juliana Fitzsimmons enjoying a day at the beach in Fenwick Island, DE.



Juliana and her mom, Bernadette Fitzsimmons, on Easter Saturday for a blessing of Easter foods.



The Fitzsimmons family traditional Easter meal.

Juliana loves the Slovenian tradition of potica making for Easter and Christmas. On Easter Saturday she joined her mother, Bernadette, for an outdoor blessing of Easter foods at St. Mary's Parish and Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Barnesville, Maryland. Among the food blessed was the round Easter potica, representing Christ's crown, shared for Easter Sunday lunch with family, including her Stara mama Nika Kovacic, who signed her up for an SUA membership when she was one month old. Juliana looks forward to meeting her Slovenian cousins in person one day, after meeting them face-to-face on Zoom for the first time this year.

What a year it has been for all of us, living in the midst of this longstanding pandemic, patiently following the rules and getting vaccinated to help protect our families and friends, and doing our best to be hopeful for the future. May you all stay well and have summer plans to spend time with family and friends.

BERNADETTE FITZSIMMONS

BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities (TC) of Minnesota

Contact Information: Elaine Barthelemy
elaineab@yahoo.com

Attendance at our monthly Zoom member meetings has consistently been between 40 and 55 as we enjoy the chance to interact and to learn more about our Slovenian culture. Surprisingly, in these Covid times our TCS membership numbers have grown, and our meetings include Slovenian "snowbirds" in various parts of the country.

In February, Cynthia Bayt Bradford wowed us with her presentation *A Party in Ptuj: Kurentovanje Festival*, where she recounted her 2019 trip to the famous 11-day rite of spring held annually in the city of Ptuj ending on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. Cynthia was motivated to visit the festival by Dr. Seth Hawkin's presentation at the Julian H. Sleeper House a few years ago. In 2019 Cindy and her daughters, Jill and Meredith, made a five-day trip to Ptuj, a quaint town with red roofs and a castle on the hill. The oldest city in Slovenia, it dates back to the Stone Age. They went for the parade but what they discovered was a vibrant combination of music, food, sights, sounds, and traditions that would provide memories for a lifetime.

In today's festival, groups of *kurents* or *kurenti* wear traditional sheepskin garments while holding wooden clubs with hedgehog skins attached called *ježevke*, the noise of which is believed to "chase away winter" and mark the beginning of spring. Each day there is a different parade, but Cynthia attended the "Slovenia Day" parade, narrated in both Slovenian and English.



Kurents in the parade.



Jill, Meredith, and Cynthia Bayt Bradford in Ptuj.



This joyful man in the parade is on the "back" of the woman, showing that women do all the work.



The Ptuj tower and a view of the city.

Zarja - The Dawn

In the 2½ hour parade, there were around 700 participants representing thirty clubs starting with flag carriers and fairies and then turning to darker characters such as thieves and devils. In Cynthia’s presentation, we saw the famous Kurent mask wearers as well as marching bands, scary whip-crackers, and costumed characters of all descriptions. Drawing around 100,000 participants in total each year, the festival was proclaimed the 7th greatest carnival in the world by Lonely Planet in 2016. Cynthia has inspired us to attend!

Our March meeting featured Brianna Montgomery, the lead wine educator for Top Ten Liquors, the largest family-owned chain of liquor stores in Minnesota. Brianna got interested in Slovenian and Croatian wines after she discovered how good they were and wanted reasonably priced “good stuff” in her store. These wines all grow from vines in soil rich in limestone and in a Mediterranean climate with warm days and cool nights. Many of the vines

are very old and are hand-trained without the use of trellises. Brianna highlighted four wines in her presentation titled *SloCro*, but I will focus on two. Pullus Pinot Grigio comes from the oldest winery in Slovenia, Ptuj, in the city of Ptuj. With this wine, the skins have been left to macerate in the pressed juice for 72 hours, giving it a distinctive copper hued, rosé-like color. Rodica Refosk, from the Primorska region, is a red wine that is biodynamic/vegan, meaning that because natural materials, soils, and composts are used to sustain the vineyard, it is “clean,” and will not result in a headache. Brianna suggested that travelers to Slovenia might contact the owners of these wineries as many of them offer “tasting tours.”

Our April meeting featured a *Virtual Walking Tour of Ljubljana* by Tom Hall.

Lastly, Rick Pisa, with the help of Chuck and Jean Podominick, is orchestrating the production and distribution of our fundraiser 2022 calendar, choosing the best photos of Slovenia from submissions by Twin Cities Slovenians members and friends. The calendar lists both Slovenian and U.S. holidays. Readers of this report can order calendars for \$15.00 each (which includes shipping). Get your order form by writing to tcslo2013@gmail.com. The deadline for ordering is September 15. Calendars will be mailed in early October.

ELAINE BARTHELEMY



Brianna Montgomery giving her presentation on Slovenian wines.



Some of the attendees at our March Zoom members meeting.

SLOVENIAN UNION OF AMERICA, INC.
Consolidated Statement of Revenue and Expense
Year Ending December 31, 2019 and 2020

REVENUE	2019	2020
Home Office Contributions and Slovenian in Grant 2020	\$34,329	\$19,119
Convention 2019 and April Showers (net)	35,424	3,501
Membership Support; Zarja and Dues	50,795	59,355
Branch Revenues including Slovenian Grant in 2020	38,184	14,687
Investment Income	13,425	10,895
Other Revenue (net)	4,159	3,060
TOTAL REVENUE	\$176,316	\$110,617
EXPENSES		
Convention Expenses 2019	\$45,948	\$0.00
Educational Grants	2,150	3,500
Zarja Publications Expenses	29,630	28,706
Branch Expenses	48,328	11,948
Insurance; Property, Liability, Directors & Officers	5,001	5,270
Museum, Real Estate Tax, Utilities, Maintenance	9,903	10,794
Management and General	29,584	29,049
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$170,544	\$88,367
EXCESS REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$5,772	\$22,250
NET ASSETS		
TOTAL ASSETS	\$517,999	\$563,908
TOTAL LIABILITIES	-39,794	-42,737
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$478,205	\$521,171

SUA is now on Instagram!

**Follow us at
slovenian_union_of_america
or scan the code with your
smartphone.**

Follow us for more content on
Slovenia and Slovenian heritage!



Katie's Delicious Pandemic Potato Salad

A long pandemic year of cooking for my husband, Jim, and me with an occasional curbside pickup has been an interesting challenge. This potato salad recipe has become our favorite side dish and is one that I will continue to prepare and enjoy for many coronavirus-free years to come. - Katie Gorton - SUA Branch 1

- 4 cups (about 1½ lbs.) quartered fingerling or thin-skinned little potatoes
- 6 slices of crispy cooked bacon finely chopped (I use a kitchen shears. It's much easier.)
- ½ cup onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup of Miracle Whip
- 2 tablespoons of Honey Mustard Aioli (I buy my aioli at TJMaxx. It's soooo good.)
- 3 eggs
- Slovenian coarse sea salt (It's really worth ordering online at www.theshopagora.com)
- Ground pepper
- Smoked paprika

Bring potatoes with skins and water to a boil; reduce heat to low for 8 minutes or until potatoes are firmly cooked. When I strain the cooked potatoes in the sink, I take 6 deep inhalations of the steam. It's good for the sinuses.

Bring water to a slight boil. Carefully add eggs, and continue to boil for 9 minutes. Drain eggs, and cover with cool water. Peel immediately. They're easy to peel and perfect every time.

Mix potatoes, bacon, and onion in a large bowl. Add in Miracle Whip and aioli. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Top with sliced boiled eggs. Sprinkle with paprika and chill in the refrigerator. Enjoy this delicious pairing with your favorite protein.

6 servings – 225 calories / serving



Maksim Gaspari - The Slovenian Painter

He was born in a small village Selšček near Cerknica, on 26 January 1883. As a child, he showed a talent for drawing, which he had got from his mother. In the primary school Begunje near Cerknica, he preferred to draw events and stories rather than write. Due to a family tragedy when his mother died when he was only a ten-year-old, he had to move from home to his relatives in Logatec. After finishing school, his aunt sent him to Kamnik as a trade apprentice. Once he painted a herring for the shop window - a fish that his boss, the merchant Murnik, was selling at that time. The painted herring was noticed by veterinarian Josip Nikolaj Sadnikar from Kamnik. He met the young painter and financially supported him to

clothing culture of the time. His works will forever remain in Slovenian hearts.



Herring, 1899

finish art school and to go to Vienna to study painting. When he had graduated from the academy, he returned to his homeland and began to paint national customs and landscapes of Slovenia. Gaspari is known for his motifs, which he made for postcards that came to almost every Slovenian home and went also beyond the borders to our expatriates around the world. About 500 different postcards are known. Gaspari was a versatile artist. He created countless illustrations and caricatures. In addition, he worked on sets for drama plays, including making various posters and diplomas for famous Slovenes.

In my research and preservation of the cultural heritage of Maksim Gaspari, I have documented over 400 different art paintings in the painting techniques of oil, watercolor, pastel, and drawing. I am writing a book titled *Maxim Gaspari: From Nation to Nation* which will be dedicated to the artist's life and work.

Gašper, as he was called by friends and relatives, is an important historical and folklore writer for Slovenians. His artistic opus outlined the Slovenian soul in detail. His characters in the pictures include beggars at the sign, ten brothers, a beekeeper, a fiancé, a girl with carnations, a Slovenian wedding, a rural wedding, carolers, Easter customs, Advent customs, Christmas holidays, and many more. His paintings show the beauty of the Slovenian landscape. Works from alpine and pre-alpine places such as Bled, Kranjska Gora, Ljubljana, and its surroundings are especially well known. The national costumes he had so beautifully immortalized are a faithful record of the



Self Portrait, 1905

Maksim Gaspari died in Ljubljana on November 14, 1980. The journalist J. Praprotnik wrote on the occasion of the death of Maksim Gaspari: "So we, Slovenians have today and we will always have the good fortune to be able to show Maksim Gaspari to the whole world. Look, this is our painter: the land in these paintings is Slovenian and its people are Slovenians."

Article prepared by: Robert Kužnik, Slovenia
www.zibka.si/en/

Images and text are copyrighted.



The Girl at the Apiary, 1925



SUA Zoom Book — Group —

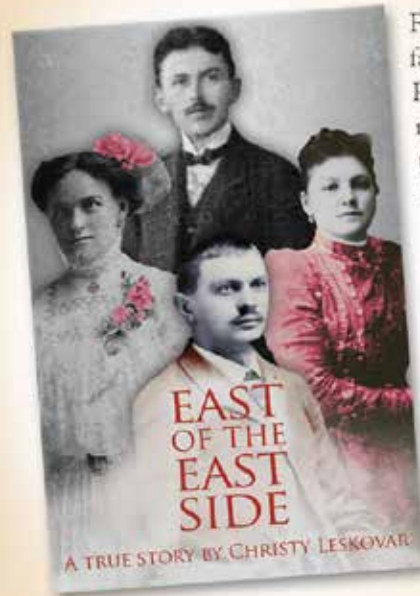
Come Join Us!

A book group that will meet quarterly on a weeknight with either a book discussion or speakers is forming. The books the organizers have in mind will be easy to find in most public libraries and relate to the immigrant or the immigrant ancestor experience of most members (the Ellis Island and post WWII periods) and also other books before or after that time period. The books may be specifically about Slovenians or well-known books that relate to the time periods of Slovenian immigration.

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!

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.

FARCOUNTRY PRESS | **sweetgrassbooks**
an imprint of Farcountry Press

WWW.FARCOUNTRYPRESS.COM • 1-800-821-3874

WWW.CHRISTYLESKOVAR.COM



Want More Out of Life?

KSKJ Life is a Christian, community-focused life insurance company that has provided financial security to its members and their families since 1894. We offer competitive life insurance products and retirement solutions, premier personalized service and meaningful member benefits and programs. As a not-for-profit organization, KSKJ Life makes a difference by reinvesting back into local communities and is dedicated to continuing its mission by helping families achieve financial security.

Connect With Us Today!

1-800-THE-KSKJ

kskjlife.com

KSKJ Life, American Slovenian Catholic Union, is an Illinois fraternal benefit society located at 2439 Glenwood Ave., Joliet, IL 60435. 2020.07.Z

30

NON-PROFIT
PERIODICALS
POSTAGE
PAID
LASALLE, IL

Congratulations
Slovenia

30 YEARS



of Independence

June 25, 2021

Statehood Day: Dan državnosti