

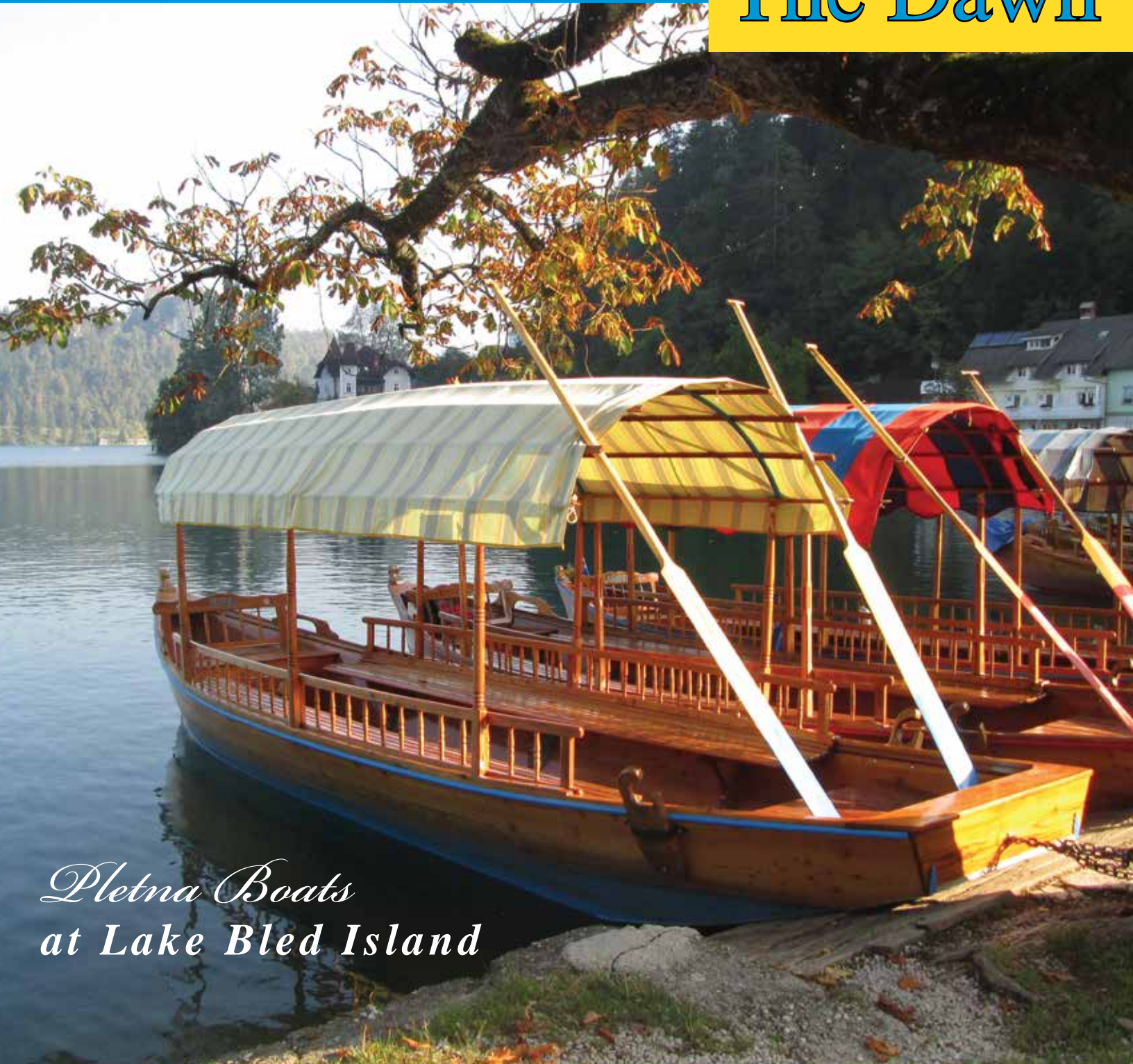
Zarja

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May/June 2016

The Dawn



*Pletna Boats
at Lake Bled Island*

Slovenian Union of America

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Communications for the next issue of publication

Do you have something you would like to share with readers? We would love to hear from you! Please e-mail the editor at wprokup@aol.com. 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 July/August issue must be received by May 10. Thank you.

Submission Guidelines

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

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

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The Slovenian-American Table

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A cookbook that presents many of the favorite dishes that Slovenian immigrants brought with them to America, but with a modern flair. This book is more than a cookbook; it is a guide for today's American families to bring Slovenian heritage into their festivities, all with a modern American twist. This book takes you through a calendar year and offers primarily recipes, but also includes crafts, entertaining and decorating tips, a little background information of the holidays, and all with full-color pictures.

President's Message...

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

It is almost a year since our 2015 SUA National Convention, and the election of the 2015-2019 National Board. I cannot help being inspired to write all that has occurred since our first Board meeting in August 2015. But first, some words of tribute.

Compliments and recognition go out to the past National Board for their years of leadership. The achievement of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit status has been the most climactic, intense, time-consuming event in the history of the SUA, and during the same time period, the discontinuance of the burial insurance policies. Add the production of *The Slovenian-American Table* cookbook. There are more, and more volunteers that have helped! The exterior of our building was tuck-pointed, new windows installed, and the roof repaired. The walls and woodwork of the huge, upper 4-bedroom apartment received a fresh coat of paint and the rooms decorated with Slovenian artifacts, donated furniture, and a fully stocked kitchen and bath with more donations was completed.

This was accomplished in addition to the responsibilities to their elected officer position. What an extraordinary display of unselfishness and vigor! Many hours and weekends were given up. Their endeavors have made the road ahead less bumpy for the newly elected board to travel on.

The National Board

In June 2015, two second-term Officers and five new members were elected to the Slovenian Union of America National Board. One of the second-term Officers has since resigned.

Richard Tereselic of Branch 103 - Washington, D.C., and Chuck Debevec of Branch 50 - Cleveland, OH, have been named to the newly established SUA Research and Advisory

Committee. Their role is to research given topics, gather detailed information, and submit same to the National Board. To date, the Educational and Cultural Grant program has been written and published, research into staggered National Board positions, technology for the main office, and a new database program search have all been accomplished.

Home Office

Beginning in 2016, the Treasurer has assumed the bookkeeping duties of the VP of Home office, who resigned. The Board will be evaluating the part-time employment of one person to handle duties at the Heritage Museum, website maintenance, and some clerical support to the VP of Outreach and the Treasurer.

Treasurer's Report - Robert J. Kuhel

The year of 2015 was a cultural and heritage success, with the 2015 National Convention, the cookbook development/sale and the thousands of volunteer hours.

In 2015 the Corporation lost \$31,878 compared to a 2014 loss of \$8,896. During the year, \$22,000 was taken from the Legacy investments to fund the expenses in excess of revenues.

For the year 2016, the Board voted for a break-even budget. Several steps have been taken to achieve our goal. Expectations of continued cookbook sales, general donations, and membership renewals should achieve a break-even budget.

A detailed Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Statement is available for 2015, compared to 2014. These reports, as well as the financial information for the first quarter of 2016, will be distributed at the April National Board Meeting. The 2015 Federal and State reports will also be available for the April Board Meeting.

The Stonich Building - SUA's Home Office, Heritage Museum, and Upper Apartment

In early January 2016, Nancy Henkel, VP of Heritage and Culture, spent three days at the museum for the sole purpose of cleaning the back room of the basement. It took the brawn of Jim Lilek of Branch 20 - Joliet to dismantle the metal shelving, haul it up the stairs to the truck, and then reinstall these same shelves in the off-site storage. His job was not yet done; the containers containing five issues of each *Zarja - The Dawn*, 1929 to the present day, made the trip to the offsite storage. It was a tremendous undertaking. Mission accomplished! Kudos to Jim Lilek!

For my husband and me it was a two-day drive from Foley, AL, to Joliet, only to spend five days at the Cleanup Marathon. The supply room and the desks in the office were gone through. Three days were spent in the basement's largest room. There was one rule - no one could go up the stairs without carrying something. Unwanted items and items not salvageable were set out on the curb for the once-a-week Thursday morning garbage pickup. Pat Figurowski toted extra bags of garbage, to be disposed in the Figurowski garbage can. How blessed to have a recycling bin located on the street behind St. Joseph Church! The cleaning continued, as a second pile was disposed of appropriately. Thank you to Gene and Carol Novak for the use of their truck to haul away two more loads. Marathon workers were Diane Hohenwater, Nancy Henkel, Daniel Moreno, Robert Kuhel, Pat Figurowski, my husband, Gene Voelk, and myself! The big room is now 95% organized. Today, the building never looked finer!

It is sad; too much "stuff" had been brought down into the basement. As

we cleaned, out-of-date paper products, an assortment of over 600 pens and pencils, and items not needed or appropriate for museum storage were donated to St. Joseph Academy and delivered by Daniel Moreno. The museum is no place for stuff; only historical pieces, archives, and artifacts should be stored in the Stonich Building.

State of The Slovenian-American Table Cookbook/Reference Book
The Slovenian-American Table continues to receive compliments. Accolades go out to Diane Hohenwater, VP of Home Office, who volunteered to take on disseminating the books. It is understandable that Diane chose to be responsible for this project - receiving phone calls, e-mails, packing, addressing envelopes and boxes, trips to the post office and Fed Ex, depositing money, and I am sure I have missed some other task. This required a management system, only to be complicated by having more people involved. SUA applauds Diane for the insurmountable hours she has given to the project. To date, almost half the cookbooks have been sold.

"April's Showers of Dollars"
Fund-Raiser, Denise Bartlett,
Director of Special Projects
As of April 1, the fund-raiser is a success! Thank you to those who have contributed and to Denise Bartlett. Our members' thoughtful interest helps the SUA stay strong! The list of winners will be printed in the July/August 2016 *Zarja* issue. Good luck to ALL!

2019 SUA National Convention,
from Kathy Ferrante
People are saying "I'll be glad to help," and each name is being recorded! The Convention Committee is looking forward to the event and very excited to showcase Cleveland. Several fund-raisers are being studied. In three years we will pack our suitcases and head for Cleveland, Ohio.

SUA Website and Facebook Page
Technology and the computer are an essential part of our lives today. E-mail and texting keep the National Board up to the current hour! The SUA website tells the world who we are. Facebook is the world's largest social network. A slice of potica on a page brought over 2,000 viewers. Publish a new page, and within minutes the number of viewers begins clicking.

Volunteers are needed for both SUA's Website and Facebook. There are people of every age level that have the skill. Please step forward if you have a few extra hours per month to keep us updated. The SUA needs you!

Membership Representatives /
Branch Information
It is important to submit any changes to your Branch contact information as it appears on the SUA website. Composing an e-mail and having it returned can be unnerving, as are telephone numbers that have been disconnected. A new form sent to the Member Representatives needs to be placed in the Policy and Procedure Manual. Use this form to make corrections and then scan them, or send them by U.S. mail to SUA, 431 N. Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432-1703.

It was brought to my attention that a National Board member cannot be a Member Representative. The following Branches need to replace your Member Representatives: Branch 109 - Twin Cities, MN (Norm Setnicker), Branch 50 - Cleveland, OH (Cookie Maxin), and Branch 23 - Ely, MN (Mary Lou Voelk).

Grant
In November 2015, a grant was submitted to the Republic of Slovenia, to be used for the purchase of acid-free banker boxes for the safe-guarding of our oldest archives. On March 9, 2016, a letter arrived at the home office, alerting the SUA that we have been granted the money! To date, Carol Novak and Carole Terlep, both of Branch 20 - Joliet, have scanned the

original applications, etc. of 3,585 deceased members. With a minimum of five papers per member, 19,925 scans have been made. These two loyal volunteers have worked nine years in this endeavor. They can now pack up the documents they have so faithfully been scanning over several years.

Zarja - The Dawn
The publication of *Zarja* requires a network of people. Behind the scene action for any article includes: sending out briefs, overseeing the layout, artwork, and photography, proofreading all pages for both the Slovenian and English languages, word count, editing and re-writing articles, and deadlines - all steps to raise the profile of *Zarja*. When finishing one issue, the next is begun. There is no time off. The dedication of feature writers, Branch reporters, the editing staff, and to Bonnie Prokup and Debbie Pohar who put it all together - it is called *fortitude*. A Google translation calls it *predanost*. There is no finer heritage magazine in America!

SUA's 90th Anniversary
Minister Gorazd Zmavc of Slovenia, joined by General Consul Andrej Rode of Cleveland, and John Vidmar, Slovenian Consul of Chicago, will represent Slovenia in a visit to the Home Office and the Heritage Museum. The date set for their planned visit is Wednesday, June 7, 2016; the SUA National Board is planning an afternoon reception. From Joliet, the delegation will proceed to Lemont, the Slovenian Catholic-Cultural Center, where there will be a short cultural program and reception to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Slovenia's Independence. Awards will then be presented to the SUA in recognition of its 90th Anniversary, the Slovenian Catholic-Cultural Center on their 20th Anniversary, and the recognition of KSKJ.

Mary Lou Deyak Voelk
President

*Every family has a journey...
Every heritage has a journey...
Every country has a journey...*

*These three comprise the human need for our roots...
and we can only find them by*

LIVING OUR LEGACY

Zarja - The Dawn

The *Americanization* of a *Slovenian Surname*

by Bernadette Kovačič Fitzsimmons

As one of the longtime proofreaders of *Zarja - The Dawn* magazine, I often notice inconsistent spellings of Slovenian surnames, and make corrections accordingly. In most cases I've caught typographical errors, however, recently, in the March/April 2016 issue I corrected the surname spelling for Zupancis to Zupančič, the traditional spelling. Following my query, editor Bonnie Prokup sent an e-mail to the Sodac family member who wrote the article, and they verified that the family of Mary Dorothea Zupancis, her parents, brothers, and families all spelled this surname as Zupancis, and that every official document they had researched consistently had it spelled this way.

I wondered how this change in spelling came about. As with many Slovenian surnames, it had likely been Americanized somewhere along the way for easier spelling and pronunciation purposes, or simply could have been an error that was never corrected, and accepted by the family when they emigrated to the United States. One can imagine that perhaps the change in spelling happened at Ellis Island when this Zupančič family checked in, and an American official tried to make sense of how to spell the name, and transliterated it to Zupancis, thus the family began anew in a new world with a slight spelling variation. A common Americanized form in the United States is Zupanchich. The Zupančič surname is a variant of the surname Župan, a major, or the head of a town or a district government. It is interesting to note that in the Dictionary of Surnames, the Zupančič surname is most often found among residents living around the Republic of Slovenia's capital city of Ljubljana, and in surrounding areas in Novo Mesto, Krško, Kočevje, Istria, Gorica, Šmarje and Logatec.

According to information from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, the Zupančič surname is the fifth most common surname in Slovenia. Following this surname research, my interest has now been further

sparked to continue writing in future issues of *Zarja* about the meaning and transliterated forms of the most common Slovenian surnames, such as Novak, Horvat, Krajnc and my own maiden name, Kovačič, which ranks as the fourth most common surname in Slovenia, but is an uncommon name in the United States. My father, Erik, listened to my complaints about people struggling to pronounce our surname. He reminded me with his classic characteristic grin, that the Kovačič surname is a variant of the surname Kovač, a blacksmith, and the English translation for Kovačič would be Smithson. Looking back on this now, I figure my father expected me to mention this fact to others long before the rise in popularity of ancestry and family names, and to repeat the correct Slovenian pronunciation until whoever got it right, or at least close to right.

The topic of Americanization of Slovenian surnames can be amusing and intriguing, as most people are curious to learn about the origins of their ancestral heritage, and variations to original spellings of their surnames that may have happened through their family's history.

Stay tuned to future issues for the meaning and transliterated Slovenian names for the most common Slovenian surnames, such as easily pronounced Vidmar, and some less common names such as Setnikar, for which minor variations in spelling have been noted in *Zarja* articles to include Setniker and Setnicker.

Zarja readers, if you notice the inconsistent spelling of Slovenian surnames, please understand we have tirelessly proofed and verified as much as possible, and there are instances where different surname spelling variations may occur among families and extended families. For more informational resources about Slovenian surnames, go to www.slovenianunion.org, and under "More Reading Topics," click on Genealogy.

THANK YOU to all who entered SUA's "April's Showers of Dollars" Fund-Raiser.

Your participation is very much appreciated!

The fund-raiser was very successful because of YOU!

The "Winner's List" will appear in the July-August 2016 *Zarja - The Dawn* issue.

Weddings in Slovenia

For years, May and June have been favorite wedding months around the world. In Slovenia, a unique tradition has been popular for decades. In northern Gorenjska Region, in the midst of the Julian Alps, is beautiful Lake Bled, located north of Ljubljana. As you approach this beautiful area the town is on a tiny lake, and it appears to be almost in a fairytale setting. This is the only true island in this country; the mountains and alpine vistas surround the picturesque island, which makes for a lovely location for weddings. Couples and their wedding parties come from near and far on Saturdays each year, with warmer months being the most popular. The island can be visited any day, but Saturday is considered Brides' Day.



Weddings, both civil and religious, are performed in and around Bled, where many churches and hotels host wedding ceremonies and receptions. The most popular place is the Castle Bled, which is over 1,000 years old, with a spectacular view above the lake, town, and the little island. The Lord and Countess of the castle, in costume, greet the couple and guests at the entry, citing an old medieval greeting, and they then escort them up to the castle courtyard in a grand manner to Viteska Hall for the ceremony. After it is performed, guests line up and throw rice at the couple, an



old Slovene tradition for good luck. The groom then opens the first champagne bottle with a special sword, assisted by the Lord of the castle. Later, during the reception the couple is taken to the wine cellar to fill their first bottle of wine together and seal it with the castle stamp. It is to be opened on their first wedding anniversary. The newlyweds will also make their way to the castle print shop where, in an antique manner, print the symbolic marriage certificate with the castle stamp on it. They eventually make their way to Bled Island to perform another tradition. In the Baroque chapel, according to legend, by pulling the long rope which rings its bell will make your wish come true!

In the center of the tiny island on Lake Bled is the Church of Virgin Mary's Assumption; its walls are lined with frescoes, with scenes about the life of Mary. In ancient times, polytheism prevailed in the area and a temple to the goddess Ziva was



built there and stood until 795, when locals converted to Christianity. In 1465, a small gothic church was built there, and during the 17th century the church gained its Baroque appearance, plus a 99-step staircase leading to the top was constructed, which is used today.

To approach the island visitor's ride in small boats called "pletnas (see front cover)," hand-rowed by a strong oarsman. It is also said to bring much luck for the wedding couple if the groom carries his bride up the monumental 99-step steep staircase to the top; a true test of his strength and love for his wife. Brides and their grooms have been doing this for many generations, following this unique custom of their parents and grandparents. All day you hear the bell toll, echoing through the hills, and it makes you smile knowing of their wishes, with hopes they will all be granted.

Quite a day to remember forever!

- Nancy Supan Henkel



Celebrating 90 Years - The Slovenian Union of America 1926-2016

-by Mary Lou Deyak Voelk

Something to Think About in Our 90th Year

In searching for a biography of Marie Prisland, I came upon a book: *Making It In America, A Sourcebook on Eminent Ethnic Americans*, Elliot R. Barkan, 2001, 425 pages.



Names were listed in alphabetical order. Under the letter P was a bio of Marie Prisland, prefaced with the wording, "Slovenian, writer, and community activist." Also listed under the letter P: Thomas Paine, I.M. Pei, William Penn, Rudy Perpich, Mary Pickford, Sidney Poitier, and Colin Powell.

The author used four pages in the introduction to establish the explanation of the word "eminent" as used in the book title. I quote several sentences:

"Fame is not synonymous with eminence. It goes beyond awe, beyond admiration. Eminence arises from the esteem men and women receive for their accomplishments."

Lee Eisenberg, in his portrayal of eminent people, divides them into categories.

Trailblazers: Led us to new and sometimes unthinkable realizations.

Legends: We needed their greatness.

Visionaries: When they were finished, "We saw."

Advocates: Surmounted oppression and changed our ways of working and living.

After centuries of foreign rule, an impending war, and extremely hard times, Slovenians looked westward to America. From one of the smallest nations, Slovenes left their families and homeland. One of those persons boarding a ship to America was a young woman named Marie Prisland. Accompanying her during the height of this exodus were yours and my ancestors, immigrants with names like Zeleznik and Rifelj.

To Be Continued...

SUA Member Support/Zarja Subscription Form can be found at slovenianunion.org or by calling 815.727.1926

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Boris Furlan (1894-1957)

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 Kathleen Schroeder, 1, +Dorothy Brezonik
 Joseph Govednik, 13, SUA
 Erin Jex, 43, +Ann Grambow
 Dolores Lewis, 2, +Ann Kahover
 Jean Herbst, 20, +Joyce Korst, sister
 Marian Plovic, 71, Educational Grant
 Patricia Reddy, 43, +Amelia Zefran
 John Zemlan, 24, SUA
 Dorothy Kabara, 20, +Rudy & Jennie Dernulc
 Stan Mramor, 40, +Josephine Mramor
 Joyce Inga, 93, +Henry F. Ostanek
 Charleen Grube, 1, +Marianne Barbuch
 Mary Rogers, 3, +Mary Podboy
 Maxine Schmidl, 100, Cultural Grant - in honor of Margaret Schmidl
 Deanna Martin, 30, SUA
 Mary Ann Greiner, 10, SUA
 Cheryl Barkovich, 100, +Joseph & Edith Barkovich
 Marcia Jean Smith, 30, SUA

James Ebner, 89,
Honor of Branch 89
Alice Ebner, 89, +Margie, mom
Mary Cay Freiberg, 43,
+Catherine Lesatz, mother
Annamarie Bodisch, 93,
+Anna Bodisch, mother
Joan Steinman, 2, Educational Grant
Jennie Kovacic, 2,
Educational Grant
Beth Ann Manion, 2,
Educational Grant
Dolores Klepec, 20,
+Rev. George F. Klepec
Margrette Newhouse, 23,
Educational Grant -
+Margaret Preshiren
Virginia Sustarich, 13,
+Katie Judnich
Judith Ovnik, 2,
+Dolores Nauheimer
Edward Zalar, 42, +Anna J. Zalar
Julia Zalar, 50, SUA
Katherine Popich, 13, SUA
Barbara Sostakowski, 47, +Lovko,
Novak, & Sostakowski families
Myra Fisher, 100,
+Mary & Anton Andres
Stephanie Helm, 30, +Stefana Masel
Elizabeth Skul, 3, +Marilyn Kristan
Debra Williams, 5,
+Frances Yovanovich
Rick Trauner, 5, +Ernestine Trauner
Sheryl Thorpe, 5,
+Mary Vertacnik Fon
Aggie Haslup, 42, +Teresa Gorup
Sandra Grisez, 50,
+Josephine Simenc
Patricia O'Neill, 42, +Louis C. Fink
Matthew O'Neill, 42, +Mary Fink
Josephine O'Neill, 42,
+Alice Franetic
Bernice Montgomery, 20,
+Frank & Frances Oviyach
Marcelline Mills, 50, SUA
Patrick Ziegenhorn, 1,
+Johanna Suscha, charter
member of Branch 1
Menky Mata, 20,
+Sylvia & Harry Troop
Georgina Varani, 30, SUA
Karen Briscoe, 20, +Marlene Ancel
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+Yvonne McComber

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Terdic & Mary Rogel Marvic
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+Ed & Catherine Perko
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Honor of Suintina Spehar
Betty Hurst, 24,
+Henry Lushina, my dad
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+Frank & Angeline Brula
Natalie Ann Imhof, 100,
Educational Grant
Margaret Bokar, 50,
+Anna Kozan, mother &
Jo Anne Oberman, daughter
Carol Ann Harley, 100,
+Dorothy Petrich
Vida Habjan, 50, +Kovacic family
William Petric, 20, SUA
Margo Cowper, 20, Cultural Grant
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+Mr. & Mrs. Louis Kastelic, Sr.
Olga Feroni, 23, SUA
Alkovich Family, 16, +Mary
Alkovich & +Emma Yergovich
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Josephine Lustik, 20, SUA
Lainie Cargould, 40,
+Milo & Binnie Uehlein
Susan Byrne, 93,
+Anna J. Birsa-Sicinski &
Louise Horvat-Nasenbeny
Milena Nemeč, 93, SUA
Mia Branc, 93, +Nežka Novak
Barbara Urick, 35, +Anne Orazem
& Martha Gunderson
Nancy Benedict, 13,
+Mary Troya & Mary Klepec
Helena Orrego, 108,
+Valentin Leskovsek
Beverly Jackson, 13, Cultural Grant
- +Moreen Spencer
Lorraine Ovnik, 2, SUA
Dorothy Parola, 24, +Mary Kastigar
Cecelia Nuteson, 43,
+Cecilia Kozleuchar
Marcia Manning, 20, SUA
Judith and Christina Grozdanik, 50,
Honor of Vercek & Grozdanik
families
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+Helen Swietek, sister
Helen Adkisson, 23, SUA

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+Clarence & Mary Doles

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+Tony & Julia Klun
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+Erik A. Kovacic
Rosemary Kalfas, 50,
+Christine (Basča) Duche
Beverly France, 20, +Bill Bahor
Mayda Gravelie, 5, +Bojan Pozcek
Lucinda Soltesz, 109,
Educational Grant
Shirley Altieri, 100,
+Antonia Zehel Mento
Michele Quinn, 93, +Albina Sloat
Jeanne Janchar, 33, +Mary Shubitz
James Lah, 23, +Theresa Lah
Ginger Semenick, 5, +Zora
Mary Anne Kwiecinski, 35,
+Mary Krebs & Johanna Belay
Anton Skamperle, 99,
+Suzanne Skamperle
Wanda Kocinec, 99,
+Mr. & Mrs. Anton Skamperle
Deena Manna-Skamperle, 99,
+Dina & Tony Skamperle
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Kambic Gersick, grandmother
Sally Venne, 30, SUA

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Branch 13,
+Elizabeth "Betty" Doherty
Janyce Eviston, 13, SUA
Bernadine Rutkowski, 20,
+Marg & Tony Grahack
Clare Mihelich, 20,
Educational Grant
Kathleen Riordan, 35,
Honor of Jeanette Korsman
Marie Tiedmann, 2, +Mary Koscak
Bernice Krasovec, 3, +Mary Hiza
Bernice Metesh, 20, *Zarja*
Eileen Kochevar, 20,
+Anton & Irene Kochevar
Jeannette Zaman Elish, 10,
+Jennie Zaman
Cheryl Greco, 30,
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Sophie Staut, 102,
Honor of Sophie Rifelj

Lynn Zalokar, 93,
 +Marilyn (Kovacic) Zalokar
 Kristina Steller, 100, +Frank Kapel
 Lauren Stiglich-McFarland, 20,
 Honor of Alice Stiglich
 Fran Hrastar, 108,
 +Frances Zupancic
 Jane Polnaszek Gray, 20,
 +Barbara R. Kociuba
 Melissa Tevsh Lacasse, 1,
 +Joseph & Mary Tevsh
 William Rogina, 20, SUA
 Hank Michalesko, 20,
 +Elfrieda Herbst
 Bernice Ceglar, 35, +Edward Ceglar
 Joanne Ponikvar, 54, +Rose Racher
 William Kobe, 20,
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 Stephanie Polutnik, 40,
 +Francine Pavlovic
 Michael Vidmar, 20,
 +Adrianna Vidmar
 Nicholas Vidmar, 20,
 +Adrianna Vidmar
 Josef Laposa, 5,
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 Florence Smorkol, 24, SUA
 Bernadine Gudac, 20, SUA
 Kathleen Marie Starcevich, 3,
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 John Behrman, 16, SUA
 Helene Behrman, 16, SUA
 Virginia Bestic, 55,
 +Frances Juvancic
 Susan Glavan, 20, SUA
 JoAnn Rustik, 99, +Frances Vessell
 Elaine Milar, 13,
 +Mary Bluth Yerman
 Nancy Criss, 30, Cultural Grant
 Sharon Umek, 20, Educational Grant
 Darlene Zevnik, 1, +Ed Zevnik
 Rose Kellett, 89,
 +Mary Dusak, mother
 Leopolda Schutte, 23, SUA
 Amelia Massaia, 93, +my mom
 Joann Fabian Curtis, 13,
 +Anna Fabian
 Haley Benedict, 13, +Sophie Troya
 Ashley Benedict, 13, +Ann Nanut

Susan O'Block Kellen, 26, Honor of
 Phyllis Bergent O'Block
 Sharon Brady, 24, +Helen Swietek
 Josephine Brady, 24,
 +Helen Swietek
 Mary Lou Vidergar, 100, +Mary
 Lipovec Glad & Mary Vidergar
 Diane Varney, 50,
 +Jennie Fitzthum, mother
 Gabriella Goritchan, 35,
 +Mary Peterka, mother
 Sharon Gillen, 50, +Ann Turcek
 Marion Volpe, 30,
 +Agnes & John Zornik
 Mary Louise Icenhour, 23,
 Honor of Rose Ann Mavetz Fritz
 Terry Kamnikar, 89, +Kernz family
 Steve Kamnikar, 89,
 +Ann Kamnikar
 Jerry Lomshek, 100, SUA
 Anna Lomshek, 100, SUA
 Sandra Rodeghero, 20,
 +Marie Juricic
 Arlene Considine, 109,
 +Martin Teshak
 Kathleen Kopfensteiner, 2,
 Educational Grant
 Linda Orazem, 35,
 +Anne M. Orazem
 Sophia Kern, 71, Educational Grant
 Lydia Marquardt, 20, Cultural Grant
 Christopher Banich, 89, SUA
 Mary (Mitzi) Irene Banich, 89, SUA
 Jay Komater, 89, SUA
 Megan Rehn, 89, SUA
 Adam Banich, 89, SUA
 Nancy Jagodnik, 50, +Marie Beck
 Jean Zebot, 103, SUA

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 Beverly Batic-Sciarrabba, 50,
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Suzanne Pecharich, 99,
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 Betty Wiley, 3, SUA
 Jenny Collins, 13, SUA
 Bekki Prokup-Root, 24,
Zarja - +John Pohar, grandfather
 Barbi Prokup, 24,
Zarja - +John Pohar, grandfather
 Agnes Glavich, 3, SUA
 Mary Jane Hiti, 50,
 Educational Grant
 Margie Tompros, 103,
 +Amelia & Louis Oswald and in
 honor of Walter L. Oswald
 Charlene Larson, 20, SUA
 Willa Jean Dellinger, 24, SUA
 Johnathan Kamnikar, 89,
 +Steve Kamnikar, grandpa
 Lydia Kamnikar, 89,
 +Steve Kamnikar, grandpa
 Alexis Tanita, 100,
 Educational Grant
 Cynthia Tanita, 100,
 +Frances K. Kinkopf
 Barbara Krogulski, 24,
 +Mary Krogulski

New Members Welcome!

Nora Frances Fon, 5
Alkovich Family, 16
Louis Petrich, 23
Pat Wlodarchak, 24
Charles Strimlan, 26
Grace Wiegand, 26
Nancy Burnett, 30
Rebecca Opaskar, 30
Allison Owen, 33
Ruth Bistak, 40
Thomas Filipovic, 50
Eden Marilyn LaJoie, 99
Anna Marloft, 99
Tisa Weisz, 100

The Education of Slovenian Culture and Heritage

One Branch - One Member at a Time

Every day, our Slovenian Union of America members are given opportunities to make a difference, whether through cultural events, research, preservation, travel, culinary or craft classes, community service, or traditional prayer. We celebrate each and every member for their dedication and compassion to honor and preserve our Slovenian legacy.



Branch 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

5th Annual Slovenian Heritage Celebration

Zarja Staff Writer David G. Sodac, Branch 89 - Oglesby, IL bd sodac@gmail.com

What if You Throw a Slovenian Heritage Celebration and Nobody Comes?

As you entered the old, landmark, corner bar on Walnut Street, you could hear the melodious strains of energetic polka music, the hubbub of lively conversations, and an air of family and friends' joyous camaraderie. You were greeted by costumed, village ladies who stood in front of a stunning arrangement of bright, red carnations, the national flower of Slovenia. Nearby was a table offering items that you could purchase, including Slovenian Union of America t-shirts, the newest best-selling cookbook, *The Slovenian-American Table*, and complimentary copies of the latest March/April 2016 *Zarja - The Dawn* magazine. The SUA Branch 89 of Oglesby, Illinois, was at their finest, hosting their 5th Annual Slovenian Heritage Celebration, a special homespun activity for both their members and interested visitors from the nearby communities.



After purchasing a draw of cold “pivo,” I settled down at a nearby table with a group of ladies who were instrumental in brain-storming the inaugural “Slovenian Heritage Celebration” five years earlier. Barbara Bruch, Alice Ebner, and Mitzi Banich were glowing about the turnout and excitement that their committee’s frantic baking and planning was generating. Mitzi shared that they once were concerned that their Slovenian Union of America (SUA) Branch was stagnating, offering the same old activities that mainly attracted women to their monthly meetings and membership. They also wanted to interest men into joining the SUA as it had transitioned from the Slovenian

Women’s Union of America (originally the Slovenian Ladies’ Union) into today’s all inclusive SUA. Alice wisely remarked that to attract men to an activity, they needed to consider locating a setting and an activity that would entice them to attend; her husband, Jim Ebner, heartedly agreed. A friendly landmark tavern, offering reasonably priced beer, might be just the place. The ladies laughed as they recalled the original planning committee’s worries of, “What if nobody comes?!” They had no reason to worry; the Oglesby - Branch 89 was warmly rewarded. The community had loved the concept, the event was well-attended, and their membership grew... and the men joined, myself included.



The tavern site, that has hosted all five of the Heritage Celebration events, today is named Claudette’s, after its newest owner, Claudette Magnoni. Claudette was bestowed with the obvious dignity of being an honorary “Slovenian” for the day. The tavern itself has its roots in Slovenian heritage. Her creative establishment was once two separate



taverns, built before the prohibition era, that were nestled amongst some 20 other taverns, all constructed just on the south side of Walnut Street, back in the early 1900s. They were the watering holes that quenched the thirst of the immigrant Slovene men who worked the coal mines and limestone quarries on the north side of the street. (The north side of Walnut Street was the mine property owned by a man of deep temperance, and there were to be no saloons to entice his miners on his side of the street.) The corner tavern once was “Slim’s Tap,” and the adjoining tavern was “Pee-pee’s Tap.” The two landmark taverns were leased out by a local beer brewery and later both were owned for years by the son of a Slovenian immigrant, Frankie Zahrastnic, and his wife, Reggie. Claudette purchased the properties in 1999 and then had an archway constructed to adjoin the two buildings into one tavern, with a side room for occasions such as the Heritage Celebration.

True to Slovenian tradition, there was a free buffet of ethnic foods, including homemade smoked sausage, cheeses, poticas, and strudels. If the samplings didn’t satisfy your hunger, then you could purchase raffle tickets from Branch 89 members, Julie Harbeck, Rose Bell, and Terri Kamnikar, for your own take-home baskets of strudels, sausages, or Flossie Argubright’s famous potica. Celebrating customers were everywhere. Rose Swietek reminisced about how it reminded her of the National Picnics held in Slovenia when



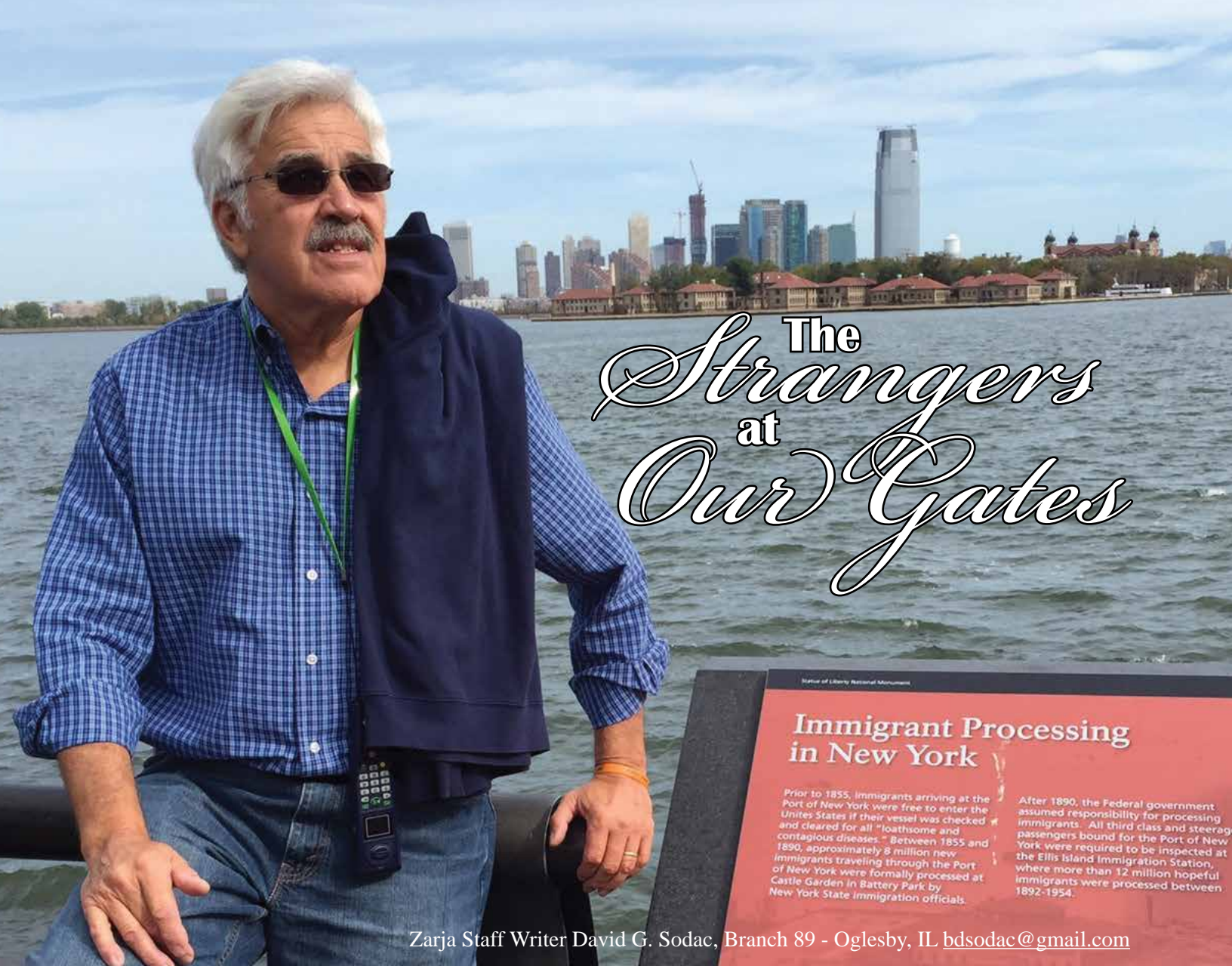
she had visited in the late 1990s. Native born Slovenian, Anica Lukac of Novo Mesto, now of Putnam, IL, promised to join SUA Branch 89, “as they just have so much fun.” A gentleman of mixed French-Canadian, German, and Native Indian descent says he loves to come to the event for the wonderful ethnic foods. First-timers, Rose Wiese Piltaver and her daughter, Sharon Butts, heard about the event and had to come to find out what it was all about. Rose discovered a 1946 high school classmate at the event, whom she hadn’t seen in years. Delores Spelich of the neighboring LaSalle - Branch 24, was proudly showing off her beautiful, handmade, Slovenian dress and outfit that was appliqued with bobbin lace, meticulously crafted by her grandparents.

The 5th Annual Slovenian Heritage Celebration was once again a tremendous success. “*The goal has never been to make money,*” says Barbara Bruch, “*but as a venue to broaden new members and as a celebration for its existing members.*” This year’s successful event was planned and carried out by Branch members, Mitzi Banich, Annabelle Bryant, Ona Rehn, Alice Ebner, Nancy Henkel, Fran Morrison, Mary Jane Gunderson, and Barbara Bruch.

Zivijo! Well done Branch 89! The warm and friendly heart of the Slovenian spirit was highly showcased at your Heritage Celebration event!



To be featured here, e-mail your *One Branch-One Member* photo as well as its description to: wprokup@aol.com.



The Strangers at Our Gates

Zarja Staff Writer David G. Sodac, Branch 89 - Oglesby, IL bd sodac@gmail.com

My wife and I finally found ourselves visiting New York City. Of course, being so enmeshed in ancestry and genealogy, ranking number one on our tourist bucket list was to experience both Liberty and Ellis Islands. So we studied the Metro subway schedule that would whisk us away from Brooklyn to lower Manhattan and began our nostalgic journey. After arriving at historic Battery Park, we boarded an early ferry to take us out of the port and into the Bay. We meandered up to the crowded, upper deck for the most optimal view, and seated ourselves. It was a picture-perfect, crisp, autumn morning with the promise of a warming sunshine. Suddenly you could sense the passengers' anxiety levels escalating as we approached Liberty Island, sheltered between the shores of New York and New Jersey. All around us you could hear a rising cacophony of unfamiliar and varied foreign voices. It felt like we were the only English-speaking passengers aboard this ship. Was this what it was like for my grandparents all those years ago? It was amusing to hear all the unaccus-

tomated chatter, all sounding so enthusiastic. There seemed to be a growing anticipation from every passenger as we pulled into view of America's beautiful welcoming lady, this iconic symbol of freedom, the Statue of Liberty. Adults and children alike rambled closer to the railing almost as in an orchestrated timing. Momentarily, fearing that the boat would tilt sharply with all the weight of its shifting passengers, I found myself grasping the bench that I was patiently sitting on. Such excitement arose from the boat's open deck; passengers from the deck below came spewing forth from the staircase to get a more open view of the monument. The resplendent, weathered copper, iconic statue came into full view. Lady Liberty was awash in sunshine that morning of our visit and appeared radiant in her greenish-hued gown.

The Statue of Liberty was a gift from the people of France, intended to commemorate the enduring friendship between the peoples of the two nations. The French sculptor,



Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi, created the statue out of sheets of hammered copper, while Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel, the man behind the famed Eiffel Tower, designed the statue's skeletal steel framework. The Statue of Liberty was then shipped to the United States in sections and erected atop an American-designed pedestal on a small island in Upper New York Bay, now known as Liberty Island. President Grover Cleveland dedicated the statue in 1886. Over the years, the statue has greeted over 12,000,000 immigrants; that's approximately one-fourth of all entering immigrants arriving to America. Today, the Statue of Liberty remains an enduring symbol

of freedom and democracy, as well as one of the world's most recognizable landmarks.

Experiencing this national treasure triggered an emotion that caused me to reflect thoughtfully on my forefathers. My mind quickly flashed back to what my grandparents might have experienced and felt well over 100 years ago, as they culminated their steamship voyages and wondered what was to happen to them in this next chapter of their lives. Were there tears streaming down their faces, or shouts of joy from their lips as they came into view of the welcoming, uplifted arm of the Lady of freedom holding her shimmering torch? Did they sense that this torch would represent a country that they hoped would brighten their lives? My paternal grandmother described her voyage to American as being in a washtub filled with people. She was so ill during the trip, but when she first saw "The Lady," she smiled. Most likely it was a mixture of awe and relief that land was finally ahead!



My parents were first generation American-born of full-blooded immigrant Slovenes. My maternal grandmother, Antonja Papež, born in the village of Ratje and raised within the duchy of Gottschee, apprehensively arrived in America to meet a potential husband, an arrangement suggested by an aunt already residing in Cleveland. She arrived in the Port of New York in May of 1900. After meeting and disappointing her potential suitor in Cleveland, she boarded a train for La Salle, Illinois. She would meet and marry my maternal grandfather, Matevž Banko, within the year. Matevž was my only grandparent to not arrive through Ellis Island. He departed from his home village of Hinje, Slovenia, and arrived through the Port of Baltimore, Maryland, in March of 1896 to join up with his older brother, Jakob, laboring as a miner in LaSalle, Illinois. "Matt" Banko died early at the age of 44. My grandmother then married her second husband, Mathias Muhič (Muhich), another Slovenian immigrant from the village of Kal. He also was processed through the center on Ellis Island in April 1910. Retracing all my immigrant relatives' footsteps and shadows through the Immigration Center's stairwells and rooms, as they might have experienced, just had to be undertaken.

My paternal grandfather, Matija Sodec, arrived at Ellis Island in February 1905. He had emigrated from the village of Sobenja vas aboard the S.S. Stuttgart that sailed out of the Port of Bremen, Germany. After being processed through immigration, he boarded a train for Chicago. Four years later, my paternal grandmother, Marija Pilt-

aver, from the village of Krška vas, boarded the S.S. Bretagne moored in the Port of Havre, France. She arrived in the Port of New York in August of 1909, anxiously waiting for a reunion with her only sister, Terezija, living in La Salle, Illinois. She would eventually be introduced to her future husband, Matija Sodec, through a relative of her sister's husband.





Our forefathers weren't afforded the opportunity of docking and disembarking to visit this Liberty Island and tour the statue with audio-phones, as you do today. Instead, the incoming immigrants stream on by to the processing center on Ellis Island. The untold fears those immigrants must have felt and the anxious hours they spent not knowing if they would be allowed to enter America, the Promised Land, or be rejected and returned to their homelands. All first and second-class passengers received preferential treatment. They were inspected and processed aboard the ships as they were anchored out in the deeper waters near Ellis Island and then allowed to enter America. All third class or steerage immigrant passengers were given tags with the ship's registry information and then ushered onto barges or ferries that took them onto Ellis Island to begin the often humiliating processing. They were arranged in long single lines and walked up the steps to the spacious baggage room and encouraged to leave their baggage for pick up later after the inspection process. Then they were marched up the grand staircase to the Great Hall or the Registry Room where they waited in long lines of mazes for medical and legal inspections to determine if they were fit for entry into the United States. My wife and I followed the steps my immigrant grandparents would have taken. We walked up the grand staircase and imagined what it was like for them to not know what would happen next. From the Great Hall we entered the medical rooms where chalk marks would be placed by the inspecting doctors on the immigrants' clothing: B-Back; C-Conjunctivitis; CT-Trachoma; E-Eyes; F-Face; FT-Feet; G-Goiter; H-Heart; Hernia; L-Lameness; N-Neck; P-Physical and Lungs; PG-Pregnancy; S-Senility; SC-Scalp; SI-Special Inquiry; X-Suspected Mental Defect; X (circled)- Definite signs of Mental Defect. From 1900 to 1914, the peak years of Ellis Island's operation, some 5,000 to 10,000 people would pass through this immigration station every day. Language interpreters were used for the interrogation process. Approximately 80 percent successfully passed through the processing in a matter of hours, but others could be held in infirmaries and dormitories until

treatments could be prescribed or decisions made. Many of those who successfully completed the inspection process joined the melting pot of cultures making up New York. Others traveled by barge to railroad stations in Hoboken or Jersey City, New Jersey, on their way to destinations across the country.

Ellis Island wasn't always the New York home to the immigration-processing center. Castle Garden was the original state immigration depot operated by the State of New York, which was built on the Battery in lower Manhattan and opened in 1855. Amongst much controversy of mismanagement, Castle Garden was turned over to the federal government to operate the inspection procedures and administrative handling. Construction of the first federal immigration processing station would be built on an expanded Ellis Island. To accommodate the construction plans, the existing island's size had to be doubled to over six acres. The ironic fact to this writer is that the land on which all these millions of immigrants were processed, was built upon past incoming ship's ballast material and landfill of subway tunnels. Ballast is the material that is used to provide stability to a vehicle or structure. Drawing a comparison, it would seem that all these millions of immigrants, including approximately 200,000 of our Slovene ancestors, became the "ballast material" that helped to provide the stability, structure, and industrial expansion to today's America.

Even though over 40 percent of Americans have at least one ancestor who was processed through Ellis Island, they weren't necessarily welcomed with open arms and a lit torch at America's gates. Heated political discussions on immigration were as contentious then as we are hearing in today's presidential candidate debates. There has been a long period of anti-immigrant sentiment that was pervasive throughout America. People worried that the big cities would become foreign territories. The immigrants were often viewed as Europe's discarded waste with expressed fears that they would become financial burdens and a drain on our social services. Newspaper editorials, and print publications were effectively alarming people. As early as 1885, Rev. Josiah Strong, one of the leading social and religious voices of the time, wrote a controversial book entitled, *Our Country*, that rallied oppositional attitudes across the nation. In response to growing sentiment, the government tightened up regulations on who could or could not enter America. They drafted a listing of non-desirables which included, "idiots, insane persons, paupers, and persons likely to become public charges, persons suffering from a loathsome or a dangerous disease, persons who have been convicted of a felony, or other infamous crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, such as polygamists." Fears lurked that all the thousands of immigrants entering our shores would erode the American way of life. In 1896, a Chicago magazine printed a political cartoon on its pages that visually expressed the sentiment of the times. The cartoon portrayed Uncle Sam holding his nose in disgust and standing guard at the gate to the Capitol Building. An unkempt immigrant stands outside the gate asking, "Can I come in?" He is illustrated with excess baggage and has labels all over his clothing marked with the words of Poverty, Disease, Sabbath Desecration, Anarchy, and Suppression. In the caption Uncle Sam responds, "I s'pose you can, there is no law to keep you out." A few years later, it didn't help public sentiment when the son of a Polish Catholic immigrant assassinated President William McKinley in

1901, refueling Americans' fears and creating increased tension on immigration policies. In retrospect, it astonishes me that our immigrant forefathers could endure all the hardships,



verbal ridicule, and belittling comments they experienced as they tried to settle into the new American way of life.

With all of today's growing sentiments of building walls and closing "gates" to protect us from illegal aliens and refugees, maybe we need to be reminded of the inspiring words of the Jewish American poet, Emma Lazarus. In 1883, she penned the famous poem on the Statue of Liberty, entitled, *The New Colossus*. The poem was used in an effort to raise funds for the Statue of Liberty's pedestal, and a plaque with the poem welcomes immigrants from across the world to the United States. The poem describes a woman, "Mother of Exiles," petitioning other lands to give her their unwanted, "your tired, your poor... the homeless, tempest-tossed to me...". By enthusiastically welcoming other nations' outcasts and wanderers, the poem gives the Statue of Liberty special symbolism for new immigrants. It is reprinted here in hopes that it will once again inspire us to reflect on our own immigrant histories and consider welcoming the so-called wretched refuse of huddled masses, yearning to breathe free in our great land of America. Our visit to Liberty and Ellis Islands seemed very timely indeed, and without question, most inspirational. If you haven't already made the pilgrimage, please add the islands to your bucket list of places to experience. Retrace the steps your ancestors took, as they became one of the strangers who stood at our sea-washed, sunset gates.

The New Colossus by Emma Lazarus

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

Member of the Year

Slovenian Union of America

MARY PATRICIA (PAT) RYAN Branch 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin



Mary “Pat” has been a member of SUA/SWUA for 75 years! Her membership originated with former Branch 108 - Calumet, MI, where Pat lived with her parents, Charles and Stephanie (Kobe) Ryan, and her brothers, John and Charles. She transferred to Branch 1 years ago.

Pat’s father ran the local funeral home, which was started over 120 years ago by Pat’s grandfather. Pat’s mother was the Treasurer of Branch 108. Pat recalls her mother returning home from meetings and not talking with family until she had her Treasurer duties completed. She kept the money and her records in a cigar box!

Branch 108 had a drill team and Pat was their Majorette. The group of young girls (about 16) marched in local parades. Slovenian pride in action! Much like Branch 1, the Calumet Branch was associated with a Catholic parish, St. Joseph’s. Their members, like so many of the early SWUA Branches, were Slovenian women who gathered socially within the community. Not all members spoke English, so they learned from each other.

Pat earned a degree in Pre-Med from Michigan Tech. She moved to Sheboygan in the early 1950s. Pat worked with the Sheboygan Health Department until her retirement. She has a real love for music; she is a member of Ss. Cyril & Methodius (SSCM) choir. In 1976, the

SSCM choir traveled to Calumet to perform a bicentennial concert and sing a Latin Mass because of Pat’s connection to her hometown parish. The choir put on a great show and choir members remember the trip fondly.

Pat is one of Branch 1’s “interpreters” when it comes to translating Slovenian to English. She is a great resource for us and lends her wonderful sense of humor to most everything she does. Branch 1 is lucky to have her and proud to name her our “Member of the Year!”

BARBARA KARLINGER Branch 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Barbara is the child of Rudolph and Mary (Erjavec) Karlinger and has three siblings: Richard, Michael, and Mary Therese (also a Branch 3 member). Barbara’s grandfather, John Erjavec, emigrated from the village of Zapotok in the municipality of Ig, Slovenia. Her grandmother, Josephine (Tekavec) Erjavec, and paternal grandfather, Rudolph Karlinger, also emigrated from Slovenia. Barbara’s paternal grandmother, Barbara (Bukovac) Karlinger, emigrated from Bubnjarci, Croatia, a village on the Slovenian border near Metlika. Barbara’s great-aunt, Frances Mikatich, was a founding member of Branch 3.

Barbara was born in Pueblo, but lived in Lincoln, Nebraska, from the age of three to seven. She graduated from St. Mary’s School, Pueblo Catholic High School, and the University of Southern Colorado (now Colorado State University – Pueblo or CSUP). Most of her career was spent working for Pueblo School District 60. When Barbara retired, she was the Senior Buyer purchasing for the school district and the University of Southern Colorado.



Outside of her social activities with extended family and friends, Barbara has been active in a variety of community groups. She is a lifetime member of Beta Sigma Phi sorority and has been the Democratic Chairwoman in her precinct for years. At St. Mary’s parish, Barbara previously served on the parish council, on the finance committee, and as a lector. Barbara has been a member of Branch 3 since childhood and is a *Zarja* co-reporter for Branch 3.

Barbara is a wonderful cook, and following her Grandmother Erjavec’s recipes, she enjoys making strudel, *štruklji*, *ahmojt*, and *žganci*. In her free time Barbara enjoys collecting cookbooks, going on trips to Colorado Springs with friends, visiting family in Denver, and trying her luck at the slot machines in Cripple Creek or Blackhawk.

MARTIN (TEENY) LAMBERT Branch 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana



Teeny grew up in Haughville, a neighborhood settled by Slovenians in Indianapolis. His parents, Martin and Anna (Kucjan) Lambert, emigrated to America at the turn of the 19th century.

Teeny met Theresa (Tootsie) Bayt – “the love of his life” - as a child growing up in Haughville. Her parents, Filip and Antonia, also emigrated from Slovenia and settled in Haughville. Teeny and Theresa both attended Holy Trinity Grade School together, and when he returned home after serving in the U.S. Navy during WWII, they married. They had 8 children, 15 grandchildren, and thus far, 14 great-grandchildren. Theresa passed away in 2000. She and her mother, Antonia, were lifelong members of the SWUA.

This May, Teeny will be celebrating his 90th birthday and can still polka with the best! During nice weather you will find him on the golf course with one of his children, getting in 18 holes. “Wind or rain, sleet or shine,” he walks daily for one hour in his garage. He always says, “If I get dizzy, I just go the other way.” No day would be complete without recitation of

his rosaries and litanies of prayers.

Teeny attends the annual SUA Christmas dinner at the Iron Skillet, where he catches up with old friends and totally enjoys the chicken! He can also be seen at the Annual Pork Dinner cooked by the SUA members at the Slovenian National Home.

Teeny lives independently in a condo in Brownsburg, IN. He readily shares his Slovenian heritage with his family and friends by telling them stories of how it was growing up in Haughville, talking about growing up on Slovenian foods, his school days, and childhood friends, but mostly how Theresa was “the love of his life.” Congratulations Teeny, our Member of the Year!

PATRICK WELSH Branch 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Patrick started coming to the SUA meetings when his domestic partner took the position of Vice President, and soon Patrick became a member of Branch 20 in Joliet. Pat immediately joined in the festivities and all the work that goes with them.

We can always count on Pat to be there to lend a hand. Whether it’s putting up decorations, taking them down, or doing dishes in the kitchen, Pat is always ready to help. With Pat’s pleasant demeanor and helpful personality he has become a well-liked and wonderful addition to our membership.

Pat enjoys showing his antique tractor at various tractor shows around the area and taking it easy on his days off from hauling gravel for Bill Kobe Trucking. We feel Pat is very deserving of being our Member of the Year for 2016!



OHIO Members

At the Ohio Regional Convention last October, I was voted the new Regional President, along with Debbie Duris as the new Regional Vice President. I am honored to be able to serve the members of SUA in this position. I am looking forward to contacting all of the Ohio Branches this summer and hopefully seeing many of our members.

I would love to hear from the Ohio Branch members. I can be reached on my cell 330.730.8951 or by e-mail at kjferrante@gmail.com. My address is 178 Gaylord Dr., Munroe Falls, OH 44262 Contact me in any manner that is easiest.

- Kathleen Ferrante, Ohio Regional President

Member of the Year

Slovenian Union of America

GABRIELLA GORITCHAN - JOANNE PLEVELL - MARLYNN (MARCY) KOSKI **Branch 35 - Aurora, Minnesota**



Gabriella was born on September 22, 1936, the daughter of John and Mary Peterka of Aurora, MN. She graduated from Aurora High School and the Minnesota School of Business in Minneapolis. Gabriella married John Goritchan at the Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Aurora, MN. They have a daughter and granddaughter. They lost one granddaughter, Anne Gabriella, in 1996. Gabriella has been a Branch 35 member for 30 years and was our recording secretary for 13 years.



Joanne was born in 1935 in Eveleth, MN, to Louis and Jennie (Turk) Putzel. In 1954 she graduated from Aurora High School and married Bill Gauthier. They raised one daughter, Debbie.

They resided in Virginia, MN, and then moved to Babbitt, MN, where Bill ran a gas station. Joanne worked in the office at the hospital in Ely, MN. After Bill became ill and passed away, Joanne and Debbie moved back to Virginia where Debbie started school. Many weekends were spent in Aurora, where Joanne found many new friends who introduced her to John Plevell, whom she married in 1969. Joanne's mother-in-law encouraged

her to join Branch 35. She enjoys the meetings and held the position of Treasurer for a time.



Marcy was born in Biwabik, MN, to Louis and Angeline (Anzelc) Karish, the middle child of three. She attended school in Biwabik and graduated from the Minnesota School of Business in Minneapolis. In 1957, Marcy married Bill Koski. They lived in Aurora and raised five children. They were married for over 50 years when Bill passed away in 2008. Marcy is a longtime member of Holy Rosary Catholic Church and the American Legion Auxiliary. Her Slovenian heritage has always been a big part of her life. Marcy has been a member of Aurora Branch 35 since 1979.

THE SENIOR LADIES Branch 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

In past years it has been difficult to pick just one individual to honor as our Member of the Year. That is because our Branch is blessed with dozens of active, helpful, supportive members. We are especially thankful for our senior ladies who have given decades of support to our many Branch activities! Therefore, this year we are pleased to honor our female members age 80 years young and above. Our ladies have served in every officer position, and have served as our bakers, chauffeurs, chefs, committee chairpersons, musicians, singers, speakers, supporters, and are the all-around strength and determination ambassadors in continuing our efforts to spread Branch 43's Slovenian spirit. Most of these dear members are Slovenian, and some are "Slovenian through marriage." We appreciate all of YOU - our treasured senior ladies of our Branch!



Front Row (left to right):

Sophie Bevsek, Rose Zuponcic, and Irene Kunovar.

Back Row (left to right):

Rose Chepeck, Shirley Vidmar, Loretta Urh, Tillie Skusek, Mary Bregant, and June Znidorka.

Not pictured - Lillian Hartmann, Dolores Ivanchich, Helen Prijic, Dorothy Rozman, Fannie Smole, Rita Starich, Claire Ujeich, Connie Vidmar, and two dozen supporters.

LIZ GROSS Branch 93 - New York, New York

Liz's Slovenian maternal grandparents, Rozi and Johan Martinčič, lived on a farm in Otsego County, upstate New York, with their only child, Rose, who married Hans Gross. The young couple lived in New York City where Liz and her brother, John, grew up. The children spent summers on their grandparents' farm and John and Liz still say, "How did Grandma say that?" as they remember the Slovenian they spoke with her. To this day, Liz stays in touch with her extended Slovenian family across the USA, also speaking often with her friends who had family members active in the Straw Hats industry in New York. Liz started her career at Steuben Glass and has always lived in New York City.

Liz is an active member of the East End Temple Sisterhood and SUA. Liz is a keen researcher, developing a Slovenian "Trivial Pursuit" and Slovenian current events quizzes for our events, along with baking cupcakes for children to decorate at *Otroški dan*, children's day. For Slovenia's first World Cup game in 2010, Liz found a sports bar that was open at 7 a.m. The New York Times featured a photo of close to thirty Slovenian sports enthusiasts who attended and cheered on Slovenia against Algeria, and Slovenia won!

Liz's personal interests are wide-ranging, most importantly focused on her devotion to art and music and the study of languages. She will find out when a Slovenian musician will be performing and organize ticket sales for her friends. Liz has studied French, Italian, and German and has spent many years studying Slovene. She is an enthusiastic participant in our Slovene Conversation Online class and Slovenian Study Buddy teams, bringing her extraordinary research skills to understanding the finest grammar intricacies of this Slavic language and making detailed presentations to our group. Most of all, Liz is a wonderful friend!



Liz with her Slovenian maternal grandparents, Rozi and Johan Martinčič, Otsego County, c. 1941.

BILL ZERIEL Branch 99 - Lemont, Illinois



Branch 99 proudly nominated Bill Zerial as its Member of the Year. Bill was born on the east side of Cleveland, OH, and currently resides in Chicago. His parents, William and Anna Zerial, were of Slovenian descent and Bill is proud to say he is 100% Slovenian. He has one sister, Ann Marie Bruno, living in Parma, Ohio, and all holidays are spent together with family eating Slovenian foods.

As a child, Bill remembered spending a lot of time in the St. Vitus neighborhood, and at his grandmother's home on 62nd and Glass (now Lausche Avenue). He used to walk to take streetcars with straw seats into town, and remembered it was a lot of fun. He also would walk to the poultry shop on St. Clair Street to pick out the chicken for their Easter dinner.

Bill's grandmother cooked and baked for weddings, so his mother learned how to make noodles, potica, strudel, *krofe*, and *flancati*. He would often help in the kitchen and learned Slovenian cooking. He and his sister would shell walnuts; a job he didn't enjoy. These days he is relieved that he can purchase shelled walnuts, since he enjoys making potica and *štruklje*.

Bill is a member of several organizations: SUA, Slovenian Catholic Center, KSKJ Lodge 25, ALM Lodge 15, Slovenian Genealogy Society International, and Friends of Slovenian National Home, Inc. It is important to him to preserve the Slovenian traditions and customs brought over by his grandparents. He enjoys listening and dancing to polka music, and will even bring his ipad with Slovenian music whenever he volunteers in the kitchen at the Slovenian Catholic Center.

Bill has traveled extensively across the states, three times by car from the east to the west coast, and many times by air. His first trip to Slovenia, Yugoslavija, under communist regime, was in 1966 and was a trip he will never forget. He has traveled to Europe and will be going to Slovenia in September for the fourth time on the *ZarjaFest 2016* tour.

Member of the Year

Slovenian Union of America



PAUL JENSEN Branch 100 - Southern California

Paul was born in Detroit, Michigan, and raised in Royal Oak, a suburb of Detroit. He joined the Navy when he was 18 and began his journey into adulthood. Most of his career was in the airline industry, employed with a commercial airline where he worked through the ranks to Regional Director of Operations. He spent 37 years in the airline industry before officially retiring January 1, 2005. Paul has six children and seven grandchildren, who are scattered throughout the United States. He attempts to visit them on a regular basis, thanks to his airline career that allows his wife, Mary Lou, and him the benefit of travel. Paul met Mary Lou in 2000 through mutual friends and they were married in 2002. He was introduced to the Slovenian culture through Mary Lou's membership with SNPJ. He has participated in many Lodge activities, as well as joining SNPJ Lodge 786 where he enjoys the camaraderie of the members and has been a very active member. Once Mary Lou became President of California Branch

100, of which Paul is also a member, he began assisting her with many of the administrative duties - reserving meeting dates, making dining arrangements, preparing flyers for upcoming activities, and distributing them to our members via e-mail and/or U.S. mail. At our annual SUA Christmas Luncheon he collects toys and delivers them to Toys 4 Tots as one of our SUA charitable donations recipients.

Paul started riding bikes in 2008 for exercise and became an avid rider along with several other Slovenians in both SUA and SNPJ until some health problems slowed him down. He enjoys bowling and bowls three times a week. Paul also enjoys playing the piano. Paul is very appreciative of the recognition as Member of the Year, and he thanks everyone for the friendship that we share.

RICK PISA Branch 109 - Twin Cities of Minnesota

Rick has been a dedicated and active board member during most of the 10-year history of the TC Slovenians. He has played a leadership role with the annual Slovenian photo contest and production of the highly regarded TC'S "*Lepa Slovenija*" calendar. In addition, Rick has been an excellent organizer, ensuring that we have appropriate meeting space for our monthly programs and lining up volunteers to bring delicious treats. Through Rick's efforts, a lending library of Slovenian-related books has become a "fixture" at our monthly meetings.

Rick is a "transplanted Iron Ranger" from northern Minnesota and traces his Slovenian ancestry to his maternal grandparents, Franc Vesel and Frances Prijatelj Vesel. In 1971, Rick traveled to Yugoslavia and met Grandpa Vessel's only sister, Marija Ivancic (81), who lived "na Gora" in the old family homestead. This led Rick to his interest in family history and genealogy. In 2009, Rick and his son, David, traveled to Slovenia to meet long lost relatives. In 2012, Rick joined the Vesel relatives "na Gora" at the old family homestead and slept in the bed Grandpa Vessel used in the 1880s.

After living with grandparents in Keewatin, Rick graduated Hibbing High School and later the University of Minnesota with a degree in social studies education. He taught in the Mounds View school system for 35 years, retiring in 2001. It was through his teaching buddy, Bob Grahek, that he joined the TC Slovenians where his talents, energy, and spirit have done much to advance our appreciation and enjoyment of our Slovenian heritage. In closing, Rick fondly recalls the chickens running in the yard, Grandpa making blood sausage and head cheese in the basement, roasting chestnuts for the holidays, and being able to "lick the pan" after Grandma added the walnut filling to her potica.





Slovenian Union of America

Branch Reports

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Marilyn Hendricks
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You'd think that with all the hustle and bustle of the holiday season behind us, we'd be settling down to a quiet start of a new year. Not so for members of Branch 1. After Mass at Ss Cyril & Methodius church the February Branch meeting was held and attendees were treated to homemade goodies. As we gathered, our hearts were filled with sadness. The oldest member of our Branch, Pauline Rugar, died at the age of 105. She had been a member for 84 years. A



Pauline Rugar and her daughter, Joanne (standing).

moment of silence was observed and a candle was lit in remembrance of Pauline. The attached photo is with Pauline's daughter, Joanne, and was taken on April 13, 2013, at the celebration of Family Festival Slovenia in Sheboygan.

Looking ahead in 2016, we will be celebrating our Branch's 90th anniversary and also our Member of the Year dinner, honoring Mary Patricia (Pat) Ryan, at The Bull in Sheboygan on May 15. This is going to be a wonderful opportunity to "Let Our Slovenian Heritage Shine."

MARY ANN SCHELLINGER

BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information: Annette Charron
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The February 2 meeting was postponed until February 9 due to a snowstorm. Chaplain Marie Mutz led the opening and closing prayers. Marie also presided over a memorial for Josephine Perko and Anne Pauline Kochevar, two Branch 3 members who passed away since the beginning of the year. Linda Secora won the mystery gift which was furnished by Mary Frances Kelley. Marie Mutz hosted the meeting.



Branch 3 members Andrea DeGarbo (left) and her niece, Jerica Khosla.

At the March 1 meeting, Marge Cullen was re-elected President and Eileen Kaplan was chosen as Secretary-Treasurer for the coming year by a unanimous vote. Madeline Khosla brought the mystery gift which was won by Angela Mock, and

Peggy Martin was the hostess. Linda Secora gave all attendees copies of her Peach Cake recipe. In early March, Branch 3 member Jerica Khosla directed a production of *The Little Mermaid* staged at Centennial High School.

Branch 3 members should mark their calendars for the annual Mother's Day luncheon which will be held on Tuesday, May 3, at Park East restaurant.

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON &
BARBARA KARLINGER

BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana

Summer Greetings to all Branch 5 members! With the mild winter, and the stormy spring, I am ready for sunshine, swimming, and socializing! There are a number of things scheduled for the next few months, so be sure to mark these on your calendars!

We would like to start off by recognizing our Member of the Year, Martin Lambert! Martin and his family have always been very involved in our Slovenian community, and it is always nice to see his smiling face at events! We also want to wish him a very happy 90th birthday!

Our Slovenian National Home will have their annual picnic weekend June 10-11. Friday, June 10, will be Polka Jam at the Slovenian National Home, starting at 6 p.m. Plenty of food, friends, singing, and dancing will be available. The annual picnic will be on Saturday, June 11, at Clermont Lions Club Park, 3201 Tansel Road, Clermont,

IN. Bring the whole family for live music and Slovenian foods! More details on the Nash website.

Branch 5 will have a meeting and pitch-in lunch on Sunday, June 26, at noon, at the Slovenian National Home. Bring your favorite Slovenian dish to share. We are inviting all members of the Slovenian Choir to our pitch-in, and hope they will lead us in Slovenian songs!

Saturday, September 10, at the Slovenian National Home, will be another Branch 5 lunch pitch-in. How much do you remember about “the good old days in Haughville?” Bring old photos to share, especially if you need help with identification of people and places in the pictures!



Branch 5's oldest member at 97 years young, Stella Louise Watson, in a four generation picture with her son, Jerry, granddaughter, Kristina, and great-granddaughter, Mikaela Louise Van Schaack.

October brings a trip to a restaurant, a little south of Haughville - The Working Man's Friend. If you have never been there, you are in for a treat. Come join your officers, Mary, Karen, and Phyllis for the best hamburger in Indy! Hope to see you there on Friday, October 7, at 6 p.m.!

November is our annual Christmas fried chicken dinner at Iron Skillet. Always a fun event, we hope you and your family can join us this year! Date and RSVP info to come.

Whew!! We hope that you can attend one or all of these events... as always, friends and family are welcome! Have a wonderful, fun-filled summer!

MARY, KAREN, & PHYLLIS

BRANCH 13 - San Francisco, California

Contact Information: Michele Twers
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It is with much sadness that we report the loss of two members. On January 20, 2016, Moreen Spencer passed away. She was 73. Moreen was the twin daughter of the late Frank and Helen Sustarich. She was the wife of the late Donald E. Spencer. They had twin sons, Kevin and Kenneth Spencer. Moreen worked many years for Slovenian (Women's) Union of America. She was Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Reporter and worked tirelessly beside twin sister, Doreen Sustarich, who is President of Branch

13. Moreen and Doreen made our monthly meetings at the Slovenian Hall a joy with a pot luck luncheon every



Moreen Spencer

month. She leaves behind her sister, Doreen, sons, Kevin and Kenneth, four loving grandchildren, Jack, Karina, Donnie, and Frankie, and many relatives. Moreen will be forever remembered for her “ability to always make things better or happier than they were.” I personally feel a great loss of a dear friend and cousin. Rest in peace Moreen.

On February 16, 2016, Elizabeth (Betty) Doherty passed away. She was our oldest member and still a very dynamic lady at age 105. Betty was born in San Francisco and raised on Potrero Hill. She married Frank Doherty in 1932 and they had four children, Betty Ann, Gerald (deceased 1936), Anne Marie (deceased 2008), and Frances. Betty was very active in Branch 13 for many years and had fun wherever she went. She always had time for everyone and her kindness to others is the description of her life. Two daughters, Betty Ann and Frances, and her sister and two brothers survive her. Betty had nine grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren. Her first great-great-grandchild will be born this spring. Betty was truly a special lady and she will be missed. Rest in peace Betty.



Elizabeth (Betty) Doherty

On a happier note, we wish all a Happy Mother's Day and Happy Father's Day!

BEVERLY JACKSON

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Contact Information: Diane Hohenwater
dhohenwater@comcast.net

Those in attendance on Sunday, February 21, at St. Joseph Park, enjoyed a presentation by Branch member, Marianne Wolf-Astrauskas, who spoke on “Slovenian Women Who



Zarja - The Dawn

Impacted Our Society.” Marianne is a celebrated writer and authored the popular history book, *Joliet*, from the “Images of America” series.

Our St. Joseph Table Dinner on March 15 was an opportunity to honor our members named Joseph and Josephine, as well as our Patricks and Patricias. This is always a lovely meal followed by a short business meeting. Our next event was our annual Bake Sale, for which we received wonderful support from our members and St. Joseph Church parishioners. At our April meeting we enjoyed a special cooking demonstration on how to prepare cherry strudel. Many thanks to Sandy Rodeghero for her time and culinary talent.

We will honor our Member of the Year, Patrick Welsh, on May 17, which is our final gathering for meetings until September. A catered banquet with entertainment is planned for this festive celebration. Please join us for this special evening.

Most Branch 20 meetings feature a guest speaker, so if you have an idea for an upcoming meeting, please contact me. We will soon begin working on our calendar of events for September 2016 through May 2017. We hope everyone is able to get out to enjoy some warm weather, wherever you live.

DIANE HOHENWATER

BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Contact Information: Diane Data diane3121@aol.com

Zivijo! Have you been enjoying the Slovenian Union of America page on Facebook as much as I have? The pictures of Slovenia have been breathtaking and how about those mouth-watering food pictures? I’ve learned that the little town of Zalec, which is known for its hop plantations, has plans to build a fountain, which spouts beer instead of water. That has been added to my bucket list. My favorite post has been the conversion chart of measurements from metric to American for weights. I’ve looked at many recipes in Slovenian cookbooks that refer to kg and dag and now I have the conversion chart at my fingertips. How handy is that! I also follow a few, okay to be truthful, many other Slovenian groups - Slovenians of the Illinois Valley, Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, D.C., Slovenian Genealogy (Genealogy2000), The Slovenian Times, Slovenian Catholic/Cultural Center, and my favorite, Adele in Slovenia. I look forward to the SUA page and these other Facebook groups, which are filled with so much information, recipes, and pictures of Slovenia.

Branch 24 will be celebrating 88 years since a small group of women first met in the old St. Roch’s School. Today we have grown to over 100 members with many changes over those 88 years. We have an exciting 2016 planned with our annual “Taste of Slovenia” picnic on Thursday, June 16, a Slovenian cooking class, our annual All Soul’s Day Cemetery Walk/Mass for Living and Deceased Members, a new St. Martin’s Day Event, and our annual Christmas Party.

This is the year for each of us to recruit one new member to enjoy these fun activities. Branch 24 members, please LIKE the Facebook page – Slovenians of the Illinois Valley – for updates on events for our Branch and provide your e-mail address to Bonnie Prokup at wprokup@aol.com

for updates and reminders on meetings and events. If you are not online, keep your eye on the local newspaper for these reminders. So, I will repeat from my last report, call a fellow member or two and carpool to our events. Bring a friend. Let’s have a crowd at the next meeting! *Nasvidenje!*

DIANE DATA

BRANCH 33 - Duluth, Minnesota

We have had no meetings through the winter, but we did have two very longtime members of our Branch pass away. The first was Dorothy Jacobson who died on November 24, and her funeral Mass was at St. Elizabeth’s Church. To make things special, a rosary was prayed before Mass with a special closing prayer. A white carnation was presented to her daughter, Mary Beth, at the closing of Mass. It was heartwarming how our ladies lifted themselves in prayer for Dorothy.

On January 10, we lost another dear member, Sue Skull, who passed away unexpectedly, which was a great shock to us. Her funeral was also at St. Elizabeth’s Church. Sue played the organ at our church for 20 plus years. She was also involved in teaching religious education classes and her music became valuable for the children’s programs. A rosary and special prayer was also done for her. In sympathy, a carnation was presented to her son from her Branch 33 sisters. Pall bearers for both of these ladies were Renee Doble, Jackie Rukavina, Sharon Bucar, Winnie Ellena, Polly Stojevich, Althea Tverberg, Florence Burger, and Ann Menart.

We will miss both of these ladies very much and we pray they are enjoying the choirs of angels in heaven. The soloist at both funerals was Mary Spehar White, our President. Her singing added to the Masses and helped in our meditation.

ANN MENART

BRANCH 35 - Aurora, Minnesota

Contact Information: Rosemary Sertich Ribich
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We decided to open the March 6 meeting to the public, and are so glad we did. More than 60 people arrived to hear our local Biwabik graduate, author Megan Marsnik, present a reading of her novel, *Underground*. Megan did years of research to write this book about Katia Kovich and her plight, which led to her arrival to America at age 16 after her parents died in Slovenia from cholera. Megan mesmerized the audience with a description of the feelings of this young woman as she came to this new, unknown land, only to become involved in the miners strike of 1916. Thank you for being here, Megan, and hopefully soon we will see the entire novel in printed form. You are indeed LIVING THE LEGACY! Excerpts are available on Kindle and also from the startribune.com/underground.

A brief meeting was held for members with announcements about upcoming events. Our Members of the Year dinner will be held on Sunday, May 1, at the Aurora Community Center. We will gather at noon and dinner will be served at 12:30 p.m. The cost of the dinner is \$15 in cash or check made out to SUA Branch 35. We are honoring three Branch members this year and are looking forward to meeting their families.

One announcement - if anyone has an extra edition of our March/April 2016 *Zarja*, we could use seven (7) more copies. Several people that were honored at our Sveti Miklavz celebration are not members of SUA and are requesting copies. Please send them to me at 4501 Bass Lake Rd., Gilbert, MN. *Hvala* in advance.

No meeting in June/July; we're back at it in August. Have a nice, warm summer everyone.

ROSEMARY RIBICH

BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Jan Gehm
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At our January 27 Branch luncheon meeting the 2016 officers were sworn in. All the 2015 officers were elected by acclamation to continue for another year. They work very well together planning our Branch meetings and special events and have become close friends. When they get together, President Jan Gehm's dog, Sophie, always wants to join them. A mascot for Branch 43, perhaps?



Branch 43's "officers and close friends" wearing their mardi gras beads. Helen Frohna, Jan Gehm (holding Sophie), Tillie Skusek, Mici Bregant, and in front - Betty Ann Kolesari.

Our annual gathering at Triglav Park to assemble butare for our procession into St. John the Evangelist Church on Palm Sunday was well attended. They were beautiful like always. On Palm Sunday, the attendance,

procession, and songs by the Church's Slovenian Choir made for an over-whelming, beautiful experience that won't be forgotten.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of Paula Delopst Behling and Gus Ostrowski, two dear members who passed away in February (Paula) and March (Gus).



Branch 43 members on Palm Sunday at St. John the Evangelist Church.

Paula was very proud that her mother, Gertrude Delopst, was the first President of Branch 43, which was founded in 1930. Gus, a special companion of member, Rose Chepeck, looked forward to all our events until his health kept him away.



Ellen Shiflet, under the capable and patient direction of Helen Frohna, making her butare for the next day to be carried in procession into St. John the Evangelist Church on Palm Sunday.

It looks like we have a full calendar of events for 2016. Kicking off these events will be our celebration for the Members of the Year, who are our senior ladies age 80 years young and older. This celebration will take place at Meyer's Restaurant on Wednesday, May 25, arrival at 6 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m.; the cost is \$17. Reservations are required and you can make them by calling Treasurer Helen Frohna at 262.821.5295.

Sunday, June 26, will be a special celebration commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Slovenia. Join our Slovenian community at Triglav Park in Wind Lake for Mass at 11 a.m., followed by a delicious chicken dinner, music, and program.

Branch 43 members will have their picnic at Triglav Park on Sunday, August 7. We invite all to enjoy each other's company socially, while partaking of a delicious dinner and enjoying Slovenian music. Who knows, there may even be a few surprises. Mark your calendar!

Watch for news of the Wisconsin Regional Convention, which will be hosted by our Branch in October.

Also in the planning stages! - "Martinovanje" scheduled for November 11. Watch this publication for more information, or, better yet, attend our meetings. Times and places are on your calendars, which you received earlier this year. Be sure to plan to attend our Annual Christmas Party rescheduled from December 10 to December 3, at Aliota's Restaurant.

Enjoy the summer! Be safe and happy.

MARY "MICI" BREGANT

BRANCH 47 - Garfield Heights, Ohio

Contact Information: Debbie Duris
330.467.2281/dcduris@gmail.com

Our first meeting is Saturday, May 2, at 1 p.m. at the Burntwood Tavern on Kruse Drive in Solon. At that time we will discuss the date and location of our September meeting. I look forward to seeing everyone there. It will be fun to catch up after our winter break. I'd love to share any member stories, call me on my cell phone, 330.730.8951, or e-mail me at kjferrante@gmail.com.

On a personal note, I was able to get together with the Central Florida Slovenians at George Plautz's home on Saturday, March 12. What a lovely "meet and greet." It was an afternoon of talk, drink, good food, and wonderful entertainment. Thank you George and all of those who made this event successful.

To get Branch information, contact Debbie Duris at her home, contact info above. Wishing everyone a safe and warm summer!

KATHLEEN FERRANTE

BRANCH 50 - Cleveland, Ohio

Contact Information: Rick Tomsick
440.655.6735/ricktomsick@gmail.com

Greetings from the "5-0" on America's North Coast! I write today's article with a heavy heart as my dad, Clarence "Ken" Tomsick, passed away on March 13, while at the Hospice of the Western Reserve after several months of difficulty with cardiopulmonary issues. My four brothers and I were with our dad as he entered into eternal life to join my mother and all of our many loved ones who have left this world before us. My dad was active in a variety of cultural events honoring our Slovenian heritage, not the least of which was his many years of promotion and involvement in the Cleveland Style Polka Hall of Fame, where he was a Trustees' Honor Roll Inductee in 2012. I can remember helping him out, beginning in 1989, with videotaping the first several awards programs during Thanksgiving weekends at the Shore Cultural Center in Euclid, Ohio. He will be missed and remembered fondly by innumerable friends and loved ones.

There are a lot of Slovenians in northern California! My son, Jonah Tomsick, reports from the West Coast that he attended the American Slovenian Education Foundation (ASEF) gala in San Francisco on February 28, held at the Westin St. Francis, whose general manager is fellow Clevelander, John Hutar. The formal event to raise funds for ASEF's mission of enhancing American and Slovenian education activities, uniting Slovenian scholars and educators globally, honored several prom-



Jonah Tomsick and Dr. Ronald Šega

inent Slovenes, including ASEF's Lifetime Achievement Award winner and astronaut, Dr. Ronald M. Šega, who charmed his listeners with stories of travel in outer space. Jonah has also explored the local Slovenian Hall in San Francisco, giving him a little connection to home, here in Cleveland where it all began!

Our first Branch meeting for the new year was on April 20 at the Euclid Public Library. Our Mother's Day luncheon will be at the Dubrovnik Gardens on Wednesday, May 18, at 1:00 p.m. We're looking forward to seeing many of our members there!

Get well wishes go out to Ivanka Matic who is recovering from a recent surgery, and to Rose Mary Toth who was recently involved in a fender-bender. My thoughts of appreciation go out to all of our members, who we collectively consider to be "Members of the Year" in keeping with a Branch 50 tradition.

Let's all remember to keep one another and all members of Branch 50 and all of the SUA in our prayers, especially remembering the sick and the suffering, the dead and the poor souls in purgatory, and those they have left behind, to bring comfort and joy to all who mourn.

I always like to hear from members near and far. Please write to me at ricktomsick@gmail.com with any family news and I will add you to our list of updates for Branch 50 (you don't need to be a member of Branch 50). That's all for now. Many thanks to everyone for all you do in SUA!

RICK TOMSICK

BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

Contact Information: Barbara Bruch
815.339.2714/barbarabruch@yahoo.com

Greetings everyone! We had a really good time at our last meeting. The program topic was wedding memories and we all brought old wedding pictures. One even pictured the great-great-grandmother of a member. Many of the pictures were from right after our ancestors arrived in this country. One member told a story: "When Grandma was asked why she married Grandpa, the answer was because he had 400 dollars!" How much would that be in today's money? He probably saved two years and lived in a boarding house to save that much. The best meetings are when we have something really interesting to see and discuss.



We also had an opportunity to grind walnuts for Easter potica with a 100 year old nut grinder. Branch 89 member, Darlene Wasielewski, whose family used it to grind walnuts for their poticas, gave it to Alice and Jim Ebner. Darlene had received it from her aunt, Catherine (Katy) Frank, who lived in Chicago. Aunt Katy brought it to Chicago when she



came from Slovenia. It has a hopper on top to hold the nuts, a wooden block to push them down into the grinder, a hand crank, and a rotary drum that grinds the nuts into a light fluff. It is a Zassenhaus nut grinder made in Germany. Jim and Alice love using it and think it does a better job than a meat grinder, that most of us use.

Congratulations to our members, Janell

and Dan Lukach. They have a new, sweet, little baby boy named Jackson Wyatt. Jackson has a big brother, William, and big sister, Emma. They are the grandchildren of Brigit and Mike Gunderson.

Best regards to everyone and many thanks to all who supported our bakeless, bake sale. We appreciate our out-of-town members.

BARBARA BRUCH

BRANCH 93 - New York, New York

Contact Information: Elizabeth Gross

718.335.8459/Lizg669@gmail.com

Our Branch celebrated Prešeren Day with Andrej Logar, Slovenian ambassador to the UN, and Erik Horvat, honorary Slovenian Consul for New York and New Jersey, as honored guests. The 100-year-old LIC Bar in Queens, with its brick walls, tin ceilings, and wooden floor, made a warm setting for the lavish spread of Slovenian delicacies prepared by Ria Whitmire, which we enjoyed while hearing the works of Slovenia's most famous poet, France Prešeren, read by Gaia Visnar. Igor Cesarec of Društvo v tujini izobraženih Slovencev - VTIS, the Association of Slovenes Educated Abroad, supplied welcoming words, relating that he had earlier in the day mentioned to colleagues at NYU that, if he were in Slovenia, he would be having a holiday. When given an explanation, they were astounded to hear that there was a country where a poet could be a national hero! The celebration was further enriched with live music provided by Jan Kus, a young Slovenian and New York-based saxophonist and composer, with his jazz band and guest guitarist, Gabriel Vicéns.

Singer-songwriter and guitarist, Sašo Sandič, student of legendary Slovenian jazz musicians, Primož Grašič and



Samo Šalamon, performed at The Bitter End in February, The Shrine in March, and the Rockwood Music Hall in April.

Many Branch members are helping with plans for the 100th anniversary of the Church of Saint Cyril and look forward to meeting you in New York City this October. We encourage you to reach out to friends and family who may have come to the church in years past and/or to let us know their names so we can honor them in our celebrations. The Centenary Mass and Gala will be on Sunday, October 16, and if you can come to New York earlier, we are planning a guided tour of Ellis Island with a librarian (9 a.m., Friday, October 14) and an SUA lunch and tour of the Tenement Museum (Saturday, October 15). For information and registration please e-mail vajkusa@gmail.com. The deadline for the Gala registration (\$100/person) is August 1.

ELIZABETH GROSS

BRANCH 99 - Lemont, Illinois

Contact Information: Jana Hlade jmhlade@hotmail.com

Congratulations to Branch 99's Member of the Year, Bill Zerial! We would like to give Bill a special thanks for his time, talent, and generosity with our Branch. He has been an integral part of this Branch and a great supporter for many years. In April, we honored Bill with a special dinner. Congrats and thank you Bill!

On Tuesday, June 7, please join us for a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Independence of Slovenia. Minister Gorazd Žmauc from Slovenia will be visiting the SUA Home Office/Heritage Museum, the historic St. Joseph Church, and KSKJ headquarters, all in Joliet. Minister Žmauc will be flying here from Slovenia that morning, and will arrive at the SUA Home Office/Heritage Museum about 3 p.m. He will then attend the Slovenian Catholic Center (SCC) for a celebration at 7 p.m. Presentations will be made to SUA for its 90th anniversary, the SCC for its 20th anniversary, and St. Joseph Church for its 125th anniversary, along with some additional presentations to local KSKJ lodges. Please come to meet the Minister, along with our General Consul Andrej Rode. This is an open reception.

On August 27, please join us for a *Štruklje* Culinary Class at 8:00 a.m. in the SCC kitchen. Cost is \$20 per person (payable at the door) and includes all supplies. Twelve (12) person max. RSVP required to Jana Hlade at jmhlade@hotmail.com or 815.439.1905.

If you did not receive a Branch calendar of events, please contact Jana Hlade at the information above. And to reduce costs, if you received a calendar in the mail via the postal service, let us know your e-mail address. We will gladly add you to the list and keep you updated much more quickly!

Wishing you a very happy and relaxing summer!

JANA HLADE



BRANCH 100 - Southern California

Contact Information: Jean Koci
949.495.0097/ajkoci@cox.net

About 20 members of Branch 100 gathered in Laguna Niguel for our annual, traditional, Slovenian food demonstration. This year it was decided to try something a bit more complicated than what we have done in previous years. Teresa Koci volunteered to demonstrate the making of *krofe* at her home. She has a treasured recipe from her Grandmother Novak who was an expert at making this very special treat. Teresa's mom, Rosemary Mlakar, also remembers much about how these pastries were made many years ago. I, also, have memories of preparing *krofe* in my mom's kitchen in years gone by. Teresa decided that we should have a couple of "dry runs" before the actual demonstration date came along, so the three of us met at her house and gave it a go. Then, I tried making them at my house and Teresa did it again on her own. We fine-tuned our experiences to the modern day. Teresa traveled up to Costa Mesa to purchase the old-fashioned cake yeast from a bakery distributor that supplies these kinds of ingredients to bakeries all over Orange County.

The big day arrived on February 27! It would be a special time since Mike Bajc offered to video tape the entire day so that others could share the experience. Mike is a professional in the field of videography and photography and has done much to help us publicize various events in Southern California since he found us (and we found him). His wife, Marie, is also active locally in our Slovenian groups. Members from all directions showed up... some traveling more than 100 miles to be here. All enjoyed the demonstration and the social aspect of this gathering. Even four year old, Lila, the granddaughter of Bonney Zupan got into the act, but she also enjoyed playing in the yard with the Koci cat, Tačka. Teresa did a fantastic job of speaking and demonstrating all the steps in preparing this rather complicated recipe, from the measuring of flour, the procedure of dissolving the yeast at the proper temperature, the mixing of ingredients in the electric mixer, and then kneading the dough until it was just the right texture. Raising the dough takes more than an hour... so thoughtfully, Teresa prepared a batch of dough before we all arrived so that there would be a seamless transition without as much waiting time. After that was the pressing of the dough to just the correct thickness, before cutting the circles and setting them on a cloth in a warm place to rise for another hour or so. When they were just puffy enough, they were ready to fry in an electric fry pan with about three inches of hot Crisco at the proper temperature. This was the exciting time when we would find out if they would fry up to be light and tasty, like the originals in our memories. We were also looking for the white or light yellow rings around the center, which was always a trademark of perfection. Then, when they were still warm, everyone was eager to take the taste test by dipping them into sugar. We used granulated sugar, but many people like to sprinkle the *krofe* with powdered sugar. Sometimes a bit of jam or jelly inserted makes them even tastier. The first batch gave us a few with the sought after rings, but the second batch proved to have many more. Success!

During a break time, Teresa served a delicious vegetable barley soup, along with bread. Others brought salads, fruits, and dessert. It is always a good time when we



get together, especially since our regular meetings and luncheons are only held twice a year, and as mentioned before, many of us live quite a distance from one another. We thank



Teresa Mlakar Koci for all the time and care she took to organize this demonstration and for offering her home, once again. Ken was a big help, as well. Thanks, also, to Mike Bajc for the

photography/videography. We will be anxious to see the finished product and hope to have discs available for those interested.

Recently, some of us were able to attend the "Pust" celebration at the Slovenian Hall in San Francisco and enjoyed the great dinner featuring blood sausage, roast pork, sauerkraut, potatoes, and all the rest. The SNPJ Lodge in the Bay Area sponsored it. Many SUA members were also present. Keep these traditional foods in mind for special events so that the next generations will know about them and perhaps be able to pass on the food culture of Slovenia. You may still have time to get tickets for the Orange Coast SNPJ Lodge 786 Wine and Beer Tasting in Temecula on May 22. Please contact me at the e-mail or phone listed above if you will be in the area. *Dober tek!*

JEAN KOCI



BRANCH 102 - Willard, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Bonnie Brierton
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Greetings from Willard! At our December meeting, members Jack and Sarah Trunkel, shared pictures and stories from their October visit to Slovenia. They met many wonderful people on this trip, enjoyed the beautiful landscapes, and feasted on the wonderful Slovenian food.



Megan Johnson continues on her adventures and love for travel. After her visit to Slovenia in 2014, she is continuing her world adventures. Her recent trips have taken her to Taiwan, Japan, and the Philippines. Her talents with photography capture the beauty of these countries, which she shares with her family and friends on Facebook.

Junior member, Sandy Brierton, continues with her interest in the theatre. Pictured is Sandy (on right), along with a fellow cast mate, before

opening night for the Central Wisconsin Children's Theatre's production of *Treasure Island*. Junior member, Mike Brierton, participated on a recent Boy Scout winter camping trip, which of course was during the coldest weekend of the year. Temperatures dipped to -20 degrees, with actual temperatures much colder with the winds. Mike showed his Slovenian toughness, being one of six Scouts from his troop to have the fortitude to camp out both nights.

Congratulations to member, Sarah Trunkel, for being honored in 2015 by the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative for her 35 years of providing exceptional nursing service to rural healthcare.

Branch 102 wishes all happiness and good health!

BONNIE BRIERTON

BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

Contact Information: Bernadette Fitzsimmons
bettekfitz@verizon.net

Members are preparing to meet at the Embassy of Slovenia for the EU Open House on May 14. Branch 108 will have an informational booth about SUA, youth activities, and a display of Slovenian folklore art. Our new Slovenian friends from our neighboring state of Pennsylvania look forward to possibly joining us for this spectacular day, the Embassy of Slovenia's open house, presenting Slovenian culture, highlighting Slovenian music, cuisine, culture, heritage, and travel. All are invited to attend from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 14. For more information and details, go to www.euopenhouse.org.

On Palm Sunday it was wonderful for our Branch to meet again to color Easter eggs the Slovenian way. The past couple of times, we didn't have any formal instructions, however, this time we were happy to share with our members and guests, the instructions to follow for *Velikonočni pirhi* on page 50 of *The Slovenian-American Table Cookbook*.



Helen Sisto is recovering from a fall and hip replacement in January, and Ed Primožič is recovering from a knee replacement, with another surgery to come this spring. On behalf of all our Branch members, we wish both Helen and Ed a full recovery to help regain movement, and to enjoy an active lifestyle in the years ahead. We wish all our students congratulations on another excellent school year, and a safe and happy summer to all our members and friends.

Slovenian proverb – *Lovimo muhe, izpuščamo bike. Muhe lovi, pa bike izpušča*. Translation – We try and catch flies, we let out the bulls. They chase flies, but set free the bulls.

Najlepše želje za srečno poletje in veliko veselih sončnih dni! Best wishes for a wonderful summer and many happy, sunny days!

BERNADETTE FITZSIMMONS

BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities (TC) of Minnesota

Contact Information: Elaine Barthelemy
elaineab@yahoo.com

“Zlati časi, kam hitite” “Golden times, where are you hurrying?” Although Norm Setnicker, scribe for Branch 109 for all 10 golden years of our existence, isn't “hurrying” off, he has passed his baton to me so he can focus more on his role as VP of Marketing and Fund-Raising for the SUA. In rereading his fascinating accounts from past issues, I realize he has set a high bar for me to follow. Thanks to Norm for all he has done and continues to do in promoting Slovenian culture through our organization. Thanks also to his lovely bride, Mary Ann, who serves as Treasurer for our Branch, and is the other half of an effective team.

To introduce myself, I was born in Lorain, Ohio, the proud daughter of two Slovenian parents (Michael Polutnik and Stephanie Turk Polutnik). In a recent issue of the *Zarja*, David Sodac told the story of my mother, who was born in Vrhnika 96 years ago. Since my father's parents were from Račja Vas, I guess I am as close to 100 percent Slovenian as possible.

Before retiring in 2012, I taught for over 40 years in elementary schools in Ohio, Illinois, Nebraska, Iowa, and Minnesota with a five-year stint in Hong Kong. My two sons are Mark, who lives in San Diego but spends time with his business in Seoul, and Matthew, who lives in Minneapolis.

Branch 109 celebrated *Kultura Dan* at the Julian H. Sleeper House by learning about Hidden Slovenia, unique locations off the "beaten path." Both Isa Keller and Cindy Gauthier (in full costume) talked about Ljubljana's Hostel Celica, a former military prison transformed into a multi-cultural art center. Bailey Peternell's topic was the "olms" blind salamanders in Postojna cave, while Mike Koski focused on the Olimje monastery. From Dr. Seth Hawkins we learned about the carnival festival *Kurentovanje* in Ptuj, the poet Preseren's life in Vrba, and the Bee museum in Radovljica.



At our February meeting, Cynthia Bradford, a retired music teacher, and Chuck Debevec, a knowledgeable collector of Slovenian recordings, presented "Folk Songs in Everyday Slovenian Life." They began by leading us in *Zdravljica*, our Slovenian National Anthem, and then played a wide variety of music, including *Sveta Krstinca Bouna Ležala* of the medieval period, the above-cited *Zlati časi* and Frankie Yankovic's version of *Bod Moja, Bod Moja*. Cynthia brought seven



Cynthia Bradford and singers.

young members of the Music Association of Minnetonka Concert Choir who sang Izidor Ovčice Pasel and demonstrated a children's choosing game.

Our March meeting will feature the father/daughter team of Marshall and Ruth Pechauer sharing the stories of their ancestors' journey to Chicago in 1899, and their own journeys back to the Bela Krajina region of Slovenia to establish relationships with long-lost cousins.

Meanwhile, members Sue Rademacher and Mike Koski, are spearheading preparations for our Slovenian booth at the May Festival of Nations in St. Paul. The legends of the Ljubljana Dragon, depicted on the Ljubljana coat of arms, and Zlatorog, the white buck, who lives on Mount Triglav, will be featured in our display for the 2016 festival's theme of "Folktales and Fairytales."

ELAINE BARTHELEMY

***UNDERGROUND A Great Summer Read* - by Rosemary Ribich, Branch 35 – Aurora, Minnesota**

On March 6, Branch 35 - Aurora, MN, welcomed a Biwabik, MN, alumnus, author Megan Marsnik from the Twin Cities to do a reading of her e-book, entitled, *UNDERGROUND*. A crowd of about 60 assembled at the Aurora Community Center to enjoy apple strudel and potica while listening to Megan describe the story she wrote about a Slovenian woman immigrant arriving in America and settling on the Minnesota Mesabi Iron Range during the strike of the miners in 1916.

Megan's research for this novel brought her to Slovenia and Croatia, interviewing many of the families left behind during that time. She also spent time interviewing many of the people who are still living in the Mesabi area that were part of this massive influx of people.

Megan stated that much of her material was based on true stories told by these immigrants. Her novel is called historical fiction, but since it was based on many true stories I personally found it difficult to call it fiction. Since I am a first-generation American I could relate to many of the events that were described in her book. Many families that are located in the Ohio, Illinois, and Pennsylvania areas probably have heard the identical stories and how those difficulties affected their lives.

Her novel is currently available on Kindle or from www.startribune.com/under-ground. Hopefully, it will soon be printed and be available for families to add to their Slovenian libraries.

At the closing of her presentation the Branch presented her with our new SUA cookbook, *The Slovenian-American Table*. She had seen it earlier and was delighted to receive it.



Vida Lanari, Branch 35 President, Megan Marsnik, author, and Frances Kovatovich, Branch 35 Cookbook Chairman.

We Would Love to Hear from You!

Send us your comments and a picture of a recipe, craft, or tradition that you followed from the new SUA cookbook – *The Slovenian-American Table*. Send to wprokup@aol.com.



For a special treat on Valentine's Day, Bob and MaryAnn Schellinger made *Palačinke*. For fillings they used homemade maple syrup and their homemade jams. Yummy!

- **Bob and Mary Ann Schellinger, Branch 1 - Sheboygan, WI**

On February 13, Verna Yaklich came to my home to buy a copy of *The Slovenian-American Table*. Mrs. Yaklich asked, "Do you think this cookbook would be a good anniversary present?" I thought it would be a splendid gift. Mrs. Yaklich said, "Today is our anniversary. Jack wanted this book and I wanted this cookbook, too." Mrs. Yaklich hugged the book when I handed it to her. Later that afternoon, Verna sent an e-mail, "Love the book!" Verna Mae Smith and Jack Yaklich were married on February 13, 1960, in St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Gilbert, MN, and "They live happily ever after."



- **Frances Kovatovich, Branch 35 - Aurora, MN**



My mother, sister, and daughter recently made strudel from page 104 *Pots and Pans* 1982 edition. Thank you!

- **Bill Jones**

My mother, Elizabeth (Betty) Kambic Doherty, has been a member of SUA/SWUA since she was a young girl. I believe she was the oldest living member to date. She passed away on Tuesday, February 16, 2016, at the age of 105 years, 6 months. She belonged to San Francisco - Branch 13.

- **Frances Granger, Branch 13 - San Francisco, CA**

My birthday was April 28 and I turned 88 years old. My father, Andrew Burgstaler, and my mother, Mary Jary, came to America in 1926. They came because my dad's brother, Frank, and his wife, Frances, were here. My dad and mom bought a farm in Aitkin, MN. I was born in 1928, then my sister, Josephine, my brother, Andy, and my youngest brother - what a nice family! My dad and mom went to Slovenia for a visit and enjoyed the trip. Also, I really enjoy getting the *Zarja* very much!

- **Mary Zilverberg, Subscriber, Aitkin, MN**

I just wanted to share with you and others, that on the back cover of the cookbook the picture of the church is where my great-grandparents, Joseph and Johanna Bregach, were married. I am so happy to have this cookbook and the *Woman's Glory - the Kitchen*. Please keep me in touch with new cookbooks!!

- **Carol "Susie" Calkins, Branch 89 - Oglesby, IL**

Zarja - The Dawn

I love this cookbook! Over 140 pages with beautiful pictures and recipes! I have made the cranberry bread a few times. It is delicious. I made the šmoren for my uncle for the first time. My kids loved it, but who wouldn't like a dish "dusted" with powdered sugar?



I also made the žlinkrofi, - again delicious. The pictures are so helpful and honestly take some of the fear out of trying a recipe. I have helped our Branch sell a few cookbooks. I am the BEST salesperson for this task, since I have nothing but accolades, excitement, and pride for this cookbook.

**- Holly Baumgard
Branch 35 - Aurora, MN**



Holly Baumgard, her mother, Jean Seline, and Holly's daughter, Josie Baumgard, are pictured in authentic Slovenian dress during a recent Polka Mass held in Gilbert, MN. Also pictured are Rosemary Ribich, Samantha Snidarich, Marianne Nanti, Jean Stark, and Frances Kovatovich.

Family celebrates its ancestry Carries on ethnic traditions

By Marie Tolonen, Staff Writer
Chisholm Tribune Press
Wednesday, January 6, 2016

CHISHOLM — Ever since she was young, Holly (Seline) Baumgard has had an interest in her family's ethnic heritage.

Baumgard, a native of Chisholm, said it wasn't until she was a teenager that she realized her family's ancestry extended beyond the borders of the United States.

That's when her maternal grandmother, Lucille (Smokrovich), brought up the fact that her parents weren't born in the United States. They were immigrants from Croatia, she told her.

Baumgard also learned her maternal grandfather, Anton Hanegmon, was the son of Slovenian immigrants.

It was this information about her grandparents' heritage that Baumgard said gave her the "drive" to clue all of her family in on its ethnicity.

A couple years ago, Baumgard's mother, Jeannie Seline, Jeannie's brother, William Hanegmon, and Baumgard ventured to Europe, where they met relatives from Lucille's and Anton's families.

Just recently, Baumgard and her family participated in a Polka Mass organized by Branch 35 of the Slovenian Union of America, based in Aurora. The event, held at St. Joseph's Church in Gilbert, was attended by around 400 people with 200 served at the dinner that followed.

A highlight for Baumgard was authentic Slovenian dress for the festivities along with her youngest daughter, Ava, and Seline.

Baumgard's grandmother always served sarmas and poticas at Christmas. She was also known for her apple strudel. Baumgard said she continues to make sarmas and potica at Christmas and apple strudel for Easter. She involves her daughters in the kitchen, allowing them to get hands-on experience with some of the finishing touches. The oldest is learning how to prepare the cabbage leaves, which are boiled in making sarmas, she noted.

Ethnic music is also an important part of family traditions for Baumgard and family.

Her grandfather played the button box accordion, sharing the polka music of Slovenia. Baumgard purchased an accordion and is hoping to follow in his footsteps. She noted two of her uncles and a cousin have already mastered playing the accordion.

Whenever the Tamburitans perform in town, Baumgard said her family makes it a point of attending.

Learning about the rich heritage of her family, Baumgard said she wishes she had been born earlier, adding that she would have relished the opportunity to learn more from the older generation.

Learning the native language of her ancestors is something Baumgard remains interested in. She's also picked up the Slovenian tradition of dyeing eggs for each holiday.

For the most part, Baumgard said she's trying to get in what she can while maintaining a busy lifestyle.

Bishop Baraga Days Weekend



Midwest SUA members from Branches 2, 20, 43, 99, and 109 enroute to Cleveland's Magnificent Baraga Days in 2015.



Ivanka Matic, Branch 50, accepting the Service Award.



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Bishop Baraga Days Weekend

September 10 – 11, 2016

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Branch 89 Oglesby, Illinois

Hosts

See Details Page 10

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Slovenian Heritage Day

*Julie Harbeck, Terri Kamnikar, and Rose Bell
Branch 89 - Oglesby, Illinois*

