



# OUR STORY NAŠA ZGODOVINA

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## Leafing Through History

Anne Urbančič

As the Canadian school year opens every September, we can count on various familiar events: cooler weather and shorter days accompanied by a sense of wistful regret about a summer that flew by far too quickly; we can count on foliage beginning to change colour and drop from trees and also count on the half exciting, half regretful shopping trip for school supplies: books, notebooks, paper, report covers, post-it notes. These are all examples of how, even in our global digital age, we still rely heavily on paper. The CSHS archives clearly depend on paper; your letters, documents, cards and notes preserved in their special boxes, tell the story of Slovenians in Canada. Consequently, in the next few issues of OUR STORY, I will present a series of articles on paper, its history, its uses.

Unlike many other manufactured items, paper has a vital living and growing source: trees (pulp and bark), plants (for papyrus and rag papers), and animals and reptiles (for vellum and parchment). As interesting proof, in many languages, words concerning writing paper derive from the word for the papyrus plant (*papir* in Slovenian, *paper* in English, the Spanish *papel* and the French *papier*). Humans make of paper an instrument of communication to future generations; but ironically in order for that to happen, the source of the paper must give up its own life.

Where did this all start?

Our natural desire to communicate our thoughts necessitated co-opting items found in nature to inscribe upon them our meaningful signs. Caves, rocks and shells collected our earliest messages. Later, metal slabs and ivory served the same purpose. Ancient Egyptians began to use wooden boards covered with beeswax; with a sharp stylus, the forerunner of our pen,



they could cut into the wax to leave a message, which however was rather fragile and subject to being ruined by heat, cold or water. Dried clay tablets were also used; the message was written with charcoal or chalk. Wet clay tablets offered more message permanence because the message remained inscribed once the clay dried. But it was not until parchment (made from animal skins) and papyrus began to be used that we had the first forms of “paper”. The earliest example of papyrus paper is about 6000 years old. The pith from the stem of the papyrus plant, which grows along the Nile River in Egypt, was cut into strips, and the strips were glued together with a paste. Much later, in Roman times, wet flour glue was used. Papyrus came in the form of rolls, but also individual sheets.

Paper the way we know it actually arrived from China about a century after Christ. The process of making it was largely a secret one but, according to historians, was soon learned by the Moors and Arabs during their raids on China in the 7th c. CE. The Arabs began making paper from the flax plant (linen). By the 11th c. CE they had carried the process into Spain, then Italy and then slowly to the rest of Europe. By 1336 CE, Europe had its first paper mill, located in Germany.



Papyrus plant

We dispose of paper without a second thought. In the past, however, it was a highly prized commodity. You may be amused to discover that the German manufacturer, a merchant named Stromer, whose mill workers came from Lombardy in northern Italy, swore them all to secrecy about the manufacturing process, so precious was paper. If they revealed the secret, they were subject to imprisonment.

Look for more about the history of paper in the next issue.

*Correction: In the last issue, in my article on postcards, I transcribed the writer of the first postcard wrongly. His name was Theodore Hook.*

# Slovensko društvo Vancouver

Silva Plut

Medtem ko se je zadnjo zimo večina Kanade borila, da bi ne podlegla neusmiljenim snežnim metežem, je bilo Vancouvru prizanešeno. Zima se skoraj ni prikazala, in na žalost tudi ne sneg, ki bi poskrbel za zimsko veselje smučarjev. Zaradi pomanjkanja snega in pozneje zelo vročega in suhega poletja je znatno upadla zaloga vode našega dvomilijonskega mesta. Vzpostavljene so bile smernice za zmerno rabo vode in danes upamo, da ne bodo potrebni še ostrejši ukrepi glede vodne rabe, kajti pravijo, da nam preti ponovna zima brez snega...

Lepo vreme je letos pozdravilo obiskovalce 18. letnega Evropskega festivala, na katerem je bilo videti tudi slovenske noše in slišati slovenske zabavne viže.



Otroška folklorna skupina na letošnjem festivalu

Konec maja 2015 je folklor Slovenskega društva Vancouver že četrto leto zapovrstjo nastopila na tem popularnem festivalu v Burnabyju. Med tridesetimi državami udeleženkami je Slovenija pokazala, da še živi slovenski duh daleč od domovine. Naši najmlajši plesalci so želi navdušen aplavz, saj so bili prisrčni v svojih narodnih nošah. Tudi skupina starejših je prikazala nekaj slovenskih plesov ob spremljavi harmonike v živo. Izkazali so se izvajalci na harmonikah s pristno slovensko zabavno glasbo in voditelji delavnice za ročna dela. Slovenci smo imeli svojo razstavno stojnico, na kateri so bile prikazane zanimivosti in informacije o Sloveniji. Ob stojnici so se ustavljali obiskovalci iz različnih kultur in z vseh koncev sveta, mnogi s pisano zgodovino in vsak s svojo zgodbo.



1967 - Prva velkonočna prireditev za otroke

izšolani poklicni delavci so se uspeli zaposliti v svoji stroki, večina pa je morala poprijeti za kakršnokoli delo. Vancouver je postalo središče, kjer je število Slovencev najbolj naraščalo, in kmalu je začela zoreti želja po organizirani skupnosti. Leta 1958 so prvi zagnani rojaki ustanovili Slovensko društvo Vancouver, ki je imelo za svoj temelj nedobičkonostnost in ločenost od države in cerkve. Vnema, s katero so začeli, je bila velika in narodni zanos jih je vzpodbujal, da so takoj na začetku ustanovili pevski zbor in kmalu zatem folklorno skupino. Začeli so razvijati družabne lovske, kegljaške in šahovske dejavnosti. Poudarek je bil vedno na družabnosti in ohranjanju slovenstva, kakršnega so poznali doma. Organizirali so ples z glasbo v živo, kjer so si rojaki želeli slišati domačo



glasbo in zaplesati po domačih vižah. Zabavali so jih najprej domači talenti, pozneje pa so se nekateri od teh organizirali v ansamble in postali redni muzikanti na prireditvah.

Zbirali so se najprej v dvoranah poljskih ali ruskih priseljencev, dokler si niso leta 1972 kupili svoje zemlje s poslopjem, ki so ga preuredili v dvorano. V njej so se odtlej dobivali ob kulturnih in družabnih dogodkih, ki so jih zbliževali in jim omogočali ohranjanje jezika, kulture in slovenskih običajev. Kulturno življenje Slovencev je bilo najbolj razgibano v času, ko so si ustvarili svoj dom, pa potem naprej v osemdeseta in devetdeseta leta. Prireditve v društvu so se s časom množile in tako so na višku svojega delovanja prirejali mesečne plesе, piknike in kulturne prireditve. Skozi vso zgodovino društva je bolj ali manj redno delovala tudi slovenska šola.

Z obiskom Ansambla Lojzeta Slaka leta 1970 se je začela tradicija gostovanj zabavnih ansamblov iz domovine. Zvrstilo se jih je lepo število. Med obiskovalci iz domovine so bili še mnogi pevski zbori in drugi izvajalci, ki so vedno pustili poseben pečat na naši skupnosti.

Velik razmah je doživelo društvo ob času slovenskega osamosvajanja in ustanovitve nove države Slovenije. Slovenci smo leta 1991 ustanovili odbor za zbiranje pomoči domovini in propagirali za njeno samostojnost.

Za duhovno oskrbo Slovencev so skozi vsa leta od začetka pa do danes poskrbeli slovenski duhovniki lazaristi, ki jih je pošiljala Družba sv. Vincencija najprej bolj pogosto, pozneje pa le ob večjih praznikih. Od leta 1981 do 2011 so nas spremljali na letni božji poti v Mission, kamor smo poromali k Mariji Pomagaj. Danes se zbiramo pri božji službi v naši dvorani dvakrat letno, kjer nas navadno obišče misijonar iz Slovenije.



1990 Koncert pevskega zbora v cerkvi sv. Mihaela

V zadnjih letih se naše vrste redčijo, leta so prinesla svoje in priča smo upadanju članstva ter pomanjkanju mladega prirastka. Slovenska dvorana pa ostaja središče za dejavnosti, ki nas združujejo in nam dajejo čutiti svoje slovensko poreklo. Še vedno se tu sliši otroški živžav, ko se pod vestnim vodstvom kulturnega odbora naši najmlajši pripravljajo na nastope tako doma kot na odrih izven društva. Poleg Evropskega festivala se obe folklorni skupini že več let udeležujeta božičnega sejma in drugih festivalov. Naš pevski zbor je dejaven ob nekaterih prireditvah ter mašnih slovesnostih in poučevanje slovenskega jezika ostaja ena važnih društvenih dejavnosti. Upokojeni člani društva uživajo sadove svojega dela s tem, da se mesečno zbirajo v dvorani na kosilu in v družabnem vzdušju preživijo dan. Vsako leto izda društvo slikovit koledar, v katerem oglašujejo slovenski in drugi poslovneži oziroma oglaševalci. Ob društveni 50. obletnici je naša skupnost izdala jubilejno knjigo v spomin na skupaj prehojena leta.



Slovenski dom v Vancouvru



ca. 1977 Morsko ribarjenje pri Tsawwassenu

Letošnjje dejavnosti so se aprila začele z gostovanjem Ota Pestnerja iz domovine, v maju smo praznovali materinski dan, v juniju pa piknik za Dan očetov. V oktobru pripravljamo ples ob 57. obletnici društva in novembra Vinsko trgatev.

Koliko dela, časa in priprav gre v projekt, kot je nastop na Evropskem festivalu! Zahvala gre vsem zavzetim članom, prostovoljcem, ki darujejo toliko truda in svojega časa, da bi obogatili doživetje slovenske kulture tako daleč od domovine.

## Meet our Summer Students



Katherine Sajovec

My name is Katherine Sajovec and I am a graduate student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. My time at the Canadian Slovenian Historical Society has been full of interesting discoveries. Working with hundreds of records, some dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier, I learned about the history of Slovenians in

North America as well as their active roles in Slovenian matters from abroad.

Until I began working here, I was unaware that such an organization existed in the Slovenian community. The CSHS is a valuable resource to Canadian Slovenians. It contains not only personal histories for those that want to trace family lineage, but also information that forms a communal identity, displaying what Slovenians have done for their communities, their country of residence, and their homeland.

I intend to continue working with the CSHS and I strongly encourage all Slovenians to donate materials to the CSHS to help create a more extensive record and understanding of Slovenians in Canada.

Working as a summer student at the Canadian Slovenian Historical Society was one of the best working experiences that I was lucky to have found. As a student going into my second year at York University studying Political Science with a very high interest in history, and as well as being a Slovenian, it was enlightening to see what the past generation had gone

through. With my new found perspective and respect for the older generation, it made me connect to my grandmother's and parents as they explained their upbringing in the home country.

While working at CSHS, I got a taste of what it would possibly be like to be an archivist, as the most interesting job I ever had, every hour was worth it. It was not only a working experience, it was also a learning experience with lesson I will use for future jobs.

I highly recommend this job to younger Slovenians and also encourage them to get involved in the Slovenian community to preserve the memories of the past generations, as well as to create new ones.

I would love to work next summer and help out, as it is my duty as a fellow Slovenian to keep our culture alive.



Natasha Zelko

## An Archives Project for Students

Miriam Čekuta

This year the CSHS has asked the Slovenian Language Schools in Hamilton and Toronto to be a part of our Archivers Research Project Program. We have asked that the students spend time researching topics of interest about their own Slovenian heritage which could then be presented in booklet form, essay, power point presentation, photographs and such. Some suggestions for the project may include an interview with family members, family traditions, immigration to Canada, notable Slovenian Canadian individuals and any other related topics that the students may wish to pursue.

This research will last throughout the school year

2015/16 and will culminate with an exhibit at Dom Lipa in the spring. All students will receive a certificate of appreciation and their work will then become a part of the CSHS archives. The schools will also be rewarded as we are asking that the Slovenian School teachers be facilitators for this activity and support the students as they work on this project allowing time during regular classes as well. We are of course also hoping for the full support from parents and families.

In future we hope to involve Slovenian Canadian youth in other parts of Canada to become participants in this worthwhile project.

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