

\$ 3.99 U.S./\$ 8.99 International

Zarja

Volume 81 Issue 6
November/December, 2009

Official Publication Slovenian Women's Union of America
Uradno Glasilo Slovenske Ženske Zveze v Ameriki

The Dawn

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*Photo:
Mary Lou Deyak Voelk
in Slovenia*

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Zarja - The Dawn

EDITOR: **Debbie Pohar**
DIRECTOR OF DESIGN: **Bonnie Pohar Prokup**

EDITORIAL OFFICE: 1696 Illinois St., LaSalle, IL 61301
TELEPHONE: 815.223.9596
FAX: 815.224.1074

WEB SITE: www.swua.org

PUBLISHER: **Slovenian Women's Union of America**
TELEPHONE: 815.727.1926

Vol. 81, No 6, November/December 2009

Published bimonthly

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

(ISSN 0044-1848)

Postmaster: Send all changes of address to:
SLOVENIAN WOMEN'S UNION OF AMERICA
431 N. Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432

Communications for the next issue of publication:

Do you have something SWUA-related you would like to share with readers, like an event you want to let people know about or an idea for an article? We would love to hear from you! Please e-mail the editor at pohar4@aol.com. We reserve the right to edit any article submitted. It is preferable that you submit your idea for discussion prior to writing an article. Articles must be related to SWUA events or members. The deadline for articles is the 15th day of the month, 2 months preceding the issue. For example, articles for the January/February issue must be received by November 15th. Thank you.



Holy Trinity Slovenian Catholic Church in Indianapolis has two Christmas Crèches, made by Frank Velikan, Sr. about 70 years ago. Mary Barbarich remembers Frank making them when she was a young girl. One looks like stone (although it is made from wood) and the other has a rough-hewn timber look. Most people don't realize that there are two different ones, but both are much loved by all who see them!

From the Editor

Artists, illustrators and painters have portrayed the Christ Child in the manger for centuries. The crèche or nativity scene portrays the story of Bethlehem and dates back to the Middle Ages. St. Frances of Assisi is credited with creating the first live scene at a Christmas Eve celebration in 1223 at Greccio, Italy. Since then Christians throughout the world, have prominently set up a crèche in their homes during the Christmas season, signifying the central meaning of Christmas.

The crèche scenes are modeled after the descriptions in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Luke tells of Caesar Augustus' order for a census to be taken in Bethlehem and the journey that followed of Joseph and Mary. They were forced to take refuge in a stable after finding out that there were no more rooms available. In the stable, Jesus is born where he was laid in the manger full of hay as an angel in the hills overlooking Bethlehem tells the shepherds of Jesus' birth. Matthew describes a new brilliant star that appears marking the birthplace of Jesus and of the three kings that follow its light.

The crèche is more than just a Christmas decoration. Whether you set up a ready-made crèche or it is your winter hobby, it is a way to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. In the homes of Slovenians and Slovenian-Americans, the crèche is typically set up in a predominate corner, commonly known as Bogov kot or God's Corner.

I am very fortunate to have inherited my grandmother's crèche. Every Christmas season I spend many hours setting it up. Each year, I set it up a little bit different but the one constant is my reflection on the true meaning of Christmas and family. Best wishes for a Healthy and Happy Holiday Season. — *Debbie Pohar, Editor*



Quite the Collection

by Jana Hlade

It's the reason for the season. It's also the reason why Paula Mavec from Branch 99 in Lemont, Illinois has quite the collection of nativity sets. She has over 30 sets and is still collecting.

Paula bought her first Christmas crèche when she became married. Although she no longer has this set, she has replaced it with many others in varying types, colors and sizes.

Some time ago, Paula noticed that many people decorated with Santa being the main message. "I wanted to put the focus on religion back into the holiday", she says. Paula became serious about collecting the sets when her son, Mike, bought her a number of Lladró collector pieces. She has since completed that set, and displays it all year long.

Over the years, Paula has become more selective in the craftsmanship of the sets she chooses, and prefers a more traditional style than modern. She has several collector sets including Lladró, Nao, Lenox, Royal Daulton, Willow, Jim Shore and Fontanini. But one of her favorite sets was hand made by her daughter, Monica. Currently, Paula is looking at purchasing a Fitz and Floyd set as well as a Hummel set.



Paula's collection has turned into a family tradition. She has started small sets for her grandchildren, and each Christmas the children enjoy carrying all the baby Jesus' while the family blesses the house. Paula's husband, Albert, has also built accessories and stables to fit the sets. She is also planning a Bethlehem village background complete with water pond and stream. Paula adds, "The hardest part is finding more room to display them!"



First Midwest Bank

Joliet

50 W. Jefferson St.
1415 W. Jefferson St.
2801 W. Jefferson St.
230 N. Chicago St.
1301 N. Larkin Ave.
2300 Rt. 59

Crest Hill

16051 Weber Rd.

Lockport

800 S. State St.

New Lenox

1888 E. Lincoln Hwy.

800.322.3623 • firstmidwest.com



National President's Message



Slovenian Traditions with an American Twist

Greetings to all our members and friends all over the world! This is that time of the year when our Slovenian traditions, many with an American twist come alive during the holidays. In this issue you will find the crèche as a common theme. I fondly remember my parent's crèche growing up and how we all fought over who got to set it up. During this time I stopped playing with my Barbie dolls and instead preferred playing make believe in the little town of Bethlehem. I liked my grandmother's crèche the best that now belongs to my sister Debbie who takes great pride in setting it up each year.



My daughter Barbi started receiving pieces for her crèche from her godfather and grandma and before we knew it she had quite the collection with many houses and figurines from the Fontanini set. Barbi and her Aunt Debbie built a "stage" which truly highlights her heirloom. Every year we pull it out of storage and Barbi sets it up all by herself. Now where was this when I was still playing with Barbie Dolls? This would have been better than the Barbie Town House. With running water, lights and animals galore we sometimes have a problem keeping little children away as it is so tempting to play with! Barbi's crèche is displayed in a prominent corner of our house. Until I attended Mary Lou Voelk's presentation on God's Corner did I realize I too had a God's Corner in my home.

Now onto SWUA Business! Rebuilding our membership is very important. The last few years we have seen a decline in our membership, this is not good! Please read the message from Bernadette Fitzsimmons on how you can help. She has prepared an exciting membership campaign with tasty winnings from Rocky Mountain Potica. What do you have to lose?

As you read Carol Ryba's charts and articles in the last issue, we are having a hard time making ends meet. This of course has always been the

case for as long as I can remember. What we collect in dues does not cover our expenses, at some point we will not be able to go on like this. Sooner or later the money will end. This makes it very difficult to accomplish many of our goals. I can assure you that we are operating on a very bare budget. We have stayed away from extravagant spending, the few people with a salary are very minimal (in many cases it is almost like a volunteer) and your board members donate many of their expenses so it

does not hit our budget. At the next convention an increase in dues will need to be voted upon. I suggest that you follow all of Carol Ryba's articles so that you are well aware of this ongoing problem.

In closing I want to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season. May it be filled with family, friends and lots of laughter!

*Bonnie Pohar Prokup, National President, Zveza
wprokup@aol.com*

Welcome to Our New Members!

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1, Basch, Elizabeth | 24, Kasperski, Tina |
| 3, Frisch, Marie | 24, Sterchi, Mary |
| 5, Bradford, Cynthia | 30, Serra, Robert |
| 10, Lovain, Daisy | 71, D'Ottavio, Dora |
| 13, Sachen, Susan | 71, Orsini, Jacqueline |
| 20, Anderson, Sharon | 71, Sever, Robert |
| 20, Beck, Antoinette Vidmar | 71, Urbancic, Carol |
| 20, Dick, Tim | 89, Kroll, Joe |
| 20, Glasgow, Gina | 89, Taylor, Mark |
| 20, Robins, Shelley | 99, DePratt, Sonja Mavec |
| 20, VanDeWalle, Janet | |

VP Home Office Message

Jana Hlade has Joined our Office Staff

We are happy to announce that Jana Hlade has joined our office staff. Jana is a member of Branch 99 who has previous computer experience and will be an excellent addition to SWUA. She lives in Joliet and will work from home and will occasionally work at the home office. In addition to maintaining the SWUA database, Jana will be responsible for sending invoices, collecting the dues and providing reports to the branches. It makes sense to have an employee who resides in Joliet because she will not have to mail deposits to the bank. Not only will this be safer and timelier, it reduces our postage costs. For now I will continue to do the bookkeeping, prepare payroll tax reports, insurance reports and issue checks.

Effective January 1, 2010, all address changes and Branch requests for reports should be sent to Jana. Her e-mail address is swuamembers@live.com. Our preferred method of communication is via e-mail because it is quicker and more efficient. You will receive an immediate reply if you use e-mail. If you do not have an e-mail address, please send all requests, changes, etc. to:

SWUA, Attention Jana Hlade
431 N. Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432

Jana will not be involved with the burial insurance. These queries should still go to Jonita Ruth (815.727.1926) or send me an e-mail (ryba4homeoffice@yahoo.com).

Email addresses: In September we had 1,050 email addresses in our database so in 2010 we will be sending

about 850 invoices via email. When I ran a test on those 1,050 to see how many addresses were valid, 200 rejected. Therefore I am making a **PLEA** to all members, please update your e-mail address and if you have never submitted one please do so by sending me an e-mail. Your cooperation in this matter will assist us in saving money!

Processing 2010 invoice payments: We ask that you be patient and allow a little longer time for your check to clear. If your donation does not appear immediately in the *Zarja*, please remember that we must process over 3,000 payments in a very short time. If a payment is received and entered after the deadline for publication in the *Zarja*, the donation will have to be listed in the following issue. Rest assured we appreciate your donations and we will make every effort to send information to the *Zarja* staff in a timely manner, but sometimes this is impossible due to timing. Thank you for your understanding.

Receiving several invoices instead of one family invoice: Every year we get complaints and suggestions on this issue. We again remind you that our computer system is not sophisticated enough to group invoices and we do not have a large staff to manually separate invoices for mailing. Of course you can write one check for several payments, but please enclose all payment stubs or copies of the printed emails to avoid errors. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

Carol Ryba, Vice President of Home Office
ryba4homeoffice@yahoo.com

Zarja The Dawn Donations

\$20 Donation

Mary Skufca, 30, Honor Edwin C. Skufca
Roberta Herrick, 102, +Marrion Herrick, Willard, WI
Becky Staut, 102, Honor Theresa Kotar

\$10 Donation

Delores Spelich, 24, Zarja
Ethel Bregant, 24, Zarja

Raymond Oviyach, 20, +Frank and Frances Oviyach
Hank Michalesko, 20, Zarja

\$5 Donation

Helen Diamond, 30, +Peter Yakovic
Maria Breszach, 99, Zarja
Jerome Newhouse, 23, Zarja
Benjamin Newhouse, 23, Zarja

Thank you for your generous support of SWUA. During this tough economic time worldwide, it shows how important our heritage is to all of us. Your donations are truly appreciated.

Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations.

Nationwide Membership Campaign In Progress

Initiating Small Changes Can Lead to Big Results

To launch the new SWUA Nationwide Membership Campaign, branch presidents were sent a letter with a bundle of membership brochures, including inserts of the revised membership application form. I hope you have been passing out the new brochures to branch members, friends, families and members of your community along with your personal smile and invitation to join SWUA.

Reassess times and places branch meetings are held; are they convenient and interesting for prospective members to attend? Initiating small changes can lead to big results. Let's inspire one another by setting a good example during this beautiful season of giving!

The top three branches recruiting the most new members from September 1, 2009 – March 1, 2010 will win a gift from Rocky Mountain Potica delivered to the Branch Presidents' of the winning branches in April, 2010 to share with branch members. 1st place branch winners will receive three poticas; 2nd place branch winners will receive two poticas, and the 3rd place winners will receive one potica. In the event of a tie among the top recruiting branches, six potica's will be distributed among the winners, along with a bag of gifts from the Slovenian Heritage Museum Gift Shop. To learn more about potica, or to order for the holidays, or other special occasion, go to www.RockyMountainPotica.com.

If branch members recruit and take the responsibility to make new contacts with other's of Slovenian descent by personally inviting a prospective member to join, I promise you will see results over the next few months. **Empower your branch members to help our organization reach out and recruit!** It takes less than five minutes to inspire and persuade a prospective member to preserve the spirit of our Slovenian ancestors in our hearts, and honor our cultural legacy.

If you need more SWUA Membership Brochures, please request them from the home office by calling 815.727.1926.

Any suggestions or questions about the brochure and membership application - please call me at 301.391.6873 or e-mail Bettekfitz@verizon.net.

Good Luck and Best Wishes for a Blessed Christmas season with friends and family!

*Bernadette Kovacic Fitzsimmons
Vice President of Marketing & Fundraising*

*Consider giving a gift membership for
birthdays, special occasions
and Christmas gifts.*

Update - 2011 SWUA National Convention

The location has been chosen for the SWUA 2011 National Convention in Milwaukee, WI. The recently renovated DoubleTree Hotel-Milwaukee City Center located in downtown Milwaukee at 611 West Wisconsin Avenue is the site from June 16th thru June 19th, 2011.

Please mark your calendars.

Room reservations may be made beginning in August 2010.

The staff at the DoubleTree Milwaukee City Center has contracted with SWUA to keep prices well below the usual downtown prices. The National Convention Committee will be striving to work towards an affordable convention package to encourage a large participation from all SWUA Branches.

**To offer help, ideas, suggestions or to ask questions please contact
Denise P. Bartlett in Milwaukee at 414.327.4990 or at
denisebartlett@wi.rr.com**



Membership Application
Slovenian Women's Union of America
 Slovenska Ženska Zveza v Ameriki

www.swua.org

swuhome@sbcglobal.net

(815) 727-1926

Yes! I want to join the S.W.U.A. I want to preserve and promote the legacy of our Slovenian-American heritage. As a member I will receive the publication, ZARJA - The Dawn; I can affiliate with branches and events across the country and best of all, I will come in contact with fellow Slovenians.

Choose type of membership:

Junior (Birth to 18), Annual Dues \$5.00

Adult, Annual Dues \$20.00

(No prorated dues offered for junior memberships)

(includes returning members)

Adult, Prorated Dues \$10.00
 (offered only to **first time members**
 joining June 30 – December 31)

Adult, International Address
 Annual Dues \$30.00

Invoices are sent annually in January; dues notices in the amount of \$20.00/adult or \$5.00/junior will be mailed to the address of the member listed below in January of the next calendar year after joining.

Please print the requested information below and send this application form with a check payable to:

***Slovenian Women's Union of America* 431 North Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432**

Name _____ Maiden Name _____

Street Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

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

Please describe your Slovenian ancestry and provide **SLOVENIAN SURNAMES**.

Do you speak Slovenian? _____

How did you hear about us? S.W.U.A. member ___ newspaper ___ website ___ other _____

I would like to volunteer for the S.W.U.A. My area of interest or expertise is: _____

Applicant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Tell a Friend! If you wish us to send information to a friend or relative just fill in name and address here:

My friend's name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

SWUA Scholarship Program

Celebrating its 60th Anniversary 1949-2009

The final SWUA Scholarship 60th Anniversary celebration column fittingly presents two past scholarship winner's updates on their lives since high school graduation, and a recent news article on past Scholarship Director Hermine Dicke.

Linda Schultz

1978 Scholarship Winner
Rides in Horse Clinic with Olympian

Linda Schultz, a life member of Branch 2 in Chicago and current member of Branch 99 in Lemont, was chosen to ride a client's horse in a dressage clinic with U.S. Olympian Jane Savoie October 18 and 19, 2008 in Lebanon, Ohio. Linda was taught by U.S. Olympian Kathleen Raine at her farm this past October.

The daughter of Fran and Ray Schultz and granddaughter of Frances Zibert, Linda was also a SWUA scholarship recipient in 1978. Linda went on to receive her BA in Journalism from Northern



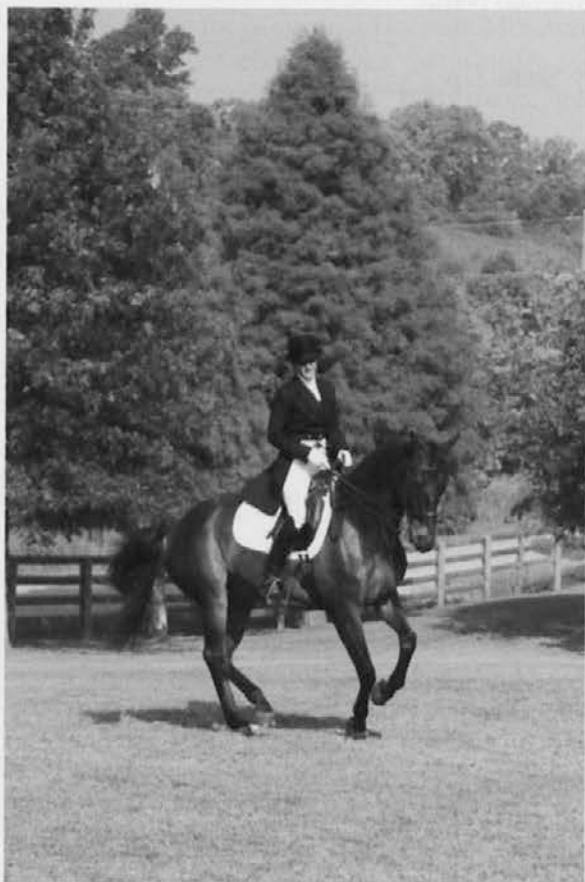
Linda on a Lipizzaner

Illinois University in Dekalb and her MBA in business from Keller Graduate School of Management in Chicago.

Linda owns and operates her own dressage training farm in Georgetown, Kentucky and is the Director of Marketing for the United States Dressage Federation. She has more than 20 years of professional marketing experience and is the author of a book on rider fitness entitled *Better Rider Better Ride*.

Dressage is most familiar to non-equestrians as the movements made famous by the Lipizzaner stallions from Slovenia. Linda also had the opportunity to take a riding lesson in Lipica, Slovenia on a Lipizzaner horse when traveling to her grandmother's home town of Gornji Grad with her mom. Normally, Linda rides warmbloods from Germany. Lipizzaners are smaller in size but hardy as they were bred for original use as war horses. Lipizzaners are still bred both in Lipica, Slovenia and in the U.S.

Linda also earned her USDF Bronze and Silver medals this summer on Rondo Faelleden, the Danish warmblood horse she rode in the clinic with Ms. Savoie. Linda is seeking a sponsor so she can continue to show at the international levels of dressage. Anyone interested in sponsoring Linda can contact her at kantelaufferfarm@yahoo.com or 630.863.1029.



Linda on an American horse, named "Rondo"

Amanda Ochendorf

2007 and 2008 SWUA Scholarship Winner
Traveled to Slovenia

Amanda Ochendorf, Hugo, Minnesota, member of Branch 35 traveled this past spring to Slovenia and met her relatives, the Sikirnik Family of Vizmarje, near Ljubljana. Amanda is currently a junior at Loyola University, Chicago, majoring in business.

While studying abroad this past semester in Rome I had the opportunity to spend a weekend with my grandfather's family in Slovenia. This was my first trip there so it was very nerve racking going alone, however, everything went better than I hoped and it was a great weekend.

After meeting my grandpa's sister and her family, I was treated to an array of homemade foods and had my first taste of Slovenian wine. We then made our way to Lake Bled. I had seen pictures of it before but it was so much more beautiful in person. We also stopped for some kremsnita, the dessert Bled is known for and I was quite impressed.

The next day we spent the morning roaming around downtown Ljubljana. We then made our way to the Postojnska jama (Postojna cave), which is one of the coolest places I have ever seen. I didn't know what to expect beforehand and I was blown away by the grandeur of it all. Afterwards they took me to the village my grandfather grew up in. Being in the very house he was



raised in was a strange and amazing experience all at once. I got to meet grandpa's brother and his family there and my cousin and I then took a walk around the neighborhood. Watching the sunset over the gorgeous Slovenian hillside was absolutely wonderful.

The last day of my short trip we spent the morning hiking up Smarna gora. It was a beautiful hike and after ringing the famous wishing bell we finally made it to the top. Although it was a cloudy and rainy day, the view from the top was amazing and definitely not like anything I could find at home. I was sad to leave but I was so thankful for the chance to see a glimpse of my roots and my heritage. After seeing it in person I am even more proud to be a Slovenian and I cannot wait to go back again someday.



DONATIONS

\$50 Donation

Gift from SWUA member Marie Ovnik who died May 26, 2009

\$10 Donation

Branch 43, Milwaukee, WI
(+Frances Sagadin)

For more information on the
SWUA Scholarship Foundation Program
please visit <http://www.swua.org>
"scholarship"

Hermine Prisland Dicke Receives a Lifetime Achievement Award

"The ARC-Dane County, an advocacy organization to ensure the rights of children and adults with developmental disabilities, recently gave awards to several individuals and businesses for their support. Their lifetime Achievement Award went to Hermine Dicke, who pioneered this advocacy work beginning in 1957 for what was then known as the Madison Area Council for Retardation." Madison State Journal 18, May 2009.

Hermine's biography as was presented at the Arc-Dane County Advocacy Organization Awards dinner. "Hermine Dicke was born in Sheboygan Wisconsin on April 21, 1912. On August 24, 1940 she married Robert J. Dicke. Together they have 4 children, 5 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

In her community, church and at the University of Wisconsin, Hermine Dicke's volunteer efforts have made a significant impact. The list of her club memberships, positions she has held in various organizations and her activities in community service is impressive. Her community volunteering service has included years of work in various capacities. She was president of the Madison Area Retardation Council during which time the organization held its only city wide fund drive in 1957. She gave 20 years of service to the Black Hawk Council of Girl Scouts. She was chief of the Oneida Tribe of Nakoma League and a volunteer at St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center.

Her beloved church is Our Lady Queen of Peace. Here, she was president of the Queen's Guild, president of the Madison Deanery Council of Catholic Women and president of the Madison Catholic Women's Club.

As the wife of a University of Wisconsin Entomology Professor, Robert J. Dicke of 61 years, Hermine volunteered for University activities as well. She served as president of both the Daughters of Demeter and the Madison Friends of International Students.

Hermine is also strongly dedicated to her Slovenian heritage. For many years she was scholarship chairman of the Slovenian Women's Union of America, founded by her mother, Marie Prisland. She shared her excellent cooking skills by writing good columns for the Slovenian magazine, *Zarja*, and by publishing a series of popular cookbooks called *Pots & Pans*.

In 1979 Hermine was presented the Book of Golden Deeds award from the Madison Exchange Club for community



services. In 1982 she was recognized with a service award from the Madison Area Association for Retarded Citizens. She also received the Downtown Rotary Club Senior Service Award in 1985.

Currently at age 97, Hermine lives in a group home called London Lodge, Cambridge, Wisconsin, which is owned by her granddaughter Meg Torrez. This remarkably vital and engaging woman has touched and inspired many lives with her leadership and devotion to a broad spectrum of society. It is a unique privilege for Hermine to be selected by the awards committee of the Arc Foundation of Dane County to be the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award."

Aunt Hermine has had a profound impact on my own life. As a college freshman, she welcomed me into her home. In 1996 she asked me to apply for the SWUA Scholarship Director's job. However, in the lives of the Turvey family, the most important of all is her pioneer work, calling for public awareness of those with mental and physical disabilities.

My grandson E.J. was diagnosed with autism back in 1997. At that time, here in upper Michigan little was known of the treatment of autism, programs and resources were minimal, teachers not trained to work with those with learning disabilities. From grades one through grade six, E.J. sat in a regular classroom, non verbal, unable to communicate except through body motion and facial expression. Several years ago he was transferred to a Special Ed program in another school. There, a speech therapist, near retirement, knew of a new program "facilitated communication" in which a dynawrite keyboard/speaker was used as a method of communication. Imagine the level of excitement we all experienced when E.J., who has never said a word, not even "mama" or "daddy", sat down and excitedly typed "loving eyes are watching me".

Christmas is still the most popular festival of the Christian year. The Babe laying in his manger still has the power



to soften hearts, to reconcile the estranged and to evoke generosity toward the poor. May the light Baby Jesus brought to the world bring us out of darkness. May that light bring us a new birth of hope in the ancient promises of God. As you visit the crèche this year, may each of you dear ones, receive the gifts of comfort, love, and peace.

March 1, 2010 is the deadline for mailing scholarship applications.

Contributions, comments, and questions can be directed to mturvey@aol.com or Mary Turvey, SWUA Scholarship Director 4 Lawrence Drive, Marquette, Michigan 49855

Rechlitz Brothers Aid in Daring Rescue

On July 19, 2009, off-duty Milwaukee Firemen, brothers John and Joel Rechlitz, were called by John's wife, Joy, who had just come upon an SUV that had flipped over and burst into flames, trapping a mother and her two young children inside. The Rechlitz brothers arrived on the scene within moments to find a group of good samaritans already at work, struggling to free the family from the blazing vehicle. The rescue was captured in graphic video by bystander Jerry Lepkowski as his nephew, Jason, joined in on the frantic rescue bid. With the mother and younger child already freed from the burning vehicle, Joel and John took turns trying to wrest the 4 year old child free from his seat restraint, both burning their hands and arms badly in the process. Off-duty police Lt. Mark Wroblewski, who lives nearby, arrived with two fire extinguishers, and he and Joel Rechlitz tried to hold back the flames. Joel ran to his car and retrieved a knife and John was able to cut the boy loose. Another quick-thinking neighbor had a garden hose to douse the boy in cold water to stop the burning.

The Rechlitz brothers appeared on the TODAY show the next day, with heavily bandaged hands and arms as the result of touching melting metal during their rescue

ordeal, but still wore smiles. The boy, David (DJ) Harper, suffered burns over 30 percent of his body. He was listed in critical c o n d i t i o n ;

however, he is expected to recover with a stay of six months in Children's Hospital.



The two brothers, who are members of SWUA Branch 43, praised all the citizens who helped in the rescue "It was a total team effort" the Rechlitz brothers stated. They would, also, like to share this website: www.helpingdavid.com. Many thanks to Neil Willenson, Founder of One Heartland for assisting with the website and coordinating donations; Culver's Restaurants; A&W Restaurant near 27th Street and Grange Avenue; Joy and Kelly Rechlitz for coordinating donations AND literally, the millions of people praying for David and his family. Anyone wanting to read and/or view more on this story, go to www.google.com and enter John or Joel Rechlitz.

Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER 6-8

"Slovenian Heritage" weekend hosted by Branch 93 of New York City, New York.

NOVEMBER 8-9

Branch 1 SWUA Craft Sale.

NOVEMBER 14

Illinois/Indiana Regional Convention hosted by Branch 99 of Lemont, Illinois.

NOVEMBER 15

Penny Social hosted by Branch 2 of Chicago, Illinois.

Celebrate the 6th Anniversary Celebration of Branch 108 of Olney, Maryland and officer election from 2-5 p.m. at the Olney Community Room.

NOVEMBER 26-28 (Thanksgiving Weekend)

Tony Petkovsek's 48th Annual Polka Extravaganza at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Cleveland.

NOVEMBER 29

USPEH Chorus presents their annual Christmas Concert on Sunday at 2:00 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church, reception to follow.

DECEMBER 1

Branch 14 of Euclid, Ohio will host their annual Christmas Dinner at the Slovenian Society Home on Recher Avenue at 6:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 3

Branch 13 of San Francisco, California will host a Christmas Party Potluck at the Slovenian Hall at noon. Call Doreen at 415.468.5039 to RSVP.

DECEMBER 5

Branch 47 of Garfield Heights, Ohio will host their Christmas meeting at noon at the Valley View Community Center. Please bring a dish to share and \$5.00 gift for the raffle. Call Elsie Spellacy 1.330.699.0031 or Olga Dorchak 1.330.468.7989 for more information.

DECEMBER 7

Branch 99 of Lemont, Illinois will have their annual Christmas Cookie sale. For more information or to donate baked goods please contact: Barb Block at 630.379.6442.

DECEMBER 17

Christmas Luncheon hosted by Branch 12 of Milwaukee, Wisconsin at the Steak House 100 on 73rd and West Greenfield Avenue. All are welcome to attend. Call Virginia Strukel or Fran Remshak.

DECEMBER 20

Adult Christmas Party hosted by Branch 2 of Chicago, Illinois.

DECEMBER 27

Branch 20 of Joliet, Illinois will host their annual Christmas Party at the Barolo Restaurant.

JUNE 16-19, 2011

Mark your calendars for the National Convention to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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Men in a SWUA World

Our Fairytale Wedding in Slovenia By Gregor Rudl, Branch 103

After proposing to my now lovely wife in Acadia National Park in August of 2008, it was an easy decision to get married in Slovenia: Tatjana was born near Ptuj and both my parents were born in the country with "love" as part of its name. Also making it easy was the great food and drink, picturesque countryside, the affordability of it all, and our relatives and friends being able to join us.

We traveled to Slovenia over Christmas to find a hall and a church to tie the knot at. We didn't want the traditional "Sranga" (the games, the payoffs, the pole climbing, the log sawing, etc.) because Tatjana had long since left the village. Those wedding customs revolve around a man from another village marrying a girl and taking her away. We wanted something more modern and a touch classier, something in a picturesque location with fabulous food and a traditional Slovenian band. We found all of that at the Smogavc Gostisce in Gorenje pri Zrecah, just outside Slovenske Konjice. The restaurant and guesthouse is perched on a hill overlooking the Pohorje region, near the Rogla Ski Resort. A lunch there, with their delicious homemade mushroom soup and cheese struklji, confirmed our decision and we booked August 22nd.

Soon after returning to Washington D.C., the planning and preparation commenced. With our imagination and a lot of hard work, we created the wedding of our dreams. Bottles of Medica (honey schnapps) served as our wedding favors, which were made possible by Tatjana's mom. Her mom also bought the wine for the reception from a local vineyard and hired the band *Trio Pogladić*, made up of a father, son and daughter. Her cousins, who are professional bakers, baked about 20 varieties of cookies. A videographer was hired and the photography was done by Photo Tatjana from Maribor. Wedding festivities commenced at 1 p.m. with a table of appetizers, including bread with homemade spreads, Prosciutto ham cut fresh from the bone, other cold cuts and cheeses, seafood salads, smoked salmon, pasta salads and wine.

My bride missed this awesome spread because she made her arrival a little later, our wish was to see each other for the first time in the church. At about a quarter to two, we formed up and walked over to the church. The procession was led by *Trio Pogladić*. The church, St. Kundigunda, was just a quarter mile away. It was built in the second half of the 14th century.

After a slight delay, Tatjana's brother left the rings in the van at Smogavc, the children's choir in the loft started to sing. Then she appeared in the entranceway, the most beautiful and special thing I've ever seen. I looked away quickly to avoid having my eyes fill up with tears. Her



father brought her up to me, shook my hand and said watch over my little girl with tear-filled eyes.

After mass, we exited the church to a barrage of rice. Tatjana and I jumped aboard our horse-drawn carriage and returned to Smogavc for the civil marriage. It was held outside and performed by officials from the city hall of Slovenske Konjice. After that we toasted with champagne and had Tatjana's friend serenade us as he sung Elvis' *Love Me Tender*. Soon after, the band led us into the hall to the cheers of our guests. Dinner started at 6:30 p.m. with choice of beef soup or Smogavc's famous mushroom soup. The main course included stuffed young pork medallions and fried turkey breast in light beer batter, veal fillet with glazed shallots in a balsamic sauce, shall I continue? The party went well into the night with dancing, skits and games by the band, a visit by "Elvis" and "Helena Blagne" (a famous Slovenian singing diva) and enough food and drink to satisfy Henry VIII's court. We cut our cake at midnight outside which was followed by fireworks.

The next morning, I was surprised to find that we even made the back page of the well-known Slovenian newspaper *NE Delo*, courtesy of my cousin's good writing skills and connections. The newspaper's photographer made a special trip to shoot us at the altar. The headline read, "Proposal above the Atlantic Ocean, marriage below Rogla."

They say that a wedding is only one day and a marriage is a lifetime. Tatjana and I will look back on our one-day for the rest of lives with pride and amazement about how well everything turned out.

Find out more about our wedding at: <http://www.weddingwire.com/gregandtjajana>

The Path Taken

Frank Martin and Mary Dimeč Tamše

by © Mary Lou Deyak Voelk with Anne Hagan Stratton

November 2009 is a Centennial year for the Tamše family. On November 1909, newlyweds Frank Martin and Mary Dimeč Tamše set foot on Ellis Island.

My great-grandfather, Martin Tamše, was born in 1860 born in Topolšica or Šoštanj, Slovenia. He died in 1933. Martin was orphaned as a young boy and was raised by neighbors. His parents owned a timber farm, which he was to inherit when he became of legal age. Martin



Great-grandfather, Martin and wife, Marija (others unknown)

was married twice. Martin and his first wife (name unknown) had three children: Frank Martin, Helena (died 1922) and a son who died during WWI. After the death of his first wife Martin remarried. He and his second wife, Marija had 12 children. Martin died in a Ljubljana hospital. He was buried in a Ljubljana cemetery, as there was no money to bring the body home.

My Grandfather, Frank Martin Tamše was born July 16, 1884 in Topolšica, Slovenia. He died November 28, 1972 in Des Moines, Iowa. As the eldest son of Martin Tamše, Frank had entitlement to the family timber farm. Since his father's second family was so large, Frank saw it as being futile to claim the property. In 1909, Frank married Mary Dimeč.

My Grandmother, Mary Dimeč Tamše, was born April 11, 1886 in Celje, Slovenia. She died June 20, 1926 in Des Moines, Iowa. Mary was born to John and Apolonija Dimeč. Her father was a farmer who died at a relatively young age. Mary's brother Anton (known as Tony Dime in America) was the first to immigrate to America. Tony was an



Frank Tamše birthplace in Topolšica, Slovenia

entrepreneur. He was always looking to set up another business and he did quite well in all his endeavors. Tony encouraged his sister Mary and her new husband Frank to come to America. Frank and Mary arrived in Ellis Island in November 1909, where their name was changed from Tamše (pronounced Tom'-shu) to Tamse (pronounced Tam'-zee). Throughout the trip, Mary was extremely seasick. When they arrived in America, Mary asked Frank to buy her a new hat.

Their destination was Oklahoma where Tony and his family were living. Frank found work in the coalmines of Oklahoma. A year later, Tony convinced them to move to Indianapolis. Both families packed up and moved to the Midwest. Frank found work in an iron foundry, where he was paid by the piece molding iron.

Frank's brother, who was engaged to Mary's sister, had expressed interest in coming to America. Frank discouraged his brother, citing that employment was difficult to find, and salaries were low. It was a regrettable decision. His brother died in WWI.

Frank and Mary had 5 children, all born in Indianapolis: Frank Jr. April 15, 1911 - July 29, 1980

Frank married Blanche Mary Harrison on June 4, 1936. He became a banker in Des Moines, Iowa. They had three children: Frank W. Tamse, 6/27/1937; Susan M Tamse Betsinger 11/25/1939; Jean P. Tamse Brown, 9/27/1947. All are members of SWUA Branch 108.

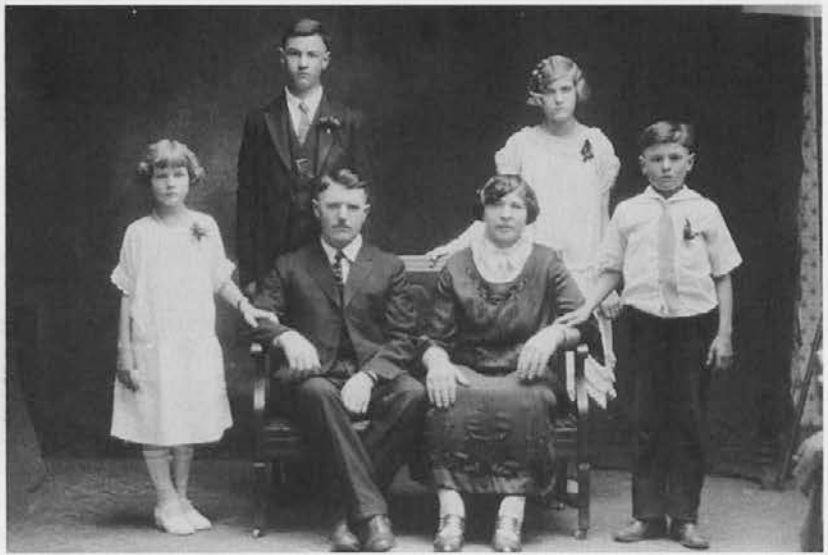
Mary 1912-1916 (*died of spinal meningitis*)
 Anna Rose June 25, 1914 - January 11, 1997
Ann worked with her father running the family store.

Joseph Ralph May 10, 1916 - January 11, 2004
Joe operated heavy equipment and helped build the Alaskan pipeline.

My mother, Louise Mary

May 21, 1918 - April 19, 2008

Louise married Joseph P. Hagan on May 1, 1948. She worked for the federal government as a comptometer operator until the birth of their first child and then she became a homemaker. They had 3 children: Anne K Hagan Stratton: 12/ 22/ 1953; Paul J Hagan, 7/21/ 1959; son, Kevin, died as an infant in 1958. The family lived in the Washington D.C. area from 1942 on. Louise was a member of SWUA 108 until her death. Today Anne is also a member, as are her daughters Kate and Lisa Stratton. Paul's daughters Julie and Kelly Hagan are also members.



Tamse family; spring of 1926, a month or so before Mary's death. The occasion of Louise's 1st Communion. (Left to right standing): Louise (8), Frank (14), Ann (12), Joe (10), (seated): Frank and Mary

It was 1919. Tony Dime again convinced Mary and Frank to move. This time it was to Carney, Iowa, outside of Des Moines. Frank delivered coal and Mary managed a coal mining grocery store. It was the age of silent movies! They were shown in the store using a wall as a screen. Later, Frank and Mary purchased their own store called **Frank Tamse Groceries and Meats**. The building included living quarters behind and above the store. Mary ran the store while Frank continued to deliver coal. Frank had two Republic trucks, a 3 ton and a 3¼ ton which he used for hauling coal and delivering groceries.

Once again, Tony tried to convince Frank, Mary and family to make a move, this time to Chicago. Frank refused. He

was established in business and saw no reason to move again and Mary reluctantly agreed. The grocery store was now a family affair. Why move?

The Slovenian community in the area was close knit. When my grandmother's cousin Rosie lost her husband, Joseph Šuštersič, she and her two young daughters came to live



Inside of Tamse Grocery Store, early 1930's. Frank Tamse in front, (left to right behind counter): Joe, Louise, Ann and Frank with Frank and Mary until she married Joe Biston. Rosie lost her two daughters to childhood illnesses. Another daughter, Erna, was born to Rosie and Joe Biston.

In 1926, Mary Dimeč Tamse, age 40, died suddenly after undergoing surgical removal of an outer goiter. Following surgery, the clamps had loosened, and by the time it was discovered she had lost too much blood. It was a sad time for the family. Frank struggled to run the business and raise the children. Frank brought a Slovenian bachelor to



Outside Tamse Grocery Store, early 1930's

live with the family to help with the cooking. When he died, Frank paid for his funeral. The grocery store was a family affair. All the Tamse children were involved in running the business. They became skilled with numbers and computations.

Frank was naturalized as a U.S. citizen on December 27, 1927 in Ankeny, Iowa. Frank and fellow Slovenians organized the former SNPJ Lodge in Des Moines. His children Frank and Ann were officers at various times. This lodge later merged with Chicago Lodge 800.

Anne's Memories

Every several years we would visit my mother's relatives in Iowa. As a child it was adventuresome going through the old steamer trunk on the second floor.

There were many photographs, but the most intriguing were of children and adults in their coffins surrounded by saddened family members. There were photographs of young girls dressed in their First Communion dresses, standing round the coffins. My mother told me that the young girls were flower girls. I found photographs of my grandmother Mary Dimeč Tamse and daughter Mary in their coffins. The trunk held many letters from family that had remained in Slovenia. These are still in my possession. I hope to have them translated someday.

The pictures from the steamer trunk played a large role in finding relatives in Slovenia. In 1980, my Aunt Ann traveled to Slovenia. She went to the village of Šoštanj looking for her family. Patrons in a local tavern directed her to the house of a cousin, Sylvester Tamše. Here they were met with open arms. The afternoon was spent visiting with cousins. They traveled to Topolšica, the birthplace of my grandfather, and saw the house where he was born. When my Aunt Ann died in 1997, I came across an address of one of the relatives. I kept this address and the stack of photographs that appeared to be related to the trip. I knew that someday I would make the trip to Slovenia!

It was in 2006, twenty-six years after Aunt Ann's trip, that my daughter Lisa and I traveled to Slovenia. Using the Internet, we made out our own itinerary, and we rented a car. After traveling to Ljubljana and Bohinj, we decided to make the village of Topolšica, my grandfather's birthplace, our home base. We stayed at a health spa, but the hotel staff spoke little English and there were many instances of miscommunication.



The "family tree"

Located across the street from the hotel/spa was a post office. I headed to the post office, armed with family photographs and a short note I had cobbled together using my Slovene-English dictionary. "My name is Anne Stratton. My grandfather was born in Topolšica. His name was Frank Tamse. Here is a picture of his house. Do you know where it is?" I handed the postal clerk the note and picture. She immediately started making phone calls, speaking Slovene. Other people entered the post office and they became engaged in the hunt. Out came my photographs. Most were from the early 1900's. But one was a "1970 vintage photo" of a lovely woman in a formal pink dress surrounded by family – a wedding picture. Upon seeing it, the postal worker exclaimed "Sylvana"! I was told that Sylvana worked in the post office in Šoštanj, the next village over. A phone call was made and we were directed to "follow that woman". After walking a few blocks we came upon a crowd of people who were waiting for the Americans to arrive! Sylvana was among those waiting! I learned that Sylvana was the daughter of Sylvester Tamše (deceased), the cousin my Aunt Ann met during her trip to Slovenia. We were at the house of Sylvana's cousin, Drago Tamše and family. Among the group were 3 young people in their twenties who spoke English! They became our translators for the next 3 days, and a wondrous 3 days it was.

We were introduced to many relatives. Food and drink flowed as we worked on the family tree, attempting to catch up on a century of family. Everyone knew of my grandfather Frank, as he was the only relative to leave Slovenia for America. They spoke with great pride of him and thought it was so courageous to leave Slovenia. One of the grandchildren played the accordion and we all danced the polka.

Drago surprised us by showing photos my grandfather had sent many years before. In the stack was the same photo I brought of the Tamse family in 1926, the occasion of my mother's 1st Communion – we had a match! We brought back copies of two photos I had never seen before. They

were pictures of the outside and inside of my grandfather's store.

My grandfather's birth home had been taken down, but we were able to see where it stood. Another family home had a large tree out front. We gathered around the tree and called it our family tree.

Most interesting was visiting the cemeteries and learning of traditions surrounding the gravesites. Families rent the plots and are obligated to tend them as they would a garden. Many family names are engraved on the granite tombs even though they may not be buried there. Families visit the gravesites at least once a week and light a candle in an enclosed red vase (these are purchased at post offices and stores).



*Anne and Lisa with relatives Sylvana, Drago and their family members
Back row - Anne, Sylvana, Jaka (Drago's son), Martine (Sylvana's sister-in-law), Drago
Front row - Lisa, Elizabeth (Sylvana's mother)*

My grandfather had talked about the Sveti Kriz (Saint Cross) church. Although the church could be seen from a distance, it took almost 40 minutes of driving up and down hills and around zigzag curves. The church was built in 1855 on a site where a farmer found a piece of wood in the shape of a cross. Mass is held only twice a year, on Christmas and Easter.

Each relative we met insisted that we visit their homes and walk through their lovely gardens. We were fed meats, cheeses and fresh tomatoes and of course there was gift giving. On the last day a family photo was taken with Drago's family with the promise to return again.

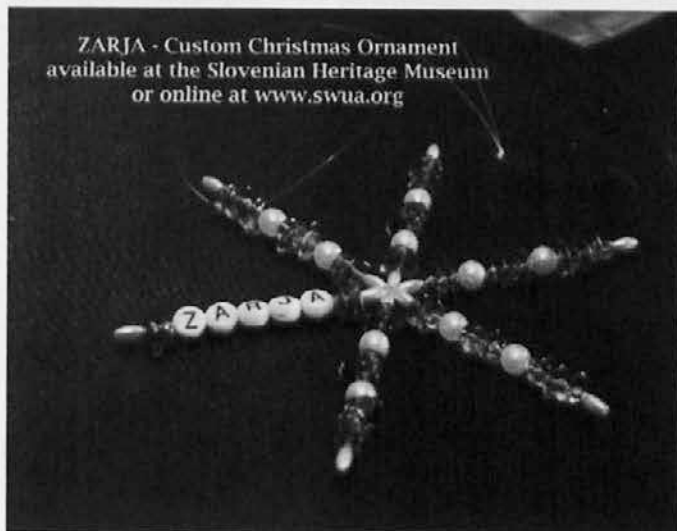
My cousin Jeanne and her husband Gene were attending a conference in Austria a few weeks after our return. They made the visit to Slovenia and experienced the same joy as Lisa and I, reconnecting with relatives we only had known from the photos and letters in the old steamer trunk.

In July 2009, I visited my cousins in Iowa, and we celebrated our grandparent's Centennial. During dinner we toasted with Slovenian schnapps, na zdravje (to health). We visited the gravesites of our grandparents, our aunt and uncles and lit the candle that I brought back from Slovenia. I almost didn't make it though the airport security with this candle. As it turned out, it is a battery operated candle. When you remove the straw inside, it lights up! This explains how the candle glows for a week in the Slovenian cemeteries. Each week then, the family brings a new candle for the week. These candles are extremely popular, and can be easily found in Slovenian stores.

I will definitely be making a potica in November 2009. Perhaps my brother and I and our families will have another celebration! - Anne Hagan Stratton

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Ana Češarek

International Award-winning Sculptor of Crèche Figurines

by © Mary Lou Deyak Voelk

Ana Češarek is an award-winning sculptor, known nationally and internationally for her creative crèche figurines. Ana created her first crèche from molds using old family figurines when she was in the 4th grade. From melted wax, plaster of Paris and some paints, a simple peasant Christmas crèche was created. Today it is tradition to display this same crèche in her home each Christmas. *"My simple crèche brings back the spirit of those early years."*

Andrej and Ana Češarek have 3 daughters, Mojca, Damjana and Andreja. Ana's creativity was channeled toward sculpturing a family home, nurturing their daughters and working the farm with Andrej. This meant feeding the animals, tending the garden and the never-ending farm chores. Once retired, Ana had time on her hands! Her son-in-law, Janez Pologorelec was the grandson of the well-known potter France Pologorelec. A locksmith by trade, Janez was also a part time potter! And so, Ana joined Janez in his workshop. Ana became energized with clay. Its versatile nature responded to her hands. *"It brought peace to my heart and soul."*

In just four years, the demand for her works grew to international acclaim. Ana has won numerous awards throughout Europe. A permanent crèche is on display in Brezje. Her crèche figurines have been on display in various churches in Slovenia; Ljubljana, Piran, Sv Gora by Nova Gorica, in Austria at Vienna and



Klangenfurt, in Italy at Verona and the Vatican. The Vatican was so rhapsodized with the crèche created for the Vatican that she received a Papal blessing. The procedure for this blessing began with Pope John Paul II and was completed by Pope Benedict XVI.

Once in her workshop, Ana creates in complete silence. She becomes completely engrossed in the project at hand. There are days she will create through the day and late into the night. Her methodology: *"I begin with the easiest piece and let the spirit from inside be my guide."* Each piece has a style and image and size of its own. She has no difficulty in creating a scene where all figures are proportionate. She is known for creating the Ribnica Peddler, that familiar figure that was a welcomed sight as he traveled through the Empire. The addition of this popular Slovenian symbol in the Christmas crèche represents the common man following the star in search of the Savior.



Today Ana uses “colored clay”. She was the first Slovenian artist to do so. There are many advantages. “*There are no dyes or additives and it is faster than if I had to buy the pottery clay.*” While the natural color of the clay



is the nearest to her heart, it can present problems. It is difficult to match all the pieces. There can be changes in the hue and color of the clay during drying and firing. For this she depends on her insight and sense from the feel of the clay as what tint will come through. Small pebbles in the natural clay can be a huge deterrent to making precise facial expressions but are the most important because they “tell it all”. Ana’s most recent works using this natural clay as found around Dolinja vas are up to 18 inches high.

But there is more, her works are found in outdoor grottos, chapels and churches. Personal requests come in for crucifixion scenes and figurines of saints. Once a year Ana conducts a workshop for seniors at Miklova Hiša in Ribnica, which is sponsored through the Ljudska Univerza Kočevje (“ljudska” means public). Such universities sponsor programs of higher education meant mainly for those who had not finished their formal education and have returned to finish a program or to take short courses. Such schooling appears to be what we in America call continuing education.)



Ana Češarek;

**Gifted, Spirited, Altruistic, Compassionate
and the grandmother to Andrej, Aljož, Gašper,
Sara, Žan and Ana.**

Grateful thanks go to my friend Sonia Avguštin of Slovenian World Congress for arranging this private interview with Ana at her home outside of Ribnica in October 2008 and for being the interpreter in our back and forth conversation. Grateful thanks also go out to SWUA members Albert and Paula Mavec of Joliet who put time and effort into translation of articles on Ana. This article could not have been written without their input.



The Bell Boy By Loretta Story

Many years ago, in a village called Novo Mesto, in the small country of Slovenia, there lived a young boy named Louis. He had many sisters 9 in all - some were older and some were younger than him, and they all called him "the prince" because he was the only boy in the family. His parents decided he needed to have his own room, which was impossible because their home was very small. So, they made him a cozy and warm room in the barn.

Louis loved it there because it was his very own place and his sisters could not bother him. He was never lonely or afraid because he had the farm animals to keep him company. At night he would tell them stories of his brave deeds, mostly exaggerated, and he would sing them songs. The animals were his captive audience and it was as though they could really understand his words and songs. His parents would hear him singing at night and they would say, "There he goes again singing to the cows and the chickens."

Louis was sometimes a mischievous boy who would skip school and then steal apples from the neighbor's orchard. Because of his behavior and his tall tales, no one took him very seriously.

One day, Louis' father gave him a small toolbox with the hope that he would spend his time more productively instead of getting into trouble. Louis discovered that the little hammer in the toolbox could be used for other things besides pounding nails. He would strike the little hammer against various metal containers, like the milk can and buckets, to make different sounds. His father would just shake his head.



they would return home for the delicious foods that awaited them. And, then of course there were the

presents. Often times they found a shiny apple or an orange, some nuts and perhaps a coin in their stocking. They were happy with their humble gifts but they were mostly happy being surrounded by the love of their family on this most holy night of the year.

One particular Christmas, as the people began to gather in the church, a terrible thing happened. The strong rope that pulled the church bells had frayed so badly that it broke. The man who usually rang the bells was so distraught, he didn't know what to do. It was Christmas and the bells had to be rung!

Louis, who had observed all of this, had an idea and ran as fast as he could through back to the barn where he grabbed the hammer. When he got back to the church he was all out of breath and tried to tell the men that he could ring the bells with the hammer. First, they were annoyed with him - this little boy how could he possibly ring the bells in the tall steeple? He looked at his father with a look that said, "I can do this!"

After some persuasion, Louis began his climb up the steeple. Up, up he climbed and when he reached the top he looked out and could see for miles in every direction. The snow covered the countryside like a soft white blanket that glistened like diamonds and the stars were shining so brightly he felt he could almost touch them.

In spite of the cold, Louis felt warm all over and with steady hands he began to tap the bells, first gently and then with more force. With each tap a melodious sound began to emerge from the steeple. It was no longer a silent night!

The music of the bells drifted over the village and even reached the ears of the barn animals. They knew this was a special night and Louis was a special boy.

The villagers were delighted that their beloved bells rang and even though the strong ropes were replaced, every Christmas, Louis had the honor of climbing up into the steeple to play the music of the bells.

As years went by, Louis said farewell to his homeland and made the long journey to America where he grew into a fine man who worked hard, raised a family, loved to sing and for many years still climbed the steeple of his church, St. Roch, to play the bells on Christmas.

This story is dedicated to my father, Louis Ahcin.

— Loretta Story, Branch 24

My Favorite Christmas Memory

My favorite Christmas memory takes me back to the days of my childhood. My mother would bake the most delicious cookies and decorate them with

care. My father took orders for and made sausage to be delivered several days before Christmas. The fragrance of the fresh balsam tree would fill the house with its aroma and underneath the tree, spanning from one wall to the other, would be the village and crib.

It would take my mother a full week to put that masterpiece together. The church and every home in the village had a light. Then came all the villagers and carolers and then on to the crib, where each lamb, shepherd, wise man and camel was lovingly put into place - waiting for the Holy Family to arrive on Christmas Eve. All of this was covered gently with the softest layers of cotton and then drizzled with flakes of artificial snow. Surrounding this scene was a white picket fence my Dad had made, which was also entwined with tinsel and lights. How there wasn't a fire, only God knows!

Underneath all of this I would lay on my stomach and look in awe at the sight before me - almost willing myself to jump in and be a part of it all. I was also fascinated with a single, green, glass ball on the tree with a piece of tinsel inside. I was so intrigued as to how that tinsel was put in there! Today, that same ornament is hung on our Christmas tree and each year I am filled with the same joy I felt as a child! Vesele bozicne praznike in screcno novo leto! - Loretta Story



Looking for a "bit" of Slovenian heritage, culture, information and great stories, before the arrival of the next issue of our bi-monthly magazine, *Zarja The Dawn*?

By subscribing to our *monthly* Online Newsletter, The New Neighborhood, you can have that "bit" of Slovenia pick-up each month!! Thank you! I look forward to sending you the Newsletter!

Jan King, SWUA Online Editor

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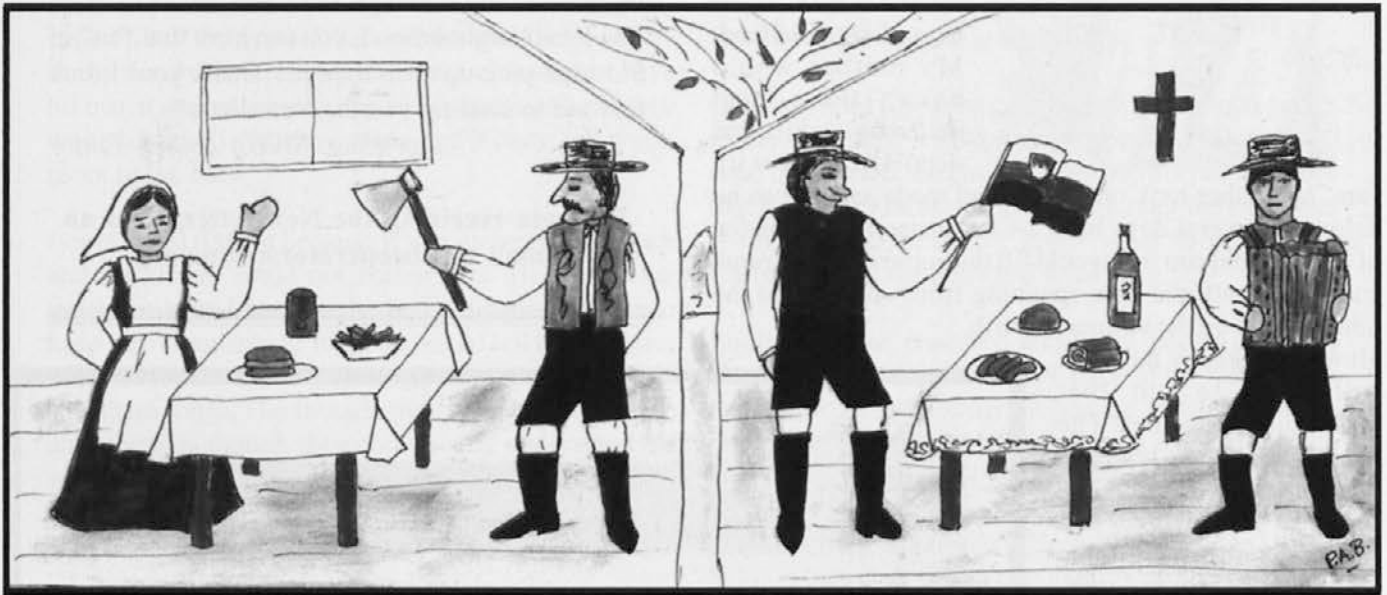


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Patricia A. Budzilek

Branch 14, Euclid, Ohio
Beehive Front Panel Grand Prize Winner



The Slovenian people are very proud of their heritage and want it to be kept alive for all time. This beehive panel illustrates two Slovenian homes where the wives have different ideas about following their Slovenian customs.

On the left of the panel is a home where we have a modern wife who puts aside the old ways. Her husband comes home and finds on the dinner table a meal consisting of a hamburger, French fries and a Coke. He is a true Slovenian as is seen by his dress, and becomes very angry that his heritage has been dishonored. He finds an axe that he threatens to use to destroy the dinner table and everything on it. His wife raises her hand to stop him.

On the right of the panel is a happy husband who comes home to find a table covered with a white tablecloth edged with bobbin lace on which there is traditional Slovenian food: Slovenian klobase, homemade bread, potica and Slovenian wine. His son plays the button box and will entertain with Slovenian folk songs. The husband is happily waving the Slovenian flag.

Editors Note: The Zarja staff would like to thank all of our contestants in our Beehive Front Panel Contest. They all are true Slovenian works of art. Congratulations Patricia.

Keeping the Slovenian Spirit Alive!

Slovenian Women's Union of America

2011 SWUA NATIONAL CONVENTION

Slovenian Win Calendar

February 2010 Fund-Raiser

\$10.00 PER TICKET

CASH PRIZES TALLING \$2,230

24 Daily Drawings at \$50.00

Feb. 1st and 28th at \$100.00

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Towards Convention Package

2011 SWUA National Convention

SWUA holds its' Nat'l Convention every four years in host cities around the country. These gatherings are important not only to conduct SWUA business but to have a forum for branch representatives to come together to give their reports, share their ideas, discuss concerns and further cement their mutual love and respect for all things related to their Slovenian heritage. Our next SWUA Nat'l Convention will be held in Milwaukee, WI, from **June 16th thru 19th, 2011.**

Plans are underway to make this another memorable event. The successful completion of this "Slovenian Win Calendar" fund raiser will provide monies to help defray the costs of conducting SWUA's Nat'l Convention. The Convention Committee is striving to offer an affordable convention package to enable delegates from every SWUA branch to attend. The calendars make excellent gifts for the holiday season, birthdays and to say "Thank You."

How Does the Fund-Raiser Work?

Everyone participating in the SWUA "Slovenian Win Calendar" fund-raiser has the chance to win cash prizes. Each day in the month of February, 2010, one winner will be chosen to win the listed cash prize for that day - \$50.00, \$100.00 or \$200.00. In addition, each day the person who sold that day's winning ticket will win \$10.00. The daily winner and seller can be one and the same and win both prizes.

Winners chosen on the 1st and 28th of February will win \$100.00 each. The month of February has long represented love and our beloved Slovenia is the only country in the world with "love" in its name. Thus, the names chosen on February 8th, Prešeren Day, the Slovenian Cultural Holiday and February 14th, Valentine's Day, will win \$200.00 each. In addition, the top sellers, 1st and 2nd place, will win \$100.00 and \$50.00 respectively towards their Convention package. It's a WIN opportunity for everyone.

Your Participation is Appreciated!

Good Luck!

Slovenian Women's Union of America

2011 SWUA NATIONAL CONVENTION

Slovenian Win Calendar

February 2010 Fund-Raiser

Registration Information

The cut-off entry form attached should be printed clearly and accompany your \$10.00 donation. Return your completed form by mail to Denise P. Bartlett's home office (please do not send cash by mail):

Denise Bartlett, SWUA Treasurer
Nat'l Convention Fund Raiser
7902 West Howard Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53220-1612

Your "Slovenian Win Calendar" entry will be eligible for all daily drawings in the month of February, 2010. Sellers

of the winning entries will receive \$10.00 as an award for their selling efforts. The daily drawing amount and the seller's \$10.00 prize will be mailed to the winners of record the next business day. Winners will be personally contacted and names also posted on the website: www.swua.org.

Need additional entries?
Contact Denise P. Bartlett at:
Home Phone: 414. 327.4990 or
denisebartlett@wi.rr.com

Entry Form

(Do Not Cut Form in Half)

Purchaser's Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Seller's Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Branch Location and Number: _____

Complete Form – Please Print

DETACH ENTRY FORM - MAIL
\$10.00 Check Payable to **SWUA** to

Denise P. Bartlett
SWUA National Treasurer

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IN MEMORY: Cherry Mining Disaster

Members of the Slovenian Women's Union of America extend sincere thoughts to family and friends whose relatives perished in the Cherry Mining disaster.



November 13, 2009 marks the 100th anniversary of the Cherry Mining Disaster where 259 men and boys working in two thick veins of coal 480+ feet below the surface,

suffered fiery and gaseous deaths. No family in the small town of Cherry, Illinois or in the surrounding area was left untouched by this tragedy.

MEMORIAL UNVEILING

A memorial with the engraved names of the 259 miners will be unveiled commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Cherry Mine tragedy. You are encouraged to arrive several hours prior to the unveiling to view photos, diagrams and stories in the Cherry Library. A trolley will run to the mine site and the local Cherry cemetery to view the tombstones.

Where: Cherry Library, Cherry, Illinois

When: November 14, 2009 at 1 p.m.

Contact: Ray Tutaj Jr. at gjourney1@yahoo.com

Coal Mining History

The coal mine in Cherry had a vertical main shaft of 500 feet. Miners dug horizontally in 3 veins or levels, thus creating tunnels and/or passageways. The coal and slag/rock was loaded onto mine cars pulled by mules. The coal was then hoisted to the surface in cages.

Fans forced fresh air down into the mineshaft for the miners. Electric lighting lit the underground mine and miners wore helmets with headlamps. Weeks before the disaster the electrical lighting system shorted out and kerosene torches were being used to illuminate the dark mine below.

On November 13, 1909, about noon, a load of hay destined for the mule stable in the 3rd vein was brought down into the mine. The hay had been pushed precariously to a spot directly under the kerosene torch. Kerosene dripped onto the carload of hay. It took just a spark to ignite the hay. The fatal mistake was reversing the fan that blew fresh air down into the mine. Two hundred and fifty-nine miners did not make it out of the mine alive.



Many died from a poisonous gas called black damp, which is caused from coal burning in an atmosphere lacking oxygen. Since the fan house had been severely damaged by the fire, no fresh air could be provided to miners who might have still been alive.

A group of twelve men made several trips down the main shaft to rescue the trapped miners. On the seventh trip, and after discussing with the cage operator to strictly obey the signals of the bell, the men descended into the smoke-filled mine. When the cage was once again brought to the surface, they found twelve men burned to their deaths.

But there was a miracle, when after 8 days, twenty-one men were found alive. They had entombed themselves to prevent smoke and black damp from strangling them.

The largest ethnic group among the surviving families was "Slavish", a word referring to those of Slovenian heritage. Other casualties were of Italian, Austrian, Scottish, Lithuanian, German, Polish, Belgian, French and a scattering of other heritages. Over 600 widows and orphans were left with no means of support. Many did not speak English and had no relatives to help them financially. Welfare as we know it was unknown.

Impelled by a public outcry over the tragedy, the Illinois legislature established stronger file and safety regulations governing mines in 1910. The Cherry Mining Disaster led to national requirements for safety in coal mines. New regulations required training and certification for operators. Fire-fighting equipment was required and workers under the age of 18 were prohibited. - *Mary Lou Deyak Voelk*

Research Sites and opportunities to learn more:

Cherry Mine tragedy homepage: <http://guitarjourney.tripod.com/cherrycoalminedisaster>

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Springfield, IL 800.610.2094 or 217.782.5764

November 1, 2009 A major exhibit will open to mark the 100th anniversary of the Cherry Mine Disaster: "The Flames Caught Us" Cherry Mine 1909

November 7, 2009 6 p.m. Author Round Table Discussion Ronald Bluemer "Fire Below"; Dean Cotton, "Oneness Angiolina, The 1909 Cherry Mining Disaster"; Steve Stout, "Blank Damp: The Story of the Cherry Mining Disaster"; Karen Tintori, "Trapped: the 1909 Cherry Mine Disaster" and Ray Tutaj Jr., Musical performance dedicated to the Cherry Mine Disaster.

Farewell letter of Consul General Dr. Zvone Žigon

Dear fellow Slovenians, dear friends!

In the mid of May this year, I achieved one of my biggest personal goals. I ran my first full marathon. It was not easy, but it was beautiful, I enjoyed it, and at the end, I felt deeply satisfied and proud. With the end of August, I am completing another marathon - the distance was - 4 years. My stay in Cleveland was in many ways similar to running the marathon. Same as with running, the beginning was anything but easy. America was more different from Slovenia than my wife Irena and I expected. I guess, those who came from Slovenia know the feeling.

Let me browse through some moments of those four years. I arrived to an empty office in which nobody worked for eight months, so I had to start virtually from the beginning, even more, I had to "clean up" a full desk of consular matters. After just four months, we moved the office to new premises. It was just me, my assistant Johanna, my wife and another beginning.

From the very first day, I tried to be present at as many Slovenian events as possible, and in February 2006 I organized my first one, a Slovenian Cultural Evening with a concert of classical music at St. Mary's Church. By the spring, I gained enough self-confidence and respect among the Slovenian community that, with a great joint effort of almost all Slovenian organizations, we produced Cleveland Slovenian days, 6 weeks of Slovenian culture all around Cleveland, which ended the best possible way, with the visit of a world famous Slovenian Octet and the Prime Minister of Slovenia Mr. Janez Janša, who visited the all-Slovenian exhibit at City Hall, Slovenska Pristava and SNPJ farm in Enon Valley.

After waiting one year, in the fall of 2006 I started talks about organizing some kind of a "heart" of a very diverse and dispersed Slovenian Community. First meetings and brain-stormings on a Slovenian Museum and Archive began. In the year 2007 we started with another February concert, with a Slovenian web page ClevelandSlovenian.com, with Cleveland Slovenian Ski club and with first meetings of different sections of Cleveland Slovenian Business and Professionals Association. In the same time, I started intensive talks on establishing a Center for Slovenian Studies with Slovenian language courses. That May I ran my first 10k and ambassador Žbogar completed his first marathon and raised large amounts of money for ITF for de-mining and victims of land mines. On the same occasion we also unveiled Slovenian Maiden, "Slovenka", in the Cleveland City hall (with great help of Mr. August Pust and City Councilman Michael Polensek).

The first half of 2008 was another huge "uphill" on my run. Slovenia was chairing the EU and I again initiated and organized or co-organized a series of events, from an international business conference in Cleveland ("How To Do Business With New EU") to a celebration of the Europe day in the Roosevelt U in downtown Chicago, not to

mention exhibits, numerous presentations of Slovenia and EU at different Universities, clubs; together with business and professionals association we hosted the American Ambassador to Slovenia Mr. Yousif Ghafari, we organized a tour of five members of Slovenian Parliament etc. I have to specifically mention a very special event though: a poetry reading in the Slovenian National Home when 13 honorary consuls read the poetry of their countries, we had a slide show featuring their countries and Korotan choir singing Slovenian poems in songs.

This time was also very difficult for me, as in July I lost my father. The Slovenian community showed enormous compassion and touched me to the bottom of my heart.

The second half of the same year begun with one of my biggest goals achieved, Professor Luka Zibelnik arrived from Slovenia and started the Slovenian language courses at Cleveland State University and Lakeland Community College, and one more thing to mention – together with Frank Zalar, John Nemec, Phil Hrvatin and Kevin Richards from Pittsburgh, we organized the first bowling tournament with participation of all Slovenian organizations, symbolically called *SloBowl United*.

The year 2009 was no different in intensity. In February, we organized a cultural evening with Slovenian Schools; the Center for Slovenian Studies started functioning with an executive director, Ivana Yuko, I focused on a huge amount of consular work and also running, and in May I coordinated a visit of 5 Cleveland Slovenians to the World Congress of Slovenian Doctors in Slovenia. On June 14, newly appointed Slovenian ambassador Roman Kirn officially opened the Consulate of Slovenia in Lemont, IL, and gave credentials to newly appointed honorary consul Dr. John Vidmar.

In June we helped to organize a concert of Slovenian Railways Wind Orchestra to honor Slovenian Statehood Day, and then two more events happened: the City of Cleveland and Slovenian Councilmen Polensek and Cimperman organized a farewell event in the City Hall Rotunda, where I dedicated my exhibit of photography named *America – Colors, Shapes and Shadows to Americans* – with this act I wanted to say good bye to Cleveland and show Americans my view of their country. On July 30, members of the newly established Slovenian Museum and Archives opened new premises of the museum, with a very precious exhibit of photography by National Geographic photographer Arne Hodaliè about archeological findings of treasures in the river of Ljubljana, and with this act the museum is officially starting to function. Members of the board spent hundreds of hours finding legal ways, technical solutions and financial background to start it running, already organized a couple of provisional exhibits and started collecting artifacts. I want to congratulate them on job very, very well done and invite everyone to join the efforts to preserve Slovenian ethnic heritage in the USA.

I should not skip my excellent cooperation with Slovenians in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois, especially members and leadership of Slovenian Women's Union of America and Zarja. We met several times in Minneapolis, Chisholm and Ely, Minnesota, Milwaukee and West Allis, Wisconsin and Chicago, Lemont and Joliet, Illinois. I definitely enjoyed visits to the SWUA Museum and archives and want to thank and congratulate you on your efforts and achievements!

During four years, we also took care of four elections, approximately 2,000 consular acts per year, numerous guest musicians and exhibits and tried to be present at as many as possible Slovenian events. On this occasion I want to specially thank to my first assistant Johanna Bajc. She was there from the very beginning, helped me and Irena to make our first "steps" in America, helped to organize the office and became a "trade mark" of Slovenian consulate, with her efficiency, knowledge and kindness. Thank you, Johanna...!

There were though, some projects and wishes that never came true. I never managed to organize direct flights from Cleveland to Ljubljana, due to a general crisis in air-industry. I never managed to fulfill my promise and organize regular consular hours somewhere on the East side of Cleveland, there was simply no time due to a permanently full desk of consular work. I never succeeded to establish more frequent visits to the Joliet area, due to lack of time. And I never managed to make the Slovenian community in the USA self-organize and establish a representative and coordinative body. We did organize a convention on which representatives of different organizations from

different parts of the USA participated, elected Ivan Kamin from New York and Milan Ribič from Cleveland to represent American Slovenians to Slovenian Government, but this body never really started functioning by itself.

As said, this 4 year "run" was not easy and not everything could go ideally. So, now, despite some negative spots, as approaching the finish line, I do feel satisfied and proud. And as I approach to the end of this letter, I must say a big THANK YOU to all Slovenian organizations, schools, churches and individuals, for being so open to me, for cooperating with me and for understanding me, even if I did some mistakes.

Special thanks to Slovenian media, especially to *Zarja - The Dawn*, for publishing Consular press releases and positively reporting about our projects!

Finally, I want to thank to my wife Irena. Many would probably escape after first two months. Not only that she voluntarily helped in the office, she always stayed on a solid ground and kept me on the right track, as she had to fight with homesickness and live through all this, in good and bad times - WITH me; criticizing or encouraging, but after all, loving me...!

Since *Zarja* is published by SWUA, I want to thank to SWUA National President Bonnie Prokup for all understanding, cooperation and friendship, and wish her and SWUA all the best in your endeavors to preserve Slovenian identity in the USA for the future!

*Na svidenje!
Zvone Žigon*

A LEGEND OF SAINT NICHOLAS

Bernice Krasovec

This entertaining book will warm hearts of both children and adults as they gather together to celebrate the holiday season. St. Nicholas (Sveti Miklauz) Day in December 6th.

Bernice Krasovec, Curator
St. Mary Slovenian Library
4730 Rosecrest Ct.
Pueblo, CO 81005

	Quantity	Price of Each	Total Price
<i>A LEGEND OF SAINT NICHOLAS</i>		\$5.95	
		Sub Total	
		Postage and Handling	\$2.05
		CO residents add sales tax	
		Total	

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Branch Reports

Poročila Podružnic

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Many thanks to all of our members who volunteered to guarantee the success of the annual SS. Cyril and Methodius Slovenian Festival. We had beautiful weather and enjoyed a day of fun and polkas.

Member Dick Jelovnik and his son traveled to Slovenia in May 2009. His presentation at our August meeting was most interesting. Of special interest to him was meeting a fellow wood carver during his travels. On display at our meeting was a sample of his intricate and delicate work. Imagine Dick's surprise when an acquaintance remembered him from his trip in 1976! Dick would have been remiss in his talk if he did not mention the many invitations of food and drink from everyone he encountered.

The SWUA craft sale on November 8-9 is fast approaching and preparations are ongoing.

SS Cyril and Methodius has a beautiful Christmas crèche, which was donated many years ago by some parishioners. In the early 1980's our pastor, Father Richard Falle painted a magnificent backdrop for the manger scene. In it, the angels sing their praises under a shining star. We have been blessed to have this wonderful artwork become one of our favorite Christmas items. Enjoy!

ANGIE FRITZ

BRANCH 2 - Chicago, Illinois

We are getting ready to enjoy the holidays with much shopping, decorating, visiting, baking and going downtown to see the window displays. It is always so exciting.

We are sorry to report we lost another member, Jennie Worth who was a member for 23 years, we will miss her. Our condolences to her son Joe (Branch 2 Vice President), her daughter Anne and to the members of her family. Please remember her in your prayers that she will rest in Peace.

Congratulations to Mike and Susan Morison on their new positions in San Francisco. Do they know that we lost our hearts to that City when we attended a wonderful National Convention many years ago? Good Luck to you both.

Dates to remember: November 15 - Penny Social and December 20 - Adult Christmas Party. We wish everyone a Blessed Christmas and Happy Healthy New Year 2010. Remember our Troops in your prayers for their safety and hopeful they will be home soon.

DAISY

BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

For decades St. Mary's Church in Pueblo, has celebrated the Feast of St. Nicholas on December 6th with a special Mass followed by a reception where the Bishop, parish

Priest or layman attired like St. Nicholas would give bowls of goodies to the children. While at the Mass everyone in the congregation brought a wrapped Christmas gift that would be placed at the statue of St. Nicholas to be given at Christmas time to the needy children of the area. This continued yearly to keep the Slovenian tradition alive in the hearts of the parish young people.

One of the early pastors at that time asked the parish secretary, Bernice Krasovec to write down the story about the feast day. She did; writing it in verse. There were so many requests for copies that Father Blane Bebble suggested that it be put into the form of a children's book, and became a fund raiser for the celebrations.

The book started out, "*Did you ever wonder just how the custom of gift-giving came to be, or how the bowls on the eve of St Nicholas were filled so secretly?*" The story then went on with the life of St Nicholas, and ended, "*So from many folk tales of the Old World came, a number of customs we keep, all beautiful dreams that CAN come true, while little children sleep.*"

The Slovenian Library at St. Mary's School in Pueblo continues to provide these books entitled. *THE LEGEND OF ST. NICHOLAS* as the Slovenian approach to Santa Claus and gift giving.

BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana

Holiday Greetings! The smells of Thanksgiving dinner cooking are my favorite! I love being the only one awake on Thanksgiving morning, and putting the turkey into the oven. When the household awakes later, the aroma of that buttery bird fills the air! I remember my Uncle Louie telling how one summer a flock of wild turkeys showed up at their Brown County cabin grounds, so he decided to fatten them up so one would be just right for their Thanksgiving dinner...boy, was he wrong! I think he said "old and stringy", but I was laughing too hard at his story. Stories of dinners past are always told, recipes were better, turkeys were bigger, but always family and friends together.

At our house, we always go out on the Friday after Thanksgiving and cut down our Christmas tree. Sometimes it is sunny and warm, breezy and cold, or just plain wet and nasty...but it is tradition! We let the tree sit and warm up in the garage overnight, and then on Sunday, out come the decorations - box after box of handmade school decorations, glittery stars, crystal hearts and lights. Multi-colored stars that twinkle and shine among the fragrant branches. Miniature Christmas village houses, with children skating on an icy pond light up the bay window. As each item is pulled from its box, the story behind it is remembered. But always, as the Nativity set is unboxed, and placed on top of the tall cabinet in the family room and the Star is placed atop the tree...that is when it really is Christmas! Merry Christmas to All, and to All a Good Night!!!

KAREN, MARY AND PHYLLIS

BRANCH 12 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

At our first meeting it was wonderful to see the same faces we left in June when we had our picnic. It seems as though each new season we lose a few more friends, but thank goodness we survived the summer.

We discussed at length the State Convention hosted by Branch 43 and Baraga Days. We also planned our Christmas luncheon, which will be held on December 17th at the Steak House 100 on 73rd and West Greenfield Avenue. We invite all of our friends from the branches especially Branch 43 to help us celebrate. Call either Virginia Strukel or Fran Remshak and we will fill you in with all of the details.

We had the privilege of enjoying the "KONCERT IN THE PARK" event with guest artists, ensemble *Erazem* from Postojna, Slovenia, which was hosted by the U.S.P.E.H. Organization. The group presented a short cultural program and then entertained us with music for our dancing pleasure. The event was presented for the purpose of generating funds for U.S.P.E.H. so it can continue its mission of preserving ethnic heritage thru its Newsletter mailed to over 600 Slovenians all over the country free of charge. Needless to say we should be able to continue on with the Newsletter.

Now since this is the holiday issue which you are receiving and the theme was Christmas crèche, I like other members, was born during the depression when money was not readily available, so we had no Christmas tree, nor did we have a nativity scene, but as poor as we were the lights in one room of our upper flat were left on all night for the coming of our Lord, and even though there was no money for toys and gifts, we always knew that Jesus found his way to our house because the lights showed him the way. This tradition is still carried on at our house, but now we have a beautiful nativity scene and we have the Christmas tree and the outdoor Christmas lights, which remain on all night, with loads of gifts under the tree, but I feel that the ways of the depression era were in many ways more memorable, when on Christmas morning my brother, sister and I found a plate with a few pieces of candy, an orange and a walnut, which we assumed were left by Jesus. What memories!!

FRAN REMSHAK

BRANCH 13 - San Francisco, California

Our annual BBQ was one of the best days of a great summer in San Francisco. We had a Hawaiian theme with music, decorations and food. The best part of the day was that all three of our new young members attended.

Special thanks to my daughter-in-laws Amy and Katie Rathbun for all their help with decorating which reminded one of being in Hawaii. Everyone received a beautiful lei



Branch 13 members at their annual BBQ

and flower for their hair. Both Katie and Amy made wonderful fresh fruit salads. Amy and her husband Joe were the BBQ cooks. Alina Spencer along with her baby son Jack and husband Kevin were there. Alina made two beautiful Hawaiian pineapple upside down cakes. It is so good to see young people join in!

Needless to say, we spent a great deal of time enjoying our fabulous food. Everyone had a good time and of course the fun we had with baby Jack and all his relatives.

Our Slovenian Church, which serves the Slovenian community in the San Francisco Bay Area is the Church of the Nativity. So the crèche has always been importation to all of us Slovenians. We always had a life-size nativity with live large Christmas trees on the side of our altar. It was really beautiful. At our Christmas celebration we all brought our own crèche to put on the tables, so every family had a crèche in front of them while we ate. We turned out the lights and just had candles burning.

Our Christmas Party Potluck is Thursday, December 3rd at noon at the Slovenian Hall. Please call President Doreen Sustarich at 415.468.5039 to RSVP and let her know what you would like to bring.

The Board of Directors of Branch 13 would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a healthy Happy New Year.

BARBARA CHIODO bchiodo@comcast.net

BRANCH 14 - Euclid, Ohio

Our get well wishes go out to our president, Diane Varney, who recently had surgery. It is due to Diane and all her efforts that Branch 14 is still flourishing, and we sincerely thank her for her work throughout the years. Everyone needs her as a vibrant, happy and healthy person who is able to continue taking care of her husband, family and friends, and when she has the time, to continue her work for our branch. May we all say a prayer that Diane returns to full health. Prayers to St. Padre Pio rarely fail.

The blessed season of Christmas is upon us with all the traditions that are part of the Slovenian culture. Branch 14 has sponsored for many years a Christmas get-together and dinner. Being with friends is an important part of the holidays and for many of us, the only time we see some of them are at events like our Christmas dinner. We have some very talented members who may ask us to join them in singing traditional Slovenian Christmas hymns, although few sing along as everyone is entranced by the vocalizations of our singing angels.

Our Christmas dinner is as usual the first Tuesday on December 1 at 6 p.m. at the Slovenian Society Home on Recher Avenue in Euclid. Once again our member, Sophie Mazi, and her helpers will be preparing a traditional Slovenian dinner from salad to dessert for a cost of \$10. We must thank these generous workers for all their efforts and realize that they are giving from their hearts.

Stana Grill is in charge of calling members and taking dinner reservations, so if she misses you, please call her. Working with Stana I know that she is so exact and precise about everything and I doubt that she ever misses anyone. I don't know what we would do without her.

Again, please say a prayer for Diane. We look forward to seeing her and her husband, and all members and friends who we so enjoy being with at our dinner. A blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

PATRICIA A. BUDZILEK

BRANCH 16 - South Chicago, Illinois

Our former member, Helen Milanovich passed away on Fathers' Day this year. She has been living in Florida for quite some time. We attended her dinner after the funeral Mass and it was quite interesting to hear about the way the Kuhels (her father was a Kuhel) have gotten so much information on these families. Joe Kuhel sat at our table and we had a very interesting conversation about all the Kuhels and their descendants. Much to my surprise they showed us a picture of their family and I saw my brother-



Branch 16 left to right *John Strus, Jim Rossi, Rudy Novak, Dan Hennelley, In the background - John Krcmaric*



Branch 16 left to right *Dolores Hennelley, Olga Kowalski, Fran Novak, Dorothy Rossi and Mary Jane Strus*

in-law standing in the back row, he was the son of Frank Kuhel and his wife. My sister's name was Mary Novak and he had all her information. When we went to Lemont for the Slovenian Cultural Center picnic, we saw some of the relatives. Mary Jane was at the dinner too and she mentioned quite a few people that were descendants of the Kuhels too. That is just great to have that many relatives within the area.

At our meeting, Mary Jane Strus accepted the position of treasurer for our branch. She now holds two offices, treasurer and vice president, thank you Mary Jane.

Our member Tina Sertich's son George passed away quite suddenly on July 31, we send our deepest sympathy to her. May he rest in peace. In the meantime, Tina is having trouble with her back and hip and she will be in rehab for a while. Get-well Tina we miss you, our thoughts and prayers are with you.

DOROTHY ROSSI

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Our annual Christmas party will be celebrated December 27 at Barolo Restaurant. Chairpersons Rita Bottomley and Renee Herbst promise plenty of fun and surprises for all.

St. Joseph Church in Joliet and the spiritual home for the Slovenians has been the site of a restoration project over the last few years. Two beautiful murals above side altars are being restored to their original glory and member Bob Figurowski volunteered his talents. Anyone visiting the Church will be especially amazed at the work done in the Chapel of Marija Pomagaj. The beauty of the Madonna and Child altar picture is breathtaking. We can be proud of our heritage and loving preservation of so beautiful a church.

Kudos to our meeting hostesses during the year: September - Agnes Dobczyk and Jeanne Warsaw, October - Lynn Wartenburg and Nancy Ferencik and November - Cheree Lewis and Dawn Irwin. And as always the delicious desserts are usually homemade for our meetings.

Our annual Grape Harvest Festival Dance in September was fantastic. Music provided by the popular Bruce Korosa and his orchestra brought out the dancers in all of us. The St. Joseph Park hall was transformed into a typical village Slovenian Town Square with brightly decorated tables and plenty of Slovenian food and wine. We always know how to party.

Congratulations to member Mary Mihelich being named as one of KSKJ Lodge Persons of the Year 2009. Mary was honored for contributing her time, talent and outstanding service to KSKJ.

We also honor our members and relatives of members who have recently passed. Member Sister Marlene Ambrose on the passing of her sister; members John Anzelc, Mary Ellen Anzelc and Janet Orr on the passing of long-time member and mother Mary Anzelc; the brother of members Mary Ann Gregorich and Richard "Zeke" Russ; and the brother of member Frances Trautner. Our sympathies to the families and friends.

PAT SCHAGER patricia.schager@sbcglobal.net

BRANCH 23 - Ely, Minnesota

Dober dan members of SWUA. It has been a very busy summer for many of our people here in Ely. Our little town is a haven for tourists and relatives in the summer.

Our branch has not met since May when we celebrated our Member of the Year, who was Mary Mavetz. The celebration was held at Veterans on the Lake, a resort on Fall Lake. We had a great time, and Mary and her family were really pleased with all the arrangements.

Ely has two festivals every year the Blueberry Arts Festival in July and the Harvest Moon Festival in September. Our little town swells by thousands for the three-day fests, and this year was no different. Blueberry picking was really good in our area as my husband, Bernie can attest to he picked over six gallons himself.

Our parish priest, Father Skarich, had the experience of his life a few weeks ago. He is a hunter and after waiting in a stand for more than eleven hours, he shot a 450-pound black bear. I can only imagine the excitement of bagging such a trophy. Needless to say he was very thankful to God for a successful hunt and beautiful day. He is even rendering the lard himself.

Our branch is now holding a fundraiser that is going very well. We are selling cloths that clean glass as well as other objects without using any additional cleaner. People are really impressed and excited about them. We are trying very hard to continue to do interesting things in order to keep our branch vital and alive.

Come October we will begin our luncheon meetings like we did last year. We hope that they will prove to be successful once again. Wishing our best to all our brothers and sisters in the SWUA.

GERRY KLUN PETRICH

BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Dober Dan! Our first meeting of the year took place on September 17 and plans were set in motion - fall and Christmas committees, bake less bake sale and a Mass for deceased members on November 8 at St. Bede Abbey, Peru. The ten o'clock Mass will be followed by a breakfast at John's North Star in La Salle for those wishing to attend.

As always, our hopes and dreams include an increase in membership and attendance. We have so much to share and learn from one another.

We wish to extend congratulations and best wishes to Hank and Martha Lushina on their 50th wedding anniversary, which was celebrated in September. May God continue to bless their lives together with good health and happiness.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of our members who are sick and/or shut in.

Our heartiest congratulations go out to Minnie Carter who celebrated her 95th birthday in September. We are proud to say that Minnie has been a long time member of our branch and we wish her all the best!

As the Advent and Christmas season approaches, our hearts are filled once again with the renewed hope the Christ Child brings. Let us bring our worries, prayers and that hope to the Manger, and until next time, may your hearts be filled with peace and love.

LORETTA STORY 9lives@comcast.net

BRANCH 35 - Aurora, Minnesota

Greetings to all! Branch 35 met on the most beautiful day, Wednesday, August 12, with eight members present. We took care of plans to attend the Minnesota Regional Convention and about our 80th Anniversary.

Anne Orazem celebrated her 90th birthday (actual date July 24th) a little early this year but in no less grand fashion with two celebrations on July 4th and 5th. She first enjoyed a day at the lake sharing a birthday celebration with her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren punctuated by fireworks and



Anne Orazem

traditional Slovenian dishes all made with love. The next day she welcomed an additional 200 family members and friends from all across the Iron Range and as far away as Massachusetts, North Carolina, Michigan and Florida! Loving wishes and many more happy, healthy years for a wonderful sister, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and dear friend. Happy Birthday Anne/Nan! We love you!



Branch 35 members at the Welcome Reception for Dr. Žigon

Another event to work on is the Aurora Heritage Festival in early December. I would like to participate as the Slovenian Postage Stamp will be featured. Each year they feature a different country and you may bring your Christmas cards there and they will stamp them for mailing. We will make plans for our Advent Party at our November meeting and also select a nominating committee for our December election.

We closed the meeting with prayers for our sick and shut-in members and also our deceased members. We especially said a prayer for our recently deceased member, Margaret Cina, one of our honored Members of the Year. We pray for all our members for their health and whatever needs they may have and also our Troops.

Bernice Ceglar and Anita Vovk made a picnic lunch, our favorite, "Birthday Sandwiches" and egg salad sandwiches with chips. Bernice brought a beautiful raspberry dessert. We drew for prizes and reminded the ladies of the next meeting, which will be our Anniversary Party. Until next time, "na svidenje"!

ANITA VOVK
218.229.3202
gospanita@yahoo.com

BRANCH 39 - Biwabik, Minnesota

It was a bountiful harvest of cabbage for the Ribich family. Plants were placed in sandy loam in the spring and had to be fenced in to keep the animals at bay. The largest cabbage head was 23 pounds. The weight of the total heads was 148 pounds. Mike Zupetz is shown shredding the cabbage and it took a couple hours to do. Who remembers the crocks of shredded cabbage and heads fermenting for that wonderful tasting saurkraut? The yield was fifty-one (51) quarts of



kraut, canned and ready for our favorite recipe of Sarma. How good it is also with fresh sausage,

spareribs or left-over sunka on a cold winter night. We must not forget the boiled krompir to complete this tasty supper. Memories??

ROSMARY RIBICH

BRANCH 40 - Lorain, Ohio

Our August luncheon turned out to be a celebration of my 90th birthday, an afternoon spent with a group of good friends, good food, topped off with cake and picture taking. Thank you, my friends! The celebration did not end there as my family had a Mass of Thanksgiving in honor of the day, followed by a picnic at my home on Sunday, August 16th with all my children, grand children and great-grandchildren present, all but one grandson who is half a world away, working in Korea. The day ended with a fireworks display. All had a great time! My wish for all of



Stephanie Polutnik's birthday celebration

you is that you may experience such a wonderful occasion in your lifetime. To the right is a picture of my dear family – that’s me in the middle holding my youngest great-grand-child, three month old Elsie Jane. My great grand sons are Charlie, Joey, Caleb and Owen.

For our September luncheon, we met at Red Lobster and had special guests

Father Paul Krajnik and his sister who is visiting from Slovenia, Sister Theresa. The final Mass and closing of SS Cyril and Methodius Slovenian Catholic Church in Lorain took place on October 4th, 2009, a sad day for our Slovenian community.

As this will be the final issue of Zarja before the holidays, I wish you all a bountiful Thanksgiving, a Blessed Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year!!!

STEPHANIE POLUTNIK
step@windstream.net



Stephanie Polutnik and her family at her birthday celebration

BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

It’s been a very busy summer, with events happening all the time in the Slovenian Community. Now it is time to focus on the fall and winter activities, some of which have already happened, including our State Convention.

Many thanks to Josephine Janezic, Toni Needham, Rose Chepeck, and Yvonne Khaldy, all from our Branch, who managed the bakery sales at Triglav Park when the U.S.P.E.H. Organization hosted the “Konzert in the Park” featuring the ensemble *Erazem*. The bakery sales would not have been such a success if it weren’t for the many delicious donations. Thank You, Bakers!

Mark Your Calendars! The U.S.P.E.H. Chorus will present their annual Christmas Concert on the First Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2009, at St. John the Evangelist Church at 2:00 p.m., reception to follow. Please join us for an afternoon of Slovenian Christmas Carols.

Condolences are extended to the four sons, their spouses, eleven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren of Frances Dragon, who passed away in July. Frances was a member of our Branch for many years. Rest in Peace, Frances.

Sincere condolences are extended to Tom and Jan Gehm on the loss of Tom’s Mother, Margaret in September. Rest in Peace, Margaret.

The time and place of our National Convention has been set. The dates are June 16-19, 2011, and the place is the Double Tree Hotel in downtown Milwaukee. The Committee, headed by Denise Bartlett, is planning an interesting and fun-filled program, so mark your calendars.

MICI BREGANT

BRANCH 47 - Garfield Heights, Ohio

Here is hoping everyone has a Blessed Holiday Season. Our next Meeting is November 8, 2009 at the Maple Heights Library. Our Christmas Meeting is December 5, 2009 at the Valleyview Community Center. Time is 12:00 p.m. please bring a dish to share and a \$5.00 gift for our raffle. Hope to see you all there.

Prayers and best wishes go out to all members and their families for the holidays and birthday’s these next few months. Contact people Elsie Spellacy 1.330.699.0031 or Olga Dorchak 1.330.468.7989 or e-mail Katherine Wallace webblekatt@hotmail.com

KATHERINE WALLACE

BRANCH 50 - Euclid, Ohio

Merry Christmas from Branch 50! The Christmas crèche holds many fond memories for me, as I used to collect parts of nativity scenes from around the world in our travels over many years, including, of all things, an Eskimo holy family! We have had a family tradition of sorts, involving all of our grandchildren in a Christmas Eve procession here at home, with each child carrying a part of the nativity scene to its place beneath the Christmas tree. The task of carrying baby Jesus was given to the youngest child in the past, but recently we've had to draw names to give everyone an equal chance, since all the kids want this duty.

Having missed my last report due to my own recovery from surgery, I would like to get all my readers caught up on some of the events of this past summer. I am pleased to report that I feel much better and my recovery from heart surgery is progressing nicely; I continue to be grateful for all the get-well wishes (including greetings from our membership in Illinois and Pennsylvania).

Congratulations are still in order for a very successful luncheon May 28th for our Branch 50 Member of the Year, Louise Troglia with 25 members present, including new member Julie Somrach, member Beverly Batic from Florida, as well as family and many friends. President Rose Mary Toth presented Louise with a lovely Virgin Mary nightlight and a corsage. Cookie Maxin baked a beautifully decorated cake for the occasion. Our June meeting was our annual picnic (held at the Euclid Public Library since we've had rain the past few years!). All present had an enjoyable time, fun and good food.

Member Joey Tomsick sends greetings and best wishes to all from member Mary Sirna, whom he spoke to while performing at her senior living community not long ago.

We are excited to report on the ambitious activity of a new musical youth group based at St. Vitus Church, "*Mi Smo Mi*" which recently performed its debut there.

Sidelined from injuries are Ivanka Matic (fractured ankle), who is in charge of our Baraga Days bus trip to Marquette, Michigan, and Josephine Arko (broken leg), our dependable 'ticket' lady. Both ladies are well on the way to recuperation as this goes to press.

Our deepest condolences go to Anne Arhar and her family on the loss of Edward, her loving husband who passed away in August after a long illness. Sympathies are also extended to the family of Helen Sturm (widow of Anthony), who died in August, a member since 1971.

In September, we welcomed our new Slovenian Consul General to Cleveland, Jure Žmauc, who succeeds Dr. Žvone Žigon.

On November 26-28 (Thanksgiving weekend), downtown Cleveland will once again be host to Tony Petkovsek's annual polka extravaganza, the 48th annual, featuring many bands and ending with the Polka Awards Show XXII at the St. Clair Slovenian National Home, followed by a polka

Mass, presided by retired Cleveland Auxiliary Bishop Edward Pevec and Minnesota's Fr. Frank Perkovich, to be held at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Cleveland.

We are very proud of Branch 50 member Kara Maruszak who was crowned Miss SNPJ 2010 this past summer. Many of Kara's family are also Branch 50 members, including her grandmother, mother and brother. Branch 50's holiday meeting will be in November this year, please contact me for more details!

ANNE TOMSICK 216.531.2745 cjaynow@yahoo.com

BRANCH 55 - Girard, Ohio

Greetings, it's hard to believe that another holiday season is upon us already. In just a short time we will be celebrating the New Year 2010! Many of us have been spending that last several weeks preparing for the holidays with baking, decorating, shopping and preparing our homes for the many gatherings of family and friends that take place during this time of the year. I always enjoy the sights and sounds of the holiday season and in particular the delicious scent of Christmas cookies in my Mom's kitchen. I hope that she will be making my favorite candy cane cookies this year!

In branch news, member Milka Kregar and her husband Frank Kregar celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on August 2, 2009. Frank and Milka were married in 1949 and have been blessed with many years of happiness, congratulations, Frank and Milka! May God continue to bless you both!

In other branch news, member Andrea Selak recently returned back to the United States after traveling for several weeks to Shanghai, China, Dubai, UAE and Paris, France on business.

Member Mark Selak is currently deployed in Okinawa, Japan with the United States Marine Corps. Mark serves as a helicopter pilot with the USMC. Wishing you a safe deployment, Mark!

As in years past, the 2009 Holiday Party will be co-hosted by AMLA Lodge 42. Members seeking information on this event are asked to please contact Maria Selak. It is always a great evening of fun and festivities. You don't want to miss out!

That's all the news for now. Vesele praznike in srecno novo leto 2010!

MONICA SELAK

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BRANCH 71 – Strabane, Pennsylvania

Dober dan, greetings from Strabane. After being inactive for approximately 10 years, Branch 71 was re-activated on June 26, 2008. The officers elected were: President - Beverly Rosselle, Vice President - Helen Hervol, Corresponding/Recording Secretary - Adelia Verakis, Treasurer - Agnes Bostjancic and Auditors - Marlene Tkach and Margie Valencic.

From April through December, we hold our meetings the last Thursday of the month at 6:00p.m. at one of our local restaurants. We do not meet during the months of January, February or March due to winter weather conditions. If you would like to attend one of our meetings or become a member call: Beverly Rosselle 724.873.0914.



Branch 71 Front left to right: Agnes Bostjancic, Helen Hervol, Mary Urbancic.
Row 2: Marie Smith, Marlene Tkach, Margie Valencic, Margie Oravec, Patty Oravec, Alice Dellorso.
Row 3: Maureen Capwell, JoAnn Mals, Helen Mavrich, Jackie Orsini, Dee Verakis, Helen Boles, Doris White, Rose Marie Lawrence and Beverly, Rosselle.

We held our last meeting of 2008 at Gino's Tuscan Grill (formerly Noochie's) in Canonsburg, PA, at which time we had our Christmas party. Each member bought a \$5 grab-bag gift. Everyone present was given a \$10 gift of money. We had a very enjoyable time.

We held our first meeting for 2009 on Thursday, April 30th at the KSKJ Hall in Strabane. Elections of officers was held and by unanimous vote all officers remain the same as 2008. A social was held after the meeting. We enjoyed sandwiches, salad and wine. We also had a birthday cake to celebrate all of our birthdays for 2009.

We are pleased to announce we gained 10 new members since 2008. Hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable summer.

BEVERLY ROSSELLE

Branch 71
Keeping the Spirit Alive!

BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

Our first meeting of the year is always one of our best; we have a wonderful potluck and are glad to see each other after our summer off. This year was outstanding and the food was delicious. President Alice Ebner said grace and read off the names of all the members who were not able to attend. We wish everyone could have been with us. There was a little loaf of zucchini bread at each place setting baked by Alice. Molly Rodriguez made delicious enchiladas and when I asked for the recipe she said, "Go to the grocery store and buy a packet of McCormack's enchilada seasoning mix and follow the directions." Thanks Molly. I thought it was a secret family recipe. Nancy Henkel baked potica, and there was an assortment of great food.

We are happy to have another new member and extend a warm welcome to Trudy Argubright. We also have our first male member, John Maloney. One of the best things about meeting on a Sunday is having junior members be able to attend. Analise Sabotta, Jordan Duffin, Hannah Huber and Natalie Landgraf and her brother Teddy were at the kid's table. Doris Ambrose won the potica door prize, Margie

Walter won the cash door prize, Rosie Kamnikar the 50/50 and we were all winners for having such a good time.

We are having a booth at Oglesby's Harvest Fest and selling strudel and potica slices and Slovenian Coney dogs. The Illinois/Indiana State convention is coming up at Lemont and we are looking forward to attending and seeing people from other branches. Write or call any time if you have a question or suggestion. Best regards.

BARBARA BRUCH 815.339.2714
barbarabruch@yahoo.com

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BRANCH 93 - New York City, New York

Our branch event for September was "Octoberfest" at Bohemian Hall in Astoria, Queens. The "Slovenian Heritage" weekend was November 6-8 at the AMC (Appalachian Mountain Club) Mohican Outdoor Center in Blairstown, NJ. There will be a recap of both events in the next issue.

The newsletter of the Slovenian Consulate in NYC, Kaipot, will list information about our branch with the heading "Fall Membership Drive - Come Join Us!" which we hope will bring in some new members!

Tentative plans for the winter/spring include cooking demonstrations: gnocchi from the Primorska region and gibanica from the Prekmurje region. If you have an idea for an event or can lead an event, please get in touch with the branch contact. Your help and assistance with any aspect of our branch activities is needed (and appreciated). Please join our yahoo group for information on upcoming events/activities (if you are not on e-mail, please call the branch 93 contact). Branch 93 contact: 201.947.6336, swuabranh93nyc@gmail.com; website: www.swuanyc.org; yahoo group, to subscribe e-mail: SWUABranh93NYC-subscribe@yahoogroups.com; SWUA Branch 93 NYC facebook page: www.facebook.com (type in "SWUA"). The branch membership list is available upon request. Check the May/June branch report for a brief list of ongoing events/resources in NYC!

BRANCH 99 - Lemont, Illinois

Hello everyone! It's hard to believe summer is already over. We have had fun with several events including the flancate (angel wings) culinary class and Bunco. Details of these events will be published in the next issue of Zarja.

On November 14th, our branch is hosting the Regional Convention in Lemont. If you would like to attend this event,

please see the information listed in this issue. All are welcome to attend!

Attention all bakers! We are looking for bakery items for the Regional Convention in November, and the annual Christmas Cookie sale on December 7th. If you would like to donate bakery/cookies for these events, please contact Barb Block at 630.379.6442 or barbandlarryblock@att.net.

Congratulations to members Julie Kaluza and Ivanka Buh and their husbands on their 50th wedding anniversaries. Also, congrats to member John Vidmar in being selected as Honorary Consul of Slovenia for Illinois. All our best!

Get well wishes to Jean Cherway and Martha Pecharich as they are recovering from surgery. Please keep these members in your prayers.

Because of the cost of postage, we are creating an email list to help keep our branch informed. Please contact secretary Barb Block above with your email address. You can also use an email address of a close relative or friend to pass the information along to you.

I would like to introduce myself as the new Branch journalist. I will be replacing Olivia Schultz who was the writer for the last two years. Olivia is currently attending Elmhurst College in Illinois with a major in Theology and English. Thank you, Olivia, for all your time and effort! As the new journalist, please contact me if you would like to see something in a future article.

JANA HLADE 815.439.1905
jmhlade@hotmail.com

BRANCH 100 - Southern California

We, in Southern California, are finally enjoying milder weather after a few weeks of really hot days. At least one of our members had some anxiety with the fires burning north of Los Angeles. All seems to be under control now, thank goodness. Dorothy Jerneycic lives in Sierra Madre and at the same time as the fires, she was planning her trip to Slovenia with Arnie and me. We are looking forward to visiting with family and friends, as well as seeing some places that we have not had a chance to see before. Of course, there are always places that we enjoy time and time again. We'll be able to connect with the Slowind Quintet, the Flip Akrobatic Club, our friends in the Village of Slap featured in the *Zarja* recently, Dr. Nada Sabec in Maribor and Franc Grom, the artist of Easter Eggs recently featured in the *Zarja*, as well. I have lots of cousins and acquaintances that we will, of course, meet up with, as well.

Mary Lou Jensen is still working on the plans for our Branch 100 Christmas

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party. Members will receive invitations either via email or snail mail, when all is settled. No matter where we will meet, I'm certain that it will be an enjoyable time, as usual.

I'm sorry to report on the death of Bill Videgar, husband of active member Pat Videgar. Pat and Bill were regulars at all of the Branch luncheons for as long as I can remember. I'm sure Pat will continue to attend as much as possible. Bill was the older brother of the well-known Frank Videgar who passed away almost two years ago. His wife, Mary Lou Videgar will be moving up to northern California to be closer to daughter, Lisa. We'll miss her down here, but I'm sure she will continue visiting whenever she can. Wishing everyone a Blessed Christmas.

JEAN KOCI 949.495.0097 ajkoci@cox.net

BRANCH 102 - Willard, Wisconsin

Greetings from Willard! With another year drawing to a close, our members extend our sincere thanks to our President, Rose Pakiz for her leadership during this past year. Assisted by Aggie Debevec and Sue Pakiz, Rose has recruited several new members and organized regular meetings and activities. We are very thankful, during this holiday season, for the volunteer efforts of our officers and their spouses. We are proud of the impact that our Branch has on keeping Slovenian spirit alive in Willard.

After a quiet fall, winter events include the annual meeting and Christmas party at the home of Sue Pakiz on December 5th. Holiday preparations remind us to remember all our members who are celebrating winter birthdays and send special greetings to our senior members. Best wishes to Ann Boh, Gertrude Bukovic, Betty Fraid, Rose Pakiz, Jeanette Perushek, Frieda Klancher and Ellen Plautz. We pause to remember during this holy season all of our deceased members and their spouses. Branch members extend condolences to the families of Janvid "Vitko" Staut and Ann Snedic. Both of these individuals promoted Slovenian traditions, within their families and community, throughout their lives.

Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year are extended to everyone in the SWUA family from all the members of Branch 102.

KAREN SPIRES kleespires@comcast.net

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BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

We gratefully welcomed member Mrs. Helen Sisto as our luncheon guest speaker at our September 13th meeting. Members and guests listened with interest as she read her cousin Joseph Rolih's diary of personal recollections and experiences during the period from June 22 – July 17, 1991 when Slovenia declared independence, following the Civil War in Yugoslavia. Joseph Rolih was a native of Joliet, Illinois and passed away in July, 2009 shortly after giving



Helen Sisto reading from her cousin Joseph's Slovenia diary written June–July 1991 during Slovenian's declaration of independence.

Helen permission to read his Slovenia diary and to donate a copy of his unpublished work to the Heritage Museum.

It was a pleasure to welcome new member Mrs. Janet Glasz, and her husband who attended as a guest to their first meeting. Janet brought an original professional photo to share with us of the leaders of the SWUA pictured in May, 1941 in front of the U.S. Capitol, including her grandmother Jennie Cermelj and Albina Novak (former Zarja Editor), Corinne Leskovar's deceased mother. The photo brought smiles to everyone's faces, as we admired the elegance of dresses and hats for their visit to Washington, DC. Janet is grateful to have been given this photo by her Aunt Emily Unik of Euclid, OH and suggested we have the photo reproduced and donate it to the Heritage Museum. We as a branch hope more of the ladies on the photo can be identified for historical and genealogical purposes for future generations.

President, Bernadette Fitzsimmons brought a delicious Slovenian Almond quick bread for dessert for everyone to



Bernadette Fitzsimmons ready to serve her award winning Slovenian Almond quick bread at the September meeting.

taste. She shared the news of winning a first place ribbon in the Ethnic quick bread's category at the Montgomery County Fair. Members Lynn and Charlie Koiner and Barbara Finch also won lots of ribbons at the fair. Lynn and her father Charlie won the Grand Champion for their herb display, and both also won dozens of ribbons for baked goods, fresh beautiful vegetables, fruits, herbs and walnuts, all from their small farm in Silver Spring, MD. Barbara enjoys making homemade jams from fruits and

flowers at Charlie's farm and won Grand Champion this year for her strawberry jam, and second place for violet and blueberry jam. Congratulations to all our Branch 108 winning participants in Maryland's 2009 Montgomery County Fair.

All are invited to our 6th Anniversary Celebration and officer election on November 15 from 2-5 p.m. at the Olney Community Room, Olney, MD. Marjeta Cedilnik will share video clips from her trip to Slovenia in summer 2009. Vesele božične praznike in srečno novo leto 2010!

Bettekfitz@verizon.net

BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities of Minnesota

After a cool and refreshing summer in Minnesota, Branch 109 (Twin Cities Slovenians) began a "new" year of activities, which will reinforce our Slovenian roots. This past year at least a half dozen members have traveled to Slovenia and experienced the natural beauty and the diverse images, which Slovenia attracts "irresistibly." Over the next three months these individuals will be sharing their pictures and experiences for our members.

What also will be exciting is the theme for the Festival of Nations (2010) 'FOLKLORE'. Jeff Martinka will be the new chairperson and will coordinate the planning and the execution for the Twin Cities Slovenians. Coming off from our award-winning exhibit in 2009, Jeff will have the strong backing and support from our members. Last year we applied for a grant with the Slovenian Ministry and did receive it. However, it came after the deadline but we will be able to apply the funds for 2010. The funds help defray the costs of putting together the Festival of Nations exhibit which is held in May.

In June we bade farewell to the Slovenian Consul General, Zvone Zigon and his wife Irena with a reception at the Nectary restaurant owned by our own Andrew Percic. After his presentation, "I Feel Slovenia", Norm Setnicker, President of Branch 109, presented Dr. Zigon with two DVD's of our two last Festival of Nations themes: Slovenian Art and Architecture and Invention and Transportation. Another gift that Norm presented was a newly published book (English and Slovenian) entitled, *SLOVENIA ATTRACTS*. Marjan Bradesko,

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the author, is a distant cousin of one of our members and resides in Polhov Gradec, Slovenia.

Another project, which the TC Slovenians began, was the daunting task of “indexing” the *Zarja* magazine. Mary Lou Voelk set up the guidelines for the project. Working with the Immigration History Resource Center (IHRC) at the University of Minnesota, a six person task force (Jim and Kathy Smrekar, Liz Tratnik, Mary Schwanke, Don Palkovich and Norm Setnicker) began recording data for the years: 1946, 1947 and 1948. As we began working on this project we were keenly aware of our SWUA roots and history almost to the point of being overwhelmed. At the IHRC the *Zarja*'s are archived as: “loose copies”, hardbound issues (hard cover volume) and microfilm. This has posed a problem with time and money expended for parking and research. Hopefully we can resolve these issues.

It was not all work for Branch 109. Yul Yost again hosted his annual Baraga Picnic, which culminated in a group photo in front of the recently completed mural depicting the life of Bishop Baraga. The eight-panel art piece was attached to the outside of Yul's home. The mural serves as a gateway to Yul Yost's other passion gardening. A walking tour of his garden featured rocks, fossils, unique stones, statues and flowers in that order.

Also, congratulations to Miro and Karen Medved who celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. Miro and Karen have hosted our Branch sing-a-longs and taught us how to sing the Slovenian National Anthem at Dr. Zigon's farewell reception. Also congratulations to Jim and Mary Bernard who also celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary and will be going to Slovenia to visit their home area.

Wishing all member of SWUA a wonderful year, good health, love and peace.

NORM SETNICKER Normas188@msn.com

Minnesota Regional Convention, September 13, 2009

Hosted by Branch 33 Duluth, Minnesota

A bright, sunny morning and warm temperatures were so welcomed for our drive to Duluth. As we pulled into the St. Elizabeth Catholic Church parking lot, we saw all the folks from Gilbert, Biwabik, Virginia and Yvonne McComber and her husband who represented Twin Cities Branch 109 all arriving.

We had plenty of time to enjoy coffee, a lovely assortment of pastries and to visit with other branch members, which is always a highlight.

The meeting began at approximately 9:30 a.m. and was very productive despite having only 44 guests in attendance.

Mass was celebrated at Noon by Father Jon Wild. Mr. Jagunich and John Stark accompanied Mary Spehar White on Lepa si, lepa si and Češčena si Marija for the Mass. Members of

Branch 33 brought gifts to the Blessed Mother, a rosary and beautiful fresh carnations placed in a vase at the foot of Mother Mary.

Following the Mass we gathered back into the Church Hall for the banquet. The Hall was beautifully decorated and John Stark and Mr. Jagunich entertained with folk songs. The meal was delicious; it included stuffed pork chops, mashed potatoes, gravy, squash, salad and an apple square dessert.

Mary Lou Voelk gave an interesting presentation on Bog Kot (God's Corner). Frank Bucar gave a talk on the life of Bishop Baraga and Mary Lou followed with a presentation of Bishop Baraga as well. Prizes were drawn and Mary Lou Voelk was exceptionally lucky. Her name was drawn for 3 of the wonderful baskets. She declined the third. Mr. Lanari, husband of Vida Lanari, of Branch 39 won a beautiful crystal bowl and a handmade table runner to go with it. The cash prize winners were, \$100, Helen Adkisson of Branch 34, Tower; \$50 went to Branch 109, Twin Cities; \$25 won by Martina Michals of Branch 39 of Biwabik.

We thank all the members of Branch 33, Duluth for their lovely hospitality and a day of fun and friendship.

All branches wish a full and quick recovery to Branch 33, President, Beverly Menart, Minnesota Regional President, Rosemary Ribich, who is also Branch 39 President and last but not least, Branch 23 President, Gerry Petrich. Kmalu se pozdravljen, Get well soon! Marija Pomagaj prosi za nas!!

Anita M. Vovk, *President*
Branch 35 Aurora, MN

Branch 99 Presents
Illinois/Indiana
2009 REGIONAL CONVENTION
Saturday, November 14, 2009

Slovenian Cultural Center 14252 Main Street, Lemont, IL 60439

9:30 a.m. Check-in in the small hall. Breakfast with pastries and beverages included

11:00 a.m. Mass; Rev. Metod Ogorelec presiding St. Mary's Slovenian Mission Church on the grounds

12:00 p.m. Meeting in the large hall

1:30 p.m. Luncheon

John Vidmar, Guest Speaker
Button Box Entertainment

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Zarjafest Potica Contest Winner

Debbie Stirnaman, Dwight, Illinois

*The recipe of our Zarjafest Potica Contest winner just in time for you to try for Christmas. This recipe was judged by Nick Carmody of Rocky Mountain Potica, was sampled by many that attended Zarjfest and came away with raving reviews. Debbie's presentation was superb with white lace and red carnations. She also served ham with her potica. Debbie is a great example of **Keeping the Slovenian Spirit Alive**.*

Dough

1 cup scalded milk
½ stick margarine
1/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
4 ½ cups flour
2 eggs slightly beaten
½ cake yeast or 1 package of dry yeast

Add margarine to scalded milk. Prepare yeast by using warm water and a little sprinkle of sugar and flour. Let yeast mixture rise. Beat 2 eggs set aside.



Sift flour, make a well and add salt, sugar, milk, yeast and eggs. Mix with regular size beaters, preferably dough beaters. Once the dough starts to form, finish kneading the dough by hand to a soft consistency.

Lightly oil a large Tupperware bowl (approx. 3 ½ quart) place dough in the bowl and cover. Let stand until dough rises to the top of the bowl (a warm draft free area works best).



*Debbie also generously donated her prize winnings back to Zarja The Dawn.
Debbie, thank you very much.*

Filling

1 pound ground nuts	1 ½ cups sugar
1 can milnot milk (condensed)	2 beaten eggs
1 stick margarine	3 tablespoons of honey
	1 teaspoon vanilla

In a saucepan cook milk, margarine and sugar. When ingredients are melted, add nuts. Simmer for five minutes stirring constantly. After mixture cools, add 2 beaten eggs, honey and vanilla. Mix with wooden spoon. Note: Variations to the recipe could include raisins, chocolate or pineapple. I prefer the white raisins.

Rolling out the dough can be tricky. Flour a treated cloth. Place dough onto floured cloth. Use rolling pin to roll an area 30 inches by 30 inches, cover with cloth and let dough rest.

After 5 minutes of resting, start to stretch the dough by hand to the length of your table. Add nut mixture by spreading over the dough surface. Before rolling the dough, cut all the way around your dough with a knife so there are no thickened doughy edges. Carefully take a butter knife and start to roll one end. Using your cloth, grab the edge and raise it upward to start the dough rolling. Lightly pat oil on top of the potica. Cut potica in equal lengths and place in a 9"x13" lightly oiled pan. Bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees.

Jenka's Taste of Slovenia

Roasted Pork Loin Stuffed With Prunes

This is the meal that is served in the Bauer household in Laze, Slovenia on Christmas Day. It is usually accompanied with a soup, homemade dinner rolls, salad and of course the families best wine that was just produced from the fall harvest.

5 lb pork loin roast with rib bones removed
Salt
Pepper
3 bay leaves
1 (8 oz) bag of prunes
½ lemon, sliced

With a large sharp knife make a slit into the center of the roast but be sure not to cut through to the end of the roast. Stuff the prunes into the slit one by one until it is filled with them. Place the bay leaves on top of the rib

bones. Generously salt and pepper the entire roast and rib bones and rub the seasonings into both. Lay the roast on top of the rib bones and bay leaves. Place the lemon slices over the top of the roast and allow it to rest for 2-3 hours.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Cover the pork with foil for the first half of roasting time to create a moist, tender and delicious pork roast. Roast for 1½-2 hours. The rib bones help keep the roast off the bottom of the roasting pan so it does not 'stew' in its own juices.

Božiček (Father) and Božička (Mother) Mother Christmas Ornaments

2 pine cones	Red string
2 walnuts shells	4 black beads or eyes
Cotton	Hot glue gun
Red felt	

Directions:

Remove stem from pinecones. Attach one pine cone and one walnut together with hot glue.

Božiček Father Christmas

Cut hat out of red felt. Glue sides together. Attach to top of walnut. Glue cotton for beard and trim around bottom of red cap. Attach the red string to top of red hat. Add white cotton to top of hat. Add black beads for eyes.
*You can add a small twig for a pipe.

Božička Mother Christmas

Cut out her ruta (head scarf). Attach to top of walnut. Tuck in bottom part of scarf in between the pinecone. Add cotton to ends of scarf and around the trim around the face. Add black beads for eyes.

The Zarja staff would like to thank SWUA's Jenka (Jean Ficek, Branch 24) and Marija Bauer from Slovenia for creating this past year's culinary column. They put a lot of time, spirit and energy, not to mention the expense to cook all of the meals that have been prepared for you.

We would also like to thank Evald Fliser and Jana Bauer for welcoming our group with warm Slovenian generosity and kindness.





Jenka's
Taste of Slovenia



Vesele božične
praznike!

from Jenka and Marija



Secrets of Slovenia II

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A complete itinerary
will be included in the
next issue of *Zarja*.

You are invited!

Come explore the "Secrets of Slovenia" as we take you on another magical journey through Slovenia's back roads. Your *Zarja* hosts Debbie Pohar and Bonnie Prokup promise you another opportunity of a lifetime.

Our magical journey will start off on the east side of Slovenia where we will spend time in Maribor, Ptuj and concentrate on the hidden secrets of the Prekmurje region. Later we will travel across the country with dynamic stops along the way to the coastline where we will dedicate days to the beauty of the Adriatic Sea and its surroundings. We will finish the tour in the capital city of Ljubljana. An exciting feature to this tour is being there for All Soul's Day,

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