



OUR STORY

NAŠA ZGODOVINA



Vol. 2 No. 4 Winter 2012

What is a 'milestone' in history?

Dorothy Lenarčič

For the Canadian Slovenian Historical Society (CSHS) it is an event that marks a stage in our development. For us the milestone is the **10th anniversary** of our organization, a point at which we reflect on how far we have come.

Ten years ago, Stane Kranjc brought together a group of Canadian Slovenians to discuss why a historical group was needed. We recognized that Slovenians had contributed greatly to Canada's cultural fabric and to its economy, and yet there was no central record of it. There were many fine clubs and organizations in our community, and yet, finding information about them could be difficult, especially those that were no longer active. It was painfully acknowledged that pioneering members of our community were passing away and with them, sadly, their untold stories.

Under Stane's leadership, we embarked on our ambitious goal to coordinate, research, record and preserve the history of Slovenians in Canada. Thanks to Dom Lipa, we soon secured a work space and established the CSHS Archives. Programs such as "Kdo smo?" and "Povejte nam kaj" were created and people were invited to help us identify photos and tell us their stories of coming to Canada. We appeared at Slovenian events to share our progress and travelled across Canada, reaching out to Slovenian communities. Our volunteers attended conferences to learn more about the technicalities of archiving, and as we set up, we were most fortunate to receive assistance and advice from professional archivist, Nicole Vonk. We joined the **Archives Association of Ontario** and the **Canadian Oral History Association**. We joined the Slovenian community and installed a plaque at **Pier 21** recognizing Slovenians' arrival there. Last year the Canadian Slovenian Historical Society was chosen, in competition, to present a display at the Ontario legislature, Queen's Park. We've been busy!

Ten years later, we pause to reflect on what has been accomplished, and are amazed. In our care there are 20,000 archival records, including 11,000 files, and nearly 6,000 photographs, along with artefacts, newspapers, magazines, postcards, books, tapes, vinyl records and oral history digital records. Our archivist Frank Majzelj, who holds certification in genealogy, took on the enormous task of cataloguing our holdings. Organizing and tracking our records could not have been accomplished without enthusiastic students who provided countless hours of assistance. The CSHS office and Archive have doubled in size. Last year we hosted a conference for clubs and organizations from across Canada, to assist them in collecting and archiving their own history. Through our newsletter *Our Story*, articles in *Glasiło*, and our presentations, Canadian Slovenians now know us well and are generously donating not just their photos, letters and artefacts, but also monetary funds, to our non-profit organization.



As we were in 1991



Stane Kranjc

As the CSHS celebrates its 10th anniversary, we recognize another corresponding milestone, the **80th birthday of Stane Kranjc**, who was the inspiration behind the CSHS and its first president.

Like many Slovenian post-war immigrants, Stan travelled across the stormy Atlantic, arriving at Pier 21 in 1951. Carrying his landing card and tag marked “Edmonton”, he climbed aboard for the long train ride. As he traveled across the prairies the wheat farms looked like golden sea, and the wind gently moved the

wheat like golden waves. Said Stane, “I remember saying to my friend, one thing we can be sure of, there will be plenty of bread in this country”. Indeed, Canada was a refuge for a generation weary of war, political conflict and rationing. Stane went on to achieve notable success in a career in the food industry. At home, with wife Elsie, they raised 3 children and Stane became involved in all areas of the Slovenian community. His awards and accolades are so many they cannot be listed here. They represent 60 years of deep commitment and service to the Slovenian community in Canada. It inspires us at the CSHS to continue the important work Stane started, so that future generations of Canadian Slovenians, and scholars, will know about the Slovenians’ contribution to Canada. “100 let!”

Folklorama: Love It/Hate It - Bryen Lebar

In 1969 a group of leaders from the ethno-cultural community of Winnipeg met to decide how they might celebrate Manitoba’s upcoming centennial year, 1970. Memories of 1967 and Expo were still fresh in people’s minds so it was decided to hold a onetime city wide, week long, ethnic festival called Folklorama. There were to be 21 “pavilions” scattered throughout the city each representing their own cultural group with food, entertainment and cultural displays much like the ones at Expo 67. People would travel around the city getting their festival “passports” stamped at each pavilion. Most were held in cultural centers, church basements or school gyms. One of those original pavilions was the Slovenija Ljubljana Pavilion held at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. Because of the festival’s overwhelming popularity and financial success it has continued on since that time. What was to be a onetime event has turned into a 43 year long festival with Slovenija being represented in 42 of them.

The commitment required from the Slovenian community in Winnipeg to sustain such an effort for so long is significant and admirable. It has survived 3 generations and it has survived all the usual ups and downs which every community and every family endures over such a long time. We have survived discord, death and time and we have benefitted the beginnings of new families, the celebrations of new lives and the enduring support of our founding generation. In my own family we have had 3 generations of pavilion coordinators. My mother, my daughter and I have each served in the roll of head pavilion organizer.

The festival lasts 2 weeks with half the pavilions opened in each week. This year the Slovenija Pavilion was in the second week, August 12 to 18. It took approximately 90 volunteers daily to operate the pavilion. This includes the 3 dance groups, Zvonček,

Rožmarin and Triglav Dance Ensemble and other singers and musicians who provide entertainment nightly. This year we had the ensemble Azalea from Slovenia perform for the last 3 nights. Their talents were appreciated by young and old.

Preparations for the festival begin in October for the following year with the beginning of weekly dance practices for Triglav Dance Ensemble. They are the senior dance group with a long and auspicious history. In January practice begins for the 2 younger dance groups Rožmarin and Zvonček. In June and July the baking crews get together and bake thousands of traditional cookies and dozens of tortes.



During the week of the festival the women (and a few men) of the kitchen crew begin at around 9AM to begin the potato salad, coleslaw, palečinke, stuffed peppers and čevapčiči along with crews roasting the whole pigs and chickens. The evening crews which run the bar, the pastry table and food serving areas arrive at 5PM for a 6PM-11PM shift. Along with all the service areas we have volunteers who are pavilion

representatives to the festival, people to look after the admission area, bus tour guides, shmoozers for the local dignitaries, cultural display guides, media and security crews and other helpers; all together over 90 people

But before anything happens, a school gym has to be converted into a bit of Slovenia. This in itself is a major job with the setting up of the gym stage backdrop, lights and sound, decorative banners, the tables and chairs for 250 people and all the food and beverage stations. And what goes up must come down. Clean up is always the toughest chore. Everybody loves a party but no one wants to clean up. But it gets done and then we rest for a few weeks before the final picnic of the season in September.

From 1970 to 2002 Our Lady of Lourdes Church was the home of the Slovenija Pavilion. A large tent covered the parking lot and the church basement served as the cultural display and kitchen. In 2003 the pavilion moved to a local high school gym away from the unpredictable nature of Manitoba weather in August.

The Slovenija Pavilion is extremely well regarded within Folklorama. Our

pavilion was referred to as “the gold standard” of the festival by the Winnipeg Free Press last year. This year we had over 1,700 visits to the pavilion over the course of the week. During the early years of the festival the majority of visitors to the pavilion were made up of the Slovenian community. Now the majority of visitors are “tourists” who have come to the pavilion to learn a little about and experience Slovenian culture.

We have been doing this year in and year out for 42 years. Is it a chore sometimes? Certainly! Do we hate it at times? Definitely! Is it without problems? Never! Has it been an effective way to connect the generations? Yes! Has it been important to the survival of a vibrant ethnic community? Absolutely! All you have to do is look out into the crowd when the little ones are dancing to see the riveted eyes and smiling faces of parents and grandparents; all you have to do is look around to see how many young people are involved in the pavilion, showing their love for their community and their pride in who they are by putting in countless hours; all you have to do is look around to see 4 generations working together in a mutual effort. And that has to be worth something or we wouldn't have been doing this extraordinary week long effort for so many years.

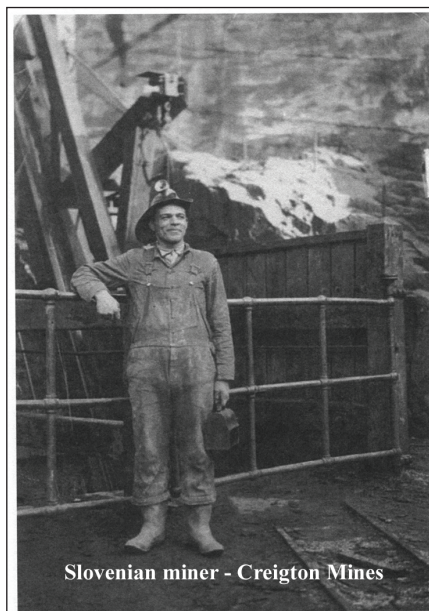


Artifact Display

Anne Urbančič

What is an artifact? The word, also spelled artefact, comes from Latin (but through the Italian word *artefatto*) from two words (*arte* + *factum*) meaning something made by human skill. The term reached popularity in the late 1800s, when museums, big and small, began to come to prominence, and when homes of the well-to-do displayed treasured items in curiosity cabinets (often called a *wonderkammer* which means “wonder chamber”). For Archives, artifacts include photos, tapes, film, tools, crafts, clothing....the list quickly expands.

We are fortunate in the Archives of the CSHS to have many artifacts in our collection, thanks to donations of Canadian Slovenians. In the future we intend to display them, a few at a time, depending on our resources. But in the meantime, an extraordinary opportunity to exhibit select items about the life of



Slovenian miner - Creighton Mines

Slovenians in Canada came to our attention. The only hurdle: the display was by competition. Dorothy Lenarčič and I put together a proposal in the fall of 2010, and you can imagine how thrilled we were when we were one of the Archives selected to have a display in the main foyer of the Legislative Buildings (Queen's Park) in Toronto. Only nine Ontario Archives or Historical Societies were chosen to participate in the six month exhibition. Our showcase, which focused on various elements of the *Narodna noša*, garnered many positive comments. But more, it was fun to organize and to set up. It was also a pleasure to work with the Queen's Park co-ordinator whose suggestions assured the success of the display.

Two years have passed since then. Our Archives contain many more artifacts. And so, we decided, we

could try entering the competition again. But what to focus on? The challenge of a new theme dissipated by serendipity when, in a short space of time, we received items that had been used by the Canadian Slovenians who had settled in northern Ontario to work in the mines. Many of the items came from Timmins. As it happens, in 2012 Timmins celebrated its centennial, so a display with emphasis on the Slovenian community there seemed perfect. We soon learned that many of the original families with Slovenian roots who had settled there and in other northern communities such as Kirkland Lake, eventually moved to southern Ontario, especially to the Niagara Region. So we wanted our display to pay tribute to a community of Slovenian mining families of the past as well as to Timmins. We prepared our proposal, calling it *Building Community Far and Wide: The Life of Canadian Slovenian miners and their families in Northern Ontario in the early years of the 20th Century*. We waited impatiently for the adjudication. And finally came an email saying that we had been chosen for the Winter/Spring 2013 exhibit. We are really thrilled to present a small part of the history of Canadian Slovenians to the numerous Torontonians, Ontarians, Canadians and visitors from abroad who step into the Queen's Park Legislative Buildings. Our artifacts, like this company photo of the Canadian Slovenian miner, will be shown from January to June 2013. Entry is free. We hope you'll come to see our showcase.

Želimo vam vesele božične praznike in srečno novo leto 2013!

Špet se božič nam najavlja,
blizu je Silvestra čas.
Novo leto že pozdravlja
tebe, mene in vse nas.
Šrečne praznike želimo,
zdravja ti privoščimo,
smeh naj greje te vso zimo,
da ti v srcu bo toplo!



Congratulations on your 20th Anniversary!

The Canadian Slovenian Historical Society would like to congratulate all the past and present members of Slovenian Radio Programme Glas Kanadskih Slovencev on the occasion of their 20th Anniversary. Your work over the past two decades in keeping the voice of Canadian Slovenians on the air has been and will continue to be appreciated by all.



OUR STORY is published by:
Canadian Slovenian Historical Society
52 Neilson Drive,
Toronto, ON M9C 1V7
For more information contact:
Frank Majzelj
Telephone: 905-643-3563
E-mail: cshistorical@gmail.com

In this issue:

- What is a "milestone" in history?
- Folklorama: Love It/Hate It
- Artifact Display
- Congratulations on your 20th Anniversary