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Zarja

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March/April, 2008

The Dawn



Vesele velikonočne praznike!
Happy Easter!

*Easter Traditions
and Recipes*

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Coming Soon... Zarja Garden Contest!

Front Cover: Painting by *Maksim Gaspari*:
Žegen nesejo (Carrying Food for Blessing)

Zarja - The Dawn

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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 15 day of the month, 2 months preceding the issue. For example, articles for the May/June issue must be received by March 15th. Thank you.

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Share your expertise

*"As a first-born American in my family,
I have always been proud of my Slovenian roots.
After researching my genealogy, it seemed natural
that I volunteer at the Slovenian Heritage Museum
to help promote my heritage."*

Theresa (Mikolic) Burns
Branch 20 - Joliet, IL

From the Editor

Easter has always been one of my favorite holidays. It is filled with Slovenian traditions. I remember going to church with my grandmother and our žegen basket. This tradition has never missed a year, being passed down to my Aunt Helen Swietek, Branch 24 and later on to my cousin Sharon Pohar Brady, Branch 24 who invites all 60 members of our family to her house for brunch and the great Easter egg hunt.

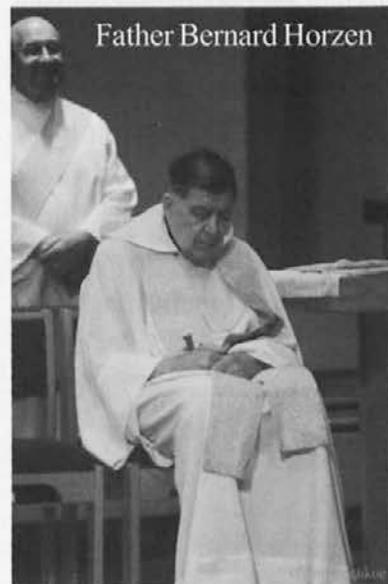
Easter brings a feeling of being reborn, relaxed, strong and ready for spring to come. This also means that I can start to prepare my garden for the year. (Remember to take a picture of your garden at its best this year as we are going to have another garden contest.) - *Debbie Pohar*

It has always been present as a part of our tradition, heritage and identity. Let it be preserved for the future generations of our family!



Maybe Be Rain - Father Bernard Horzen **Memoirs of a First Generation American of Slovenian Immigrant Parents.**

Father Bernard Horzen, a loved and respected teacher and monk for over half a century at St. Bede Academy in Peru, IL, is releasing his memoirs in a book titled "*Maybe Be Rain*". Father Bernard, a first generation American of Slovenian immigrant parents, makes several connections to his Slovenian heritage in his book. From his schooling at St. Roch's Slovenian parish in La Salle, IL, to accounts of his own travels to the "old country", readers will be captured by Father's humor, storytelling and memories. Not preachy in any way, Father's life says more about the benefit of religious devotion than any sermon could. The book will be released the last week in March, just



Father Bernard Horzen

after Easter, and will be available by calling 815-663-6201, or by mailing a check/money order to St. Thomas More Church, 302 Chestnut Street, Dalzell, IL 61320. The book is \$15. Phone/mail orders should add \$3 for shipping and handling.

For a listing of book signings please check our web site at www.swua.org.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank Rea Rossi for her Short-Cut Walnut Potica recipe in *Zarja*. For the second time in my life I tried to make potica and it was wonderful!!!! My sons said it was just like "Nana's". It will be a tradition I can now carry on, thank you Rea!!! I have told everyone in our branch about it and they are all going to try it. Looking forward to the next *Zarja* and more recipes.

- *Barbara Chiodo, Branch 13 - San Francisco*

To the Editor:

We very much enjoy reading *Zarja The Dawn*. Veronica is a member of Branch 43 in Milwaukee. Her mother, Frances Teshner, and grandmother, Frances Zager, had also been members of Branch 43. Her father came from Bucka, northeast of Novo Mesto. Her mother's parents came from Senturska Gora and Lahovce. John's father came from Sorica in the Julian Alps.

After reading Genealogy by George in the May-June 2007 issue of *Zarja*, we contacted Mary Urban. After several e-mails sharing of our family histories, we found that we are related and, through her cousin in Slovenia, we both were able to trace our Zagar families history back three more generations in Senturska Gora, a small village on the south slope of the Kamnisko Savinjske Alps. The Zagar cousins immigrated in 1909 to Ely, MN to work in the iron mines. They moved to Wilton, ND to work the coal mine. Eventually, the Peter Zagar family moved to Willard, WI and the Lawrence Zager family moved to Milwaukee, WI.

In 2005, we spent two and a half weeks in Slovenia, seeing the country, meeting relatives, enjoying the hospitality of a beautiful people, staying at tourist farms with the natural home grown foods and drink. We put together a wall quilt, a schematic of the country with photographs of the various areas that we visited.

- *Veronica & John Sustar*



Quilt with Veronica in her traditional dress

National President's Message

Spring is in the Air

Spring is in the air – or for sure in this issue of *Zarja*. Also having the role of Director of Design for *Zarja* gives me the opportunity of working on each issue months before you even see it. I have to say this is a great issue! My hat goes off to each of you and especially to our branch reporters. Be sure to read the excitement in the branch reports. Take notice of what other branches are doing for their heritage. You will read about anniversary parties, Mother's Day parties, cooking lessons, videos of travel to Slovenia, Pust celebrations, some neat Slovenian games to play at your meetings and of course all those who wrote about their Žegen traditions. Wow, I do believe we have come a long way! Congratulations to all the members in each branch, the officers who are making things happen and of course to the reporters who share the news in *Zarja*.

I regret the recent resignation of our VP of Culture and Heritage George Plautz Jr., due to health reasons. We are going to miss George as he worked very hard his first six months. He focused his attention on the Home Office/Museum, which also included the gift shop. In this short time he computerized the entire gift shop, which was a phenomenal task and formulated many plans on redesigning the building. The work he began will be carried on by the Board of Directors and Nancy Henkel who was recently appointed the Heritage Museum Director. We are hoping George gets better soon!

Replacing George as VP of Culture and Heritage on the National Board will be Mary Lou Voelk. I am sure you will all join me in welcoming Mary Lou Voelk and Nancy Henkel to their new board positions. I am positive they will do a great job. We will have a complete biography on Mary Lou and Nancy in our next issue.

We have lots of excitement going on at our Home Office/Museum in Joliet. Some times good things come out of bad. This past August when floods hit much of the

Midwest our building also suffered. We had some severe damage to the roof and pipes causing problems on our 1st and 2nd floors. Luckily for us, insurance has been covering the majority of it and the good news is that we are fixing the building up. As plans are further developed we will keep you informed. But in the meantime be assured that we are in the right direction.

Notice in this issue the neat volunteer ad featuring Theresa Burns. This was created by Klemen Novak. Klemen is an aspiring actor with the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in NYC. You can visit his website for more information: <http://www.klemenovak.com/>.

In closing I wish everyone a Happy Easter. I hope this issue of *Zarja* inspires many of you to include our Slovenian traditions for this coming Easter. Even the front cover alone is a treasure!

Easter is one of my favorite holidays where my family gathers at the home of my cousin, Branch 24 member Sharon Pohar Brady for our annual tradition. I can still remember when Sharon and I were little girls searching for the Easter Bunny which we knew was bringing the eggs for our hunt. Till this day over 60 members in our family gather for the annual hunt which includes the golden egg filled with money and a feast with foods I've seen for 40 years like our home made sausage, horseradish, home made bread, ham, wine and of course all of this is blessed on Holy Saturday in a basket with a white cloth with all of our names embroidered on the top. I borrowed the basket and cloth for Jenka's column - Entertaining with a Touch of Slovenia so you could see it. Enjoy!

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



Bonnie Pohar Prokup
National President



Welcome to Our New Members!

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 001 Mary G. Bartzen | 020 JoAnne Lantka | 035 John Stark |
| 001 Robert Bartzen | 020 Will Leben | 035 Lawrence Stark |
| 001 Ann L. Kovacic | 020 James McAsey | 035 Paul Stark |
| 001 Ruth E. Lallemond | 020 Mary Parsons | 035 Louise J. Terrill |
| 001 Daniela Munnik | 020 Betty Wiley | 038 Klashna Palcher |
| 001 Judy Rahn | 024 Janyee Eviston | 038 Ray Palcher |
| 001 Edward Golob | 024 Carol Koplenik | 039 Leopolda Schutte |
| 001 Marjorie Wilhelm | 024 Lynda McKibben | 039 Robert Sherek Sr. |
| 002 Nancy D. Beese | 030 Zuzanna Kobos | 093 Maria Schopper |
| 002 Rhianna Rose Beese | 030 Kathy Morgan | 100 Jean A Turnbull |
| 002 Colin J. Drake | 030 Beverly J. Rosselle | 103 Mary Jane Vidmar
Williamson |
| 002 Julia Drake | 030 Adelia Verakis | 108 Mark Oven |
| 002 Monica MacMillan | 032 Theresa M. Wargo | 108 Father Peter Rozic |
| 002 Hanna R Gornick | 033 Lottie Trudell | 109 Patrick McNeal |
| 002 Eathan D Newbould Johnston | 035 Jean Stark | |
| 003 Christine D. Charron | | |
| 003 John W. Sabo | | |
| 005 Kris Vowels | | |
| 013 Nancy Benedict | | |
| 013 Lindsay Goergen | | |
| 016 Victoria Krcmaric | | |
| 020 Kathy Gunier | | |
| 020 Hayden Harper | | |
| 020 Pat Kraske | | |
| 020 Cilla Sluga | | |
| 020 Tammy Sullivan | | |
| 020 Judy Tezak | | |
| 020 Maria Yakos | | |
| 020 Joyce Fremeau | | |

Zarja The Dawn Donations

“Keeping the Spirit Alive”

\$30.00 Donation

Carol Ryba, 20

\$10.00 Donation

Delores Spelich, 24

In Memory of Maria M. Yakos

Yvonne Louison, \$30.00

Margaret Rendall, \$25.00

Mary Malanche, \$25.00

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2008 NEW MEMBER CAMPAIGN

Take the Lead SWUA Members - The Time is Right to Recruit

By Bernadette Kovacic Fitzsimmons, Vice President of Marketing & Fundraising

We, as SWUA members, are all spokespersons for our organization, responsible for recruiting new members within our own families and our communities. Although the country of Slovenia is small, Slovenian natives and people of Slovenian heritage are found throughout every state in our nation, many of whom will say "yes" to an invitation to join. In order to survive, each of us must realize it is our responsibility to take the initiative, and reach out to invite prospective members to join our organization. Below are four simple suggestions to start with to revitalize branches and also to begin forming new branches. Discuss at your next meeting what would work best to market your existing branch, or to form a new one, depending on your unique goals and geographic location.

- Check with your local libraries, churches, schools and grocery store bulletins to post applications and meeting announcement details
- Recycle 2007 past issues of *Zarja* and have them available in the resource section of your local public and school libraries
- A personal invitation from a fellow Slovenian is hard to resist, so spread the word to prospective members by giving them an application along with an extra *Zarja* magazine, and invite them to an upcoming meeting
- Be persistent and don't give up after the first try!

Slovenians are coming forward like never before, proud of their heritage and eager to learn about becoming part of SWUA. Slovenia is known throughout the world as an independent country, and this year as they lead the European Union through June, 2008, it has gained further recognition in the world news arena. The time is right to recruit!

Even in my small home state of Maryland where the percentage of Slovenians is relatively low, a few small actions have produced a significant increase in interest and membership. Just think how successful states could be with high representations of Slovenians! I believe each member is capable of accomplishing small miracles if only they take a few simple steps.

My personal experience this past November happened simply by taking the time to notice a "6th Grade Cultural assignment, Where Do You Come From" school bulletin board that led me to discover another Slovenian family.



Attention!

Grandparents/Parents/Godparents/Aunts/Uncles ENROLL A YOUTH MEMBER CAMPAIGN

Pass on the love of your Slovenian heritage and traditions just in time for Easter by enrolling a new youth member, 17 years or younger for **FREE**, no payment due until an invoice is sent in **January, 2009**.

Free **Slovenia** t-shirts to the first 50 new applicants. All other new youth members also to receive a special Slovenian themed gift from the Slovenian Heritage Museum. Grandparents, parents, godparents, aunts, uncles, or any other member signing up a new youth member may designate who the gift is sent to. To download an application, go to www.swua.org, or call the home office at 815-727-1926.

2008 NEW MEMBER CAMPAIGN

There is still time - The top three branches to get the most new members Dec 1 - April 1 will receive a gift bag from the Slovenian Heritage Museum Gift Shop. Surpass your expectations.

Remember, **BE PERSISTENT!**

Final results to be posted in May/ June issue of *Zarja*



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

Membership Application

Yes! I want to join the SWUA. 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 Slovenes.

Please type or print legibly. Choose type of membership:

Junior (Birth to 18) Annual Dues \$5.00

Adult, Annual Dues \$20.00

Name and Middle Initial _____ Maiden Name _____

Street Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone/Fax _____ E-mail _____

Date of Birth _____ Do you speak Slovenian? _____

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

How did you hear about us?

SWUA member _____ newspaper _____ website _____ other _____

Applicant signature: _____ Date: _____

Branch Affiliation No. (if known) _____ Location: _____

Please make checks payable to the *Slovenian Women's Union of America* and mail to:

SWUA 431 North Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432

For additional information, contact:

SLOVENIAN WOMEN'S UNION OF AMERICA, 431 North Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432
(815) 727-1926 e-mail: swuhome@sbcglobal.net - website: www.swua.org

I would like to volunteer for the SWUA. My area of interest or expertise is:

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 _____

National Board of Director's Meeting

November 01-04, 2007

Special Board Meeting

Location: SWUA Home Office, Joliet, IL

November 01, 07: SWUA Board of Director's attended the Open House at the Slovenian Women's Union of America Home Office/Heritage Museum from 6:00-7:30 PM. Visitors arrived from branches in Illinois.

November 02, 2007:

Call to Order at 9:50 AM by President, Bonnie Prokup.
Roll Call: In Attendance- President: Bonnie Prokup, Vice President of Outreach: Debbie Pohar, Vice President of Home Office: Carol Ryba, Vice President of Culture and Heritage: George Plautz, Jr., Vice President of Marketing and Fund-Raising: Bernadette Kovacic Fitzsimmons, Corresponding/Recording Secretary: Karen Taylor, Treasurer: Denise Bartlett.

Opening Prayer: "Our Father" in Slovenian by Bernadette Kovacic Fitzsimmons

Welcome by President Bonnie Prokup. She provided orientation manuals and working calendars to each board member. She reviewed the agenda for the meeting and her plans for developing a Strategic Plan. Bonnie appointed Denise Bartlett as parliamentarian for all board meetings. President Prokup presented "Mover and Shaker" awards to Carol Ryba for her work in researching the home office insurance information in order to do necessary roof repairs and to George Plautz, Jr. for his work on the organizing of the gift shop.

Reports of Board Members:

- Vice President of Outreach, Debbie Pohar: Debbie provided an update on the Zarja- The Dawn, the on-line newsletter, the website and scholarship program.
- Vice President of Home Office, Carol Ryba reported on the issues of the home office. She is focusing on improving workflow. Currently she is managing the membership application process, invoicing, data maintenance for insurance and the day-to-day operation of the home office. She reports that our total membership is now 4,243 of which 518 are junior members.
- Vice President of Culture and Heritage, George Plautz, Jr. provided an update on the heritage museum, gift shop sales, and his team leaders.

The board met with the contractor, Jim Knapp, regarding the repairs to the building following the recent rainstorm and the insurance claim.

- Meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

November 03, 2007:

Meeting resumed and called to order at 9:10 AM. All board members present.

Continued Board Member Reports:

- Vice President of Marketing and Fund-Raising, Bernadette Kovacic Fitzsimmons, reported on marketing strategies for the next year, including the development of a marketing campaign to increase membership and fundraising.
- Treasurer, Denise Bartlett, updated the board on plans for the next national convention, which her branch will be hosting in Milwaukee, WI in 2011. She also provided copies of the updated bylaws for review and discussion. She is in the process of updating the index. The bylaws are not official until approved by the State of Illinois- Department of Insurance.
- President, Bonnie Prokup, provided an update on our Slovenian-American connection, including the Forget-Me-Not writer's tour of America in 2008, the Forget-Me-Not tour of Slovenian landmarks in 2009.
- President, Bonnie Prokup, led a discussion on the role of Regional Presidents. Denise Bartlett made a motion to provide a \$50 stipend to regional presidents who conducted a regional convention in 2007 and performed all of their job duties for that current year. Adopted by majority vote.
- Treasurer, Denise Bartlett, indicated that we are in need of three auditors who, per the bylaws, shall be appointed in a non-salaried, non-voting position for four years. She recommended Genevieve Buol and Mitzi Banich for two of those positions. The board reviewed the proposed auditors' qualifications and voted unanimously to appoint both of them to the positions. A third auditor will be determined at a later date.
- Bill Prokup provided the board with an update on the findings of the insurance audit conducted earlier in the year.
- President, Bonnie Prokup, led a brainstorming session on Strategic Planning to prioritize our focus for the next four years. Determination of our Vision/Mission/Purpose was deferred until next meeting.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

November 04, 07

Meeting reconvened and called to order at 8:45 AM. All board members present.

Telephone call from Mary Lou Voelk who provided an update on the culinary pins, Ivanka Project, maintenance of the archived Zarjas, and future projects.

- Discussion held on the status of the building at 431 N. Chicago, Joliet, IL. Planning for the most appropriate use of the building, a proposed floor plan/renovations and preservation were included in the discussion. A vote was conducted on whether to keep the building and continue work on recently needed repairs and initiate further plans for repairs and renovations. All board members voted unanimously to keep the building for use by Slovenian Women's Union of America.
- Assignments were given to be completed before the next board meeting:

Minutes from the July 13, 2007 board meeting were reviewed and amended for spelling errors. Bonnie Prokup moved that they be approved. Adopted per unanimous vote. Next meeting scheduled for February 22-24, 2008.

Meeting adjourned at 12:09 PM.

"Recruit, Retain, Reinstate – Branch Resources" **By Lynn Zalokar, Branch 93-NYC**

My final follow-up from the SWUA 2007 Convention concerns the "branch resources" list that was included in the delegates' convention binder. A few things were listed (below), but resources are limitless – like picking the brain of a friend/acquaintance who works (or volunteers) for a non-profit or a membership-based organization, asking a meeting or event planner for ideas on innovative programs/events and how to keep costs down, looking at a publication similar to the *Zarja* for ideas (membership-based like a fraternity or sorority, college alumni, Toastmasters, or other ethnic organizations, etc.)

1. Toastmasters International is a communication and leadership skill-building program. There are clubs all over the U.S. and the world (and hopefully one day in Slovenia)! Do we have any Toastmasters in our membership? Sure, right at the very top – Bonnie Pohar Prokup was a member with her American Airlines job. I am a former member. How to benefit? You can join your local club to improve your communication and leadership skills (much of what you learn can be applied to running your branch) or you can ask if anyone in your branch is a current or former

member. You could invite a Toastmaster to speak to your branch (or at a state/regional convention) on communication and/or leadership topics. Phone (949) 858-8255: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., PST, www.toastmasters.org

2. Create a branch business card, Free (except for postage) at www.vistaprint.com What better way to promote than to be able to hand prospective members a card or include in a note or letter to a Slovenian friend or family member?

3. Fund\$Raiser Cyberzine An online magazine bringing fundraisers how-to hands-on ideas in fundraising. This is free and sent out via e-mail once a month www.fundraiser.com

4. www.evite.com If you have a good amount of member e-mails, this is the fun way to invite members to events. This is a free service.

5. www.google.com (an internet search engine) Type in whatever help you are seeking and see what comes up: membership recruitment, membership retention, fundraising, sponsorships, etc.

6. SWUA Cookbook Sales - Cookbook collectors are another source for cookbook sales. They "haunt yard and rummage sales, library used book sales and used book stores." There are also numerous online cookbook sites through which people research and buy cookbooks. For example www.cookbookstore.com, www.epicurious.com/features/cookbooks/bookfinder, www.oldcookbooks.com

7. YOU are a resource. Mention the SWUA to at least one person a day. So many times we have an opportunity but say nothing. We need to remember to promote our branch or the SWUA a little bit every day!

Additional websites to add to the list: www.surveymonkey.com (you can conduct a free online survey when sending to one hundred or fewer e-mails)

www.volunteerpowers.com "Mobilizing the Power and Passion of the Volunteer Network"

www.affordablemeetings.com - Annual conferences with invaluable educational seminars in Chicago, Washington D.C. and Southern California (free admission for qualified attendees, i.e. those working on a big branch event or a state/national convention). www.score.org (Service Corp. of Retired Executives), a resource for those working on national projects (i.e. non-profit status for the SWUA or landmark status of the Joliet headquarters office).

I appreciated the many thank yous from delegates after my presentation. I hope this is just the beginning and that there will be more learning sessions/workshops at future national conventions (as well as at state and regional conventions). Any questions or comments please call or e-mail me. Lynn Zalokar, (201) 947-6336, lzalokar@yahoo.com

Lynn Zalokar is Membership Manager for a not-for-profit professional association in New York City.



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

Washington, January 15, 2008

Slovenia at the Helm of the European Union

by H.E. Samuel Žbogar, Ambassador of Slovenia to the United States

Most of you remember the 1990s, when Slovenia started its historic journey to the West. Then, very little was certain, except for the determination of the Slovenian citizens to create an independent country based on democracy, human rights and other values of the western civilization.

Since then, Slovenia has traveled a long way. It became a member of the United Nations in 1992. In 1999 Bill Clinton was the first American President to visit Slovenia, and in 2001 Presidents George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin chose Slovenia as the place where they would first meet. In 2004 Slovenia became a member of the European Union (EU) and NATO, in 2005 it chaired the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and in 2007 it adopted the common European currency and joined the European border-free area.

However, the peak of Slovenia's success is certainly the assumption of the rotating Presidency of the European Union on January 1, 2008 as the first of the 12 EU newcomers. Our relatively small Alpine state is now being in charge of the Union of 27 states. For the next 6 months, 2 million Slovenians will be providing guidance to 500 million Europeans. This is a historic achievement, recognition and honor for a country that, only 17 years ago, used to be considered part of a problem. Today the Presidency of one of the most exclusive clubs in the world makes Slovenia part of the solution more than ever before.

* * *

Let me briefly explain the essence of the EU Presidency. From January 1 to June 30, 2008, Slovenia will chair one of the three main EU institutions, namely the Council of the European Union. Also known as the Council of Ministers, this body is composed of the ministers of all the EU member states. In addition to chairing the Council of the EU, Slovenia will also chair the European Council, which brings together Heads of State four times a year. The European Council is the highest decision-making body in the European Union. In the case of Slovenia, the European Council will be chaired by Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša.

Besides chairing both Councils, the presiding state represents the Union in relation to foreign countries.

Since most of the power in the EU is concentrated in the Council of Ministers and the European Council, the chairmanship of these two bodies is regularly called the Presidency of the European Union.

* * *

To give you a better idea of the EU's organizational structure, let's compare it to the U.S. Government. Structurally, but not in terms of power, the Council of the EU could be compared to the U.S. Senate, where every state, no matter how large or small, has an equal number of representatives. The role of the Council is to pass EU legislation. The Council shares its

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legislative role with the European Parliament. The latter offers each member state the number of representatives according to the size of each state's population, ranging from five to 99, thus making it similar to the U.S. House of Representatives. The third main EU institution is the European Commission, the executive body of the EU, which could be compared to the U.S. Administration.

* * *

During the next six months, Slovenia will become face and voice of the EU. Coordination of EU foreign policy will entangle our country in international issues ranging from Middle East and Iran to Darfur and Kosovo.

Based on its geographical position and historical links, Slovenia decided to use its six months at the helm of the EU to bring the focus of the EU to the Western Balkans. Slovenia believes that the path towards development, stability and prosperity of its neighboring region runs through European integration. Further, we believe that integrating the region to the West is in the general interest of the EU.

With regard to the Balkans, one of the most difficult issues faced by the Slovenian presidency will almost certainly be finding a solution to the final status of Kosovo, whose majority ethnic Albanians want to declare independence - a move Serbia vehemently opposes. Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, recently said that by a "happy coincidence the toughest issue and the most immediate one, Kosovo and its final status, is the issue on which Slovenia is the most prepared. That's because, to state the obvious, you know the ground, you know the players, you know the culture, you know the issues. I can't think of a better President of the European Union in this critical time than Slovenia." While the words of this prominent U.S. official certainly boosted our confidence, they revealed the high expectations of our partners and the whole international community in the Slovenian leadership of the EU.

Besides the Western Balkans, other priorities of Slovenia's Presidency will be climate change and inter-cultural dialogue. On the former, we will lead the European effort in trying to reduce greenhouse emissions on our planet and thus try to stop global warming. On the latter, we will do all that we can to start a dialogue between different nations and religions, which we see as crucial for stability and peace in the world. In addition, Slovenia will also push for a speedy ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in all the EU member states.

* * *

While representing the Union vis-à-vis foreign countries, Slovenia is expecting to host the President of the United States, George W. Bush, whose attendance of the EU-U.S. Summit is foreseen for late spring this year. If realized, this would be President Bush's second visit to Slovenia. Some of us like to see this visit as particularly symbolic. Namely, President Bush stopped in Slovenia during his first trip to Europe back in 2001 and is expected to stop again in a couple of months, during one of his last, if not last, trip to Europe.

In addition to the Summit with the United States, Slovenia will be representing the Union also in the summits with Russia, Japan and Latin America. All these summits will be organized during the first six months of this year, however, only the EU-U.S. Summit will take place in Slovenia.

* * *

Less than two decades ago, Slovenia did not exist on the map of the world and the membership in the United Nations was merely a dream. Today the country on the sunny side of the Alps has not only become a member of several exclusive clubs in the world, but it is sitting in the driver's seat of the greatest integration project in the world - the European Union. What was unimaginable to our ancestors is being realized by us today.

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SWUA Scholarship Program 1949 - 2008

SWUA Scholarship Mission:

**To generate funding
to financially assist young students
with hope that they will promote
and preserve Slovenian culture.**

In order to more clearly define the function of the Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation and Program, Marge Church, Vice President and Treasurer, has graciously submitted the following excellent report:

SWUA offers a wonderful opportunity to support our youth in their endeavors to join the life circle of education towards security in today's world. The Slovenian Women's Union of America Scholarship Foundation begs your support in funding these young adults and adult programs to secure a future of interest in community, church, state and country and quality leadership in their lives.

The SWUA Scholarship program offers scholarships to our high school seniors to pursue their college choice and programs, to college students, those currently in college and to adults, who wish to pursue a continuing education program to enhance their career, develop a new career or to finalize an interrupted education due to extenuating circumstances. The SWUA wishes to support our young and adult members to remind them that SWUA will assist our Slovenian descendants, while at the same time let them learn of their heritage, whether it be of direct, one-half,

one quarter, one eighth or one sixteenth descendent status and to realize that their background was derived from a country which survived hundreds of years of turmoil, wars, destruction, starvation, loss of land and poverty. The nature of the Slovenian was to survive, and today it has saved all of its land, independence and tradition.

The legacy of SWUA is to preserve the culture that our great grandparents, grandparents and parents have tried to maintain and pass down to us. Let's help to respect their heritage, and our future with their tradition, the tradition of honor, respect for love and life, our Christian principals, and determination for progress and success.

Your support in donating to the Scholarship Fund is critical. We look to the membership and friends to assist in developing and build a program that will give assistance to those family members we treasure.

Please consider making a donation in *honor* of a family member or friend, or in *memory* of a loved one. Donations of \$1,000 or more will be designated with the scholarships awarded in the honoree's or deceased's name. Donations are tax exempt. However, no matter what the amount, all donations are welcome, sincerely appreciated and acknowledged. Every donation, large or small will help reach our goal, and give a support to any applicant.

The Scholarship Fund and Scholarship Foundation of the Slovenian Women's Union of America needs your support and donations. Hvala lepa! - Zbogom, Marge Church (*nee Yemec*)

Marge Church can be reached at 1028 Skyland Drive, Macedonia, Ohio 44056 or yemec1@windstream.net

Please complete and cut out the attached:

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In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

From: _____

Address: _____

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Send to:

Mary Turvey, Scholarship Director Slovenian Women's Union of America
4 Lawrence Drive, Marquette, MI 49855



**In Memory of
JANET MAURIN
1939-2007**

SWUA Branch 1, Sheboygan, Wisconsin has recently honored one of their long time past presidents and Slovenian women musicians by a generous contribution to the SWUA Scholarship Foundation. Janet Maurin, nee Janet Hoepner of German ancestry started playing the accordion as a young girl, eventually joining her father's orchestra. After marrying Rudy Maurin, whose ancestors were of Deskova vas, Stari trg ob Kolpi, Slovenia, Janet learned Slovenian music and formed the 4 M's recording orchestra, which included her husband and two sons, John and Paul Maurin (Paul received a SWUA Scholarship in 1982). Janet formed the Slovenian Singers and Dancers, a group of 22 young children who learned to dance with the able guidance of long time, devoted Branch 1 member, Pauline Rugar. Aggie Gruenke sewed authentic detailed Slovenian costumes for each of the children, which have been carefully preserved. The youngsters sang and danced at picnics, church events, nursing homes and even marched in 4th of July parades. Janet entered her new life on May 22, 2007, after serving as secretary of the Sheboygan Police Department and St. Cyril & Methodius Church for a number of years. Janet was named "Mother of the Year" in 1977. Her love of music, work with young children and of Slovenian culture will live on in the Sheboygan Community for years to come.

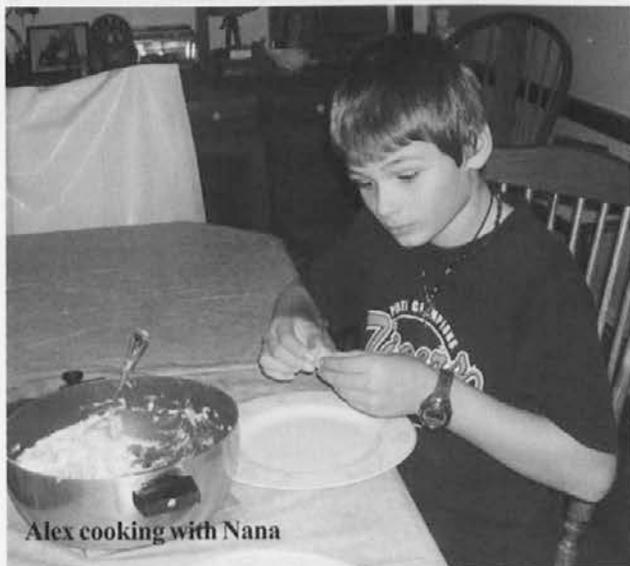


The 4 M's Orchestra

Correspondence

A most promising SWUA Scholarship applicant has recently written to tell us of his nomination to attend the Junior National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C. during spring 2008. Alex Kossakoski, a 7th grader at Walpole Elementary School, Walpole, New Hampshire, junior member of SWUA and grandson of Lil Sadowski,

Branch 42, will be attending classes with other students from across the United States to further develop and use leadership skills: learning important traits of "leadership": character, communication, goal setting, respect, problem solving and teamwork. Alex has requested some financial assistance for the conference and travel expenses but at this time, the SWUA Scholarship bylaws do not cover awards, other than for those attending college, universities, or technical schools as young adults. We extend best wishes to Alex.



Alex cooking with Nana

MONICA A. SELAK

2003 SWUA Scholarship winner and daughter of August and Maria Selak of Girard, Ohio completed her degree requirements at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and graduated at the school's 162nd commencement May, 20, 2007. Monica majored in Anthropology and Pre-professional Studies and will continue her studies at the University of Cincinnati, College of Medicine. Congratulations Monica! We wish you the very best in your chosen profession.

Consulate General of Slovenia and Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations are now accepting applications for internship of the spring semester. Those who wish to apply may send a resume and cover letter to Consulate General of Slovenia, 600 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10016 tel. 212.370.3006 fax: 212.370.3581. Or email clara.drew@gov.si.

Promotion of the Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation through financial and verbal support is sincerely appreciated.

ALL application materials MUST BE postmarked by March 1, 2008 to be considered for 2008 SWUA Scholarships.

For further information please visit the website at <http://www.suwa.org> "scholarship" or contact:

Mary H. Turvey, Director
4 Lawrence Drive
Marquette, Michigan 49855
mturvey@aol.com

Scholarship Donations

\$6,000.00 a most generous GIFT to fund four \$1,500.00 Scholarships for 2008-2009 – Rose Marie Princ

\$175.00 donation: Branch 1, Sheboygan, Wisconsin in Honor and Memory of Janet Maurin, Past President of Branch 1

\$100.00 donation: Branch 89, Oglesby, Illinois – Scholarship Foundation

\$50.00 donation: Karen F. Zuga – Scholarship Foundation

\$25.00 donations: Mary Fredricks in Honor of her Mother, Mary Luzar, Branch 55, Girard, OH (+Helen Dagati)

\$20.00 donation: Virginia Strukel (+Anton Starich)

\$10.00 donations: M. Virginia Roland, Rose & Roy Leubke (+Anton Starich)

\$5.00 donation: Branch 23, Ely, MN (+Christine Cadari)

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Men in a SWUA World

Easter and a New Beginning

Holy Saturday is the first redemptive day after the long Lenten period. During the early morning hours it is customary to light the Easter fire (Žegnan ogenj). The fire is blessed in church and youngsters deliver it through out the village and put it into the oven of every home. Now this doesn't sound like the safest practice with kids running through the streets with fire, but it does sound like a lot of fun, I mean my mom and dad wouldn't even let me light the candles on my birthday cake. But anyway this is the day that the Slovenian Easter celebration begins. Now we get to a tradition we all remember which is dyeing the eggs. Then in the afternoon the Easter feast for the next day is prepared and placed in a basket to be taken to church to be blessed. This is called žegen. Later that evening, bonfires are lit up on the hills and to the great delight of children the fires burn and the kids get the special treat of staying up late, which we all remember as a big deal no matter what the reason. But what does it mean? Well, the bonfires signify the anticipation of Christ's triumph over death, which as we all have learned from our Bible studies, occurred on the third day after his death by crucifixion. How great of a weekend must this have been with the bonfires, running around with fire and then dyeing eggs? I mean you have had all that fun and you haven't even got to Easter Sunday and all that goes with that, must have been a great time to really enjoy Easter.



Painting by Maksim Gaspari

Well, another thing that Easter means to me is that spring is right around the corner and that means warmer weather and all those wonderful outdoor activities. My favorites of course include bocci balls and baseball. Because spring like hope springs eternal and that means my Cubbies still have a chance. Hey, it's only been 100 years, we're due!! Ha! Ha! Well, enjoy your Easter and your spring and as always, may good luck be yours! - Don Baldin

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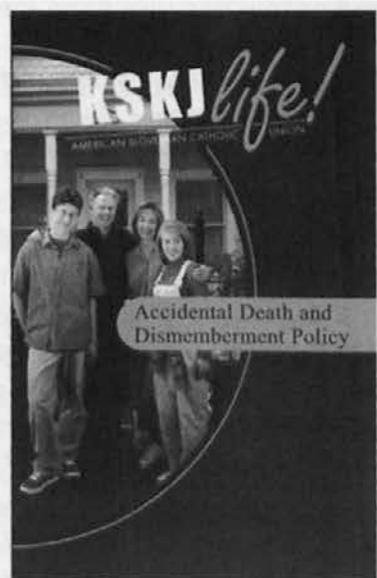
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So c'mon...

Let's Explore

Hi Kids! It's JOJO again.

Well, spring is coming soon and with it comes the yellow dandelion flower, which most kids love to pick. Did you know the name means "tooth of the lion" because of its pointed leaves? Wine is made from the blossoms, the root can make coffee and it provides food for bees, birds and small animals. We all know it is fun to blow the pretty fuzz ball which is known as the



blowball! Best of all, did you know the green leaves can be eaten as a salad? Actually, it is an old Slovenian favorite called the *Regratova Solata*. Ask Mom or your grandmother about it because it is very good and simple to make. Check the cookbook "More Pots and Pans" page 175 for the recipe. Try it.

Hey, do you like to play in the dirt sometimes? I asked my good friend, Colee Moly, (he's a mole so he is an expert on dirt), if he had any ideas about spring things and this is what he said... "Why not make Dirt Dessert for each family member?" Here is how you do it... Spoon one serving of chocolate pudding into clear small plastic cups. One per person. Hide a few gummy worms inside the pudding per cup. Then crush 2 Oreo cookies per dessert and sprinkle on the top. Serve everyone their "Dirt Dessert," won't they be surprised! Yep, yep it is a very good dirt thing for kids and moles, too. Enjoy it and think of ole' Colee Moly when you have it.



Colee Moly's Dirt Dessert

Easter will soon be here. Maybe you can make a simple Slovenian *Butara* bouquet for your kitchen. All you need are some small twigs, some evergreens, a few spring flowers (silk or fresh) tied with several pretty ribbons. Years ago they took them to church in Slovenia on Palm Sunday. They were blessed at church during a procession made around the church during Mass. People then hung the *Butara* in their kitchen so the house would be blessed and safe all year. Some feed a little piece to their cows so they would have good food and milk all year. On Holy Saturday maybe you can help with the family Slovenian *žegen* basket, filling it with the things to be eaten after church Easter Sunday. If your church still blesses the *žegen* basket ask if your family can take a basket there to be blessed on that day. This is a very old Slovenian custom and it is a nice family tradition to continue. You can place the *Butara* on the top of the basket to be also blessed. Ask grandmother about it and she may be able to tell you a little more. It is fun to do some old Slovenian customs each year. Keep it up if you can. **Prosim**

Happy Easter! Hope you have some *Potica* in your *žegen* basket Easter Sunday!

Well, until next time! See ya.....**JoJo**

FUNNY CORNER

Why did the Farmer use a steamroller on his field?

Answers: He wanted to grow mashed potatoes!

**A Slovenian word
to learn
pomlad
it means spring**

Grow a Colee Moly

Here's a spring fun project to do indoors that is made from seed...

You will need:

grass seed

potting soil

spoon

low dish, like a saucer

glue

"eyes" from craft store that wiggle

Nylon stocking / brown or black

water

**Put soil into stocking about 10 inches long. Just enough to fill it really good, but don't let him get too fat!*

**Then spoon grass seed on the top of soil inside the stocking. The more seed used the thicker the grass grows. Do not put any seed on his underside it makes his tummy itch!*

**Lay the stocking grass seed side up in a shallow dish.*

**Pour water over the stocking and leave a little in the bottom of the dish, but don't drown him, he can't swim.*

**Place in a sunny spot, like a window sill, he'll enjoy that!*

**Check him each day and water him when the dish completely dries out. The seeds need to be moist but not soaked or they won't grow.*

**In about a week seeds will begin to grow through the stocking.*

**Note: once grass has grown glue the eyes on. Keep watering him. Isn't he cute? He puts us in a spring mood.*

Thanks, Colee Moly for your hints of spring! We will think of you this spring while you are under ground enjoying dirt and we enjoy potica.



Why Slovenia

Jacqueline Widmar Stewart



For me it's a no-brainer. You might think of me as the prodigal son. Other than the fact that I'm the wrong gender, two generations removed, and I haven't quite moved back, the comparison is quite apt.

All four of my grandparents immigrated to the U.S. at around the turn of the last century, before both World Wars. My mother's parents, Antonia Zupan and Alois Knez, immigrated through Germany by way of Canada. My father's parents, Jozefina Povse and Janez Vidmar, arrived in the United States at Ellis Island.

Although my father was born in Pennsylvania and my mother in Oklahoma, their families both ended up in small towns in southern Illinois. It was not until both were working in Chicago at very young ages, however, that they met at a dance at the Slovenian Lodge. Following the birth of my oldest sister Joan, they moved out of the City and into the little town of Beverly Shores at the tip of Lake Michigan, a place of such natural beauty that it is now a national park.

It's impossible for me now to fathom the hardship my grandparents must have faced in leaving their homeland and their difficulty in communicating with the family left behind. Even to send a letter meant that it went halfway around the globe by boat, country by country, often in wartime. There was precious little contact with relatives who remained "in the old country" for the first two-thirds of the 20th century.

By 1967 the whole world was a different place as my parents and I ventured into the old Yugoslavia. At the northernmost part of what was then a six-republic country, Slovenia belonged to a bygone era. I have to confess to you, though, that the first taste of that place was so sweet and so familiar that it draws me like a magnet even now.

Yes, the country was poorer then and under a socialist brand of rule. Living as a student for the year I spent in Ljubljana in 1969, though, gave me a good chance to take a look at some of the advantages of those times. I want to

tell you about one legacy from the past that appeals to me most particularly.

In the old Yugoslavia people seemed to appreciate each other's work regardless of how disparate their positions might be. It didn't matter if you were shoveling gravel on the roads or directing public works. Person-to-person contacts were direct and easy, at least as far as my eyes and memory could tell.

Although altered by the passage of a half-century's worth of change, I am certain that this legacy lives on today. Yes, the land is exquisitely beautiful and scientifically intriguing. Ljubljana radiates with outstanding architecture and geographic setting. For me, though, one of the biggest attractions may come all the way to the present from the seventh century, and maybe way before. Admittedly it was only when I began research for my book about Slovenia that I came upon this realization. The egalitarian spirit that I have loved about life in Slovenia seems to have been a part of an ancient culture. It may derive from that era when Slavic forbearers filtered into a fairyland of an area full of hills, plains and waterways.

History speaks obliquely of them as a gentle people tending cattle, only looking to a tribal chief if under attack. Today that translates in my mind to a land where life is enjoyed by people as equals together, whether working on the job, conversing in outdoor cafés or hiking in the hills. That together with the hospitality that is so deeply characteristic of the country adds up to an unparalleled ambiance. It just feels good to be a human in Slovenia.

By now you might suspect that I am enamored by the country and driven to discover why it is the way it is. Help from friends and relatives, here and there, has made this endeavor an exceptionally rich experience. The result is a

"Hills and Vales of Slovenia"



About the Author

The Glaciers' Treasure Trove: A Field Guide to the Lake Michigan Riviera, started Jacqueline Widmar Stewart's series of books with environmental, historical and cultural themes. Her guide to Slovenia awaits publication; Paris parks is in the research stages.

Born and raised in northwestern Indiana, the author earned a B.A. at the University of Colorado, an M.A. at the University of Michigan and a J.D. at Stanford Law School in California. Her foreign studies include Greece, Germany and Yugoslavia.

book that I hope you will find as fascinating to read as I have found to research. My manuscripts and photography have been submitted to the publisher in Ljubljana and I'm awaiting further word. I will also strive to provide Zarja with information as I receive it. In the meantime I invite you to check my website www.lexicuspress.com for publication updates.

I trust that my guide will interest those who love the country as I do. Objectively speaking, or at least as objectively as I can speak about the subject. I also think my book will entice all who would enjoy exploring an especially enchanting part of the earth with the eyes of a prodigal granddaughter. A warm welcome awaits!

Najlepše pozdrave in vse najboljše.

Following law school she and her husband Blair W. Stewart have lived in Palo Alto, California. Son Blair Andrew and daughter Julia Suzanne are both graduate students at Stanford University.

Immigration Paths of Author's Zupan/Knez, Povse/Vidmar* Families in the U.S.

Red Oak, Oklahoma: Mother Jewel Knese Widmar's birthplace
Yukon, Pennsylvania: Father John Widmar's birthplace
Livingston, Illinois: Paternal grandparents Widmars' home
West Frankfort, Illinois: Maternal grandparents Kneses' home
Chicago, Illinois: Slovenian Lodge where John and Jewel met
Beverly Shores, Indiana: John and Jewel's home from 1930's
Palo Alto, California: Author's home since the 1970's

*Germanic versions: Supanz, Knese, Posey, and Widmar

Quest for Identity

From an early age, I was fascinated by my Slavic roots. My grandfather was born in the U.S. shortly after my great-grandparents emigrated from Slovenia, just a little more than a century ago. My Slovenian grandfather passed away when my father was only a small boy, and my Croatian grandmother was left to raise him. I had little contact with the Slovenian side of my family. As a sixth-grader, I was required to write a detailed research report about one country. I knew, without a doubt, that I would write about Yugoslavia. When my parents visited Lake Bled in 1985, they sent me a postcard, which I taped up in my school locker. No one else at my high school had roots from Slovenia or Croatia, and I felt exotic and different. I felt a strong attachment to these Slavic roots.

A few years after I graduated from college, I met and fell in love with what would be my first of Slovenian men. My boyfriend planned to return to Ljubljana to pursue a job offer, and I decided to follow him. I was very pleased I could easily transfer to my company's newly-opened office in Ljubljana. Although I had a good command of Croatian, I knew that I would need to develop my proficiency in Slovenian as well. My boyfriend helped me to learn some

basic Slovenian expressions and vocabulary; he made flash cards, drilled me, and role-played everyday situations.

We arrived in Ljubljana and settled in. At first, I was totally dependent on my boyfriend to help me communicate. He was a hard taskmaster when it came to the language, and he constantly pushed me to improve my grammar and vocabulary. As time passed, my proficiency became greater, and I was able to manage in Slovenian when it came to everyday situations. Still, adapting to life in Slovenia was something of a struggle. I was frustrated by my inability to communicate fluently with people, and I often felt bored and lonely. The pace of life seemed a crawl sometimes, and I missed my family and friends from home.

At the end of 1997, our relationship took us to New York City. Although I had excellent career opportunities in New York, leaving Slovenia was difficult, as I finally felt as if I had settled in and established a circle of friends and activities. Back in the U.S., I found myself missing the very things I had found so frustrating: quiet weekends and a slow pace of life. The heavy, constant traffic outside the window of my New York City apartment made me feel queasy.

Inside myself, I kept a small hope that I would be able to live in Slovenia again some day. Keeping in touch with my Slovenian friends helped me to maintain my language skills. During one of my visits to Slovenia, I made my first excursion to Bela Krajina to see the towns of my ancestors and to make contact with some distant relatives there. I was able to locate some cousins in the village in which my great-grandfather had been born. Even though we were related only very distantly, I knew we were family. I longed to establish some more permanent connection with Slovenia, to have a permanent tie, to make Slovenia an official part of my identity.

Obtaining Slovenian citizenship became an important personal goal for me. I contacted several Slovenian government offices to find out the requirements. I was told that getting Slovenian citizenship would be a long shot; as it was my great-grandparents who had been born in Slovenia, there was no guarantee. I would have to prove to the Slovenian government that I was an interesting candidate for citizenship.

My first task was to relocate myself to Slovenia. In the spring of 2003, I was able to negotiate with my company to move back to Slovenia. My adjustment was much easier than it had been the first time; I had a ready circle of friends, and I was able to function independently in the language. I had the maturity and the confidence to set up my new life on my own. Within a week of arriving in Slovenia, I met a Canadian Slovenian who had also come to learn more about his cultural identity. Our shared interest in our roots was the first of many things we had in common, and he would later become my husband.

Meanwhile, I prepared my application for citizenship. I went to the church archives in Ljubljana and found copies of my great-grandparents' baptismal records. I wrote a brief essay explaining why I wanted to acquire Slovenian citizenship. Without help, I was able to write the essay in the Slovenian language. I took great pride in this achievement, as I had not known a word of Slovenian before I was 24 and had never studied the language formally.

At the end of 2004, I mailed my application. For a long time, I had no response. When I phoned the relevant government office, I was told that applications usually take about 18 months to process. A colleague with connections to the Ministry of the Interior told me rejection notices were usually sent almost immediately. The wait was a good sign. I was encouraged to know that my application would likely be accepted. Although I believed I had submitted a complete application, the Ministry kept sending notices requesting other documents. Each time a registered

letter arrived, my heart would begin pounding in my chest. I feared the worst, that the letter contained a rejection notice. At one point, the Ministry even advised me to reapply under different conditions. I kept telling myself that all of the Ministry's requests were a positive sign, that my chances of obtaining Slovenian citizenship were good.

In the summer of 2006, my wedding took place at Ljubljana Castle. In addition to the usual wedding-day jitters, I felt anxiety because the service was conducted entirely in Slovenian, and we had had no rehearsal. I had to pay close attention to what was being said so that I would be sure to know when it was my turn to speak and say, "I do." Despite our nervousness, both my husband and I were able to respond at the proper time and went on to participate in the tradition of drinking a celebratory glass of champagne in the castle courtyard.

Finally, two years after I had submitted my application, I received a summons to the Ministry of the Interior. Although I believed that my papers were in order and that everything pointed towards a positive response, I still had doubts. I arrived at the office before my appointment and paced the halls. When the time came, a female clerk unsmilingly greeted me and opened a thick folder containing two years' worth of my documents. I was so excited that I could barely keep my pen from shaking. My long held-dream was becoming a reality. My quest for citizenship ended rather anticlimactically, as the clerk told me, "Zdaj lahko greste po slovenske dokumente." ("Now you may go to get your Slovenian identification documents.") I felt disappointed not to receive any congratulatory word or smile.

Later, as I reflected on the experience, I supposed that her nonchalance was due to the fact that Slovenia is not a nation of immigrants; gaining citizenship does not bear the same emotional significance that it does for people becoming U.S. citizens. Having an EU passport has certainly made my life easier in my business travels around Europe, but, more important; it has helped reinforce an important part of my identity. - *Katharine Špehar*

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The Beauty of our Slovenian Heritage...

Blessing of Easter Food: ŽEGEN

One of our most beautiful, gracious and symbolic traditions is having the food that we eat after the long Lenten fast, blessed. The food is usually taken to a church, chapel, or roadside shrine, and prayers are said over it and a cross made by the sprinkling of holy water. This is indeed a ritual that many older Slovenians remember from their youth and it is still maintained in many churches here in the USA. In Slovenia, it is now possible to see the priest-officiant, walk to various stop-overs, such as roadside chapels, where people gather to have their food blessed. In our American communities, the churches provide a schedule for blessing according to the Holy Saturday custom.

By the time the calendar shows that Easter is upon us, we already prepare for ŽEGEN on Holy Saturday afternoon. It is then that the idea of the blessing comes into its full meaning. Although we have fasted from meat (in some places this is most regulated), and done other forms of fasting or regulated our sweets for the full 40 days of Lent, there is a certain pleasure in that we have done our "penance" and now we can enjoy food again.

So, the preparations for žegen begin. Since Easter comes in spring, it's most often the time when things are put to order in the house and there maybe even some new clothes to wear. But preparing the žegen is certainly the first of our symbolic Easter customs.

In a beautiful meditation written by a famous Slovenian writer, J.V.Finžgar (17th c.) we may get the sense of the historic žegen ritual:

All is washed. All is swept. The table is covered with a white cloth, and on it stands a colorful basket. The children stand around the table as Mother comes, bringing a big bread, all golden brown like a field of wheat. She places it into the basket first. "This is in memory of Christ's crown of thorns. He, the thorns, we, the bread. God be praised for your holy crown." Then, five red colored eggs. "These are the five wounds of Jesus. Five drops of His blood. Be blessed a thousand times!" Around the edge of the basket she places three horseradish roots "Look, children, the terrible nails with which they put Christ on the cross. When you hurt me or sin, you are hitting the nails harder to crucify Christ." Then comes the prepared meat. The children who have not tasted meat for weeks rise on their toes to look at it. "This is the blessed body given for us." The basket is filled. The mother covers it lightly with a most beautifully embroidered cloth and the

basket stands alone, all beautiful and mysterious. The family is silent. Mother, a saint, has ended the ritual and her words float in the air above them. Her words are holy.

Žegen today is prepared with foods that are quite symbolic, as in the Finžgar story above, but

many other things may be added, such as oranges, sausages, ham, and, very popular is potica or some form of sweet bread. Included is favorite food that the family will like to eat the first thing on Easter morning when the basket is uncovered and offered.

Taking the food for blessing

The olden ritual has the basket of food being taken to church on Holy Saturday afternoon by the lady of the house, or a daughter who has earned the right. She is usually unmarried and her action in carrying the basket – oftentimes on her head resting on a small pillow – is noted by all the young men in her village who also take part in this by making all kinds of mischief along the way. (There are other Slovenian Easter customs that boys like to play here, i.e. hitting eggs together to see whose egg will break, rolling them in a game, etc.) The girl tries very hard to be quick about it, and may earn some honors by being the first to get back home with her basket in tact!

The Eggs should be beautiful

Easter egg coloring is a favorite holiday tradition in our country, and most families color eggs as a children's activity. To follow an old custom, some Easter eggs for the žegen basket are dyed and decorated by natural coloring. The members of Branch 93 NYC told us a few years ago how they did it, by placing larger wet parsley leaves on cooked eggs and tying them tightly in pieces of hosiery, then dipping them into various densities of a warm liquid, such as tea. The result is a beautiful silhouette of the leaf and a lovely color for the egg. -Corinne Leskovar

Finžgar's "Meditation" was a free translation from the Slovenian. For more on Slovenian customs, see Niko Kuret's double volume called "Praznično leto Slovencev"



Painting by Maksim Gaspari

Family Connected ©

By George Plautz

with Patricia Urick Zegas (Branch 93) and Sam Zegas

Anton Urh (pronounced Ulrich) and his family were born in Griblje in Bela Krajina. Anton and his brother settled in Biwabik, Minnesota about 1892. He married Ursula Potokar from Ig, a village near Ljubljana. Anton and Ursula had nine children. Ludwig, one of the youngest, is the father of Patricia. Ludwig and his brothers, Matt and Victor, kept in touch with their relatives in Bela Krajina visiting them in the 1970's and early 80's. Contact ended when due to health problems they stopped writing. Eventually, Patricia wrote to some of the old addresses and was able to reestablish contact. The Urh descendants in Bela Krajina currently live in the village of Križevska Vas.

In 2000, Pat and her family went to Slovenia, visited all the relatives, and a cousin, since passed away, suggested Sam (Patricia's son) attend the month long program by the Centre of Slovene Language as a Second/Foreign Language. So at 17, not knowing what to expect, but supported by his family and having relatives in the area, who could be there for him if there were problems, he began. Sam stayed in the dorms while attending the school: on the weekends he went sightseeing with the

other students or visited with family. Some branches of the family were so thrilled to have him visit and he found them very warm and hospitable. Other branches were less engaged; however, he and his peers, among the cousins, found a common bond. Through this process of integration a cultural bridge was connected, family ties were developed and time was enjoyed with his Slovenian family. Meanwhile, Sam's and Pat's relatives in Slovenia became closer to their American cousins, visiting them in the United States and two of the younger cousins will be staying with the family in America to further their education.

During the three summers he attended the Language School, he met citizens from Japan, India, Argentina, the continent of Europe, plenty of Canadians and Americans. People of all ages attended the class, from those in their teens to adults in their sixties. Sam is studying linguistics at Harvard and was an exchange student in Southern Germany, so he already possessed some language skills to



Sam Zegas in Slovenia as a boy

communicate with the other students. That is before he became adept at the Slovenian language. Actually Sam had to learn, in addition to the standard Slovenian, a specific dialect used by his family near Metlika called "belokranjsko".

The language program instruction was conducted from four to six hours a day and the average class size was ten students, with over 150 people attending each summer session. A community of those students who attended the program developed. About twenty people went through the same journey with Sam over the three summers of attendance at the language program. The people loved the program and ties developed with fellow members through the years, often communicating long afterwards.

The Language school is separate from the certification program. Certification by the Examination Centre of the Centre for Slovene as a Foreign/Second Language at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana is required at the Intermediate level if someone intends to attend college in Slovenia, obtain a work permit or become a Slovene citizen. Sam sought certification at the Intermediate level. The process is exhausting and comprises a day-long exam. The student must listen to authentic discourse and answers open or

multi-choice questions; writes two compositions; reads three or four authentic texts and answers questions relating to context and grammar; chooses several forms of grammar and edits them and then makes a 15 minute oral presentation to a panel. Sam's presentation was on Slovenian immigration to America. He covered general immigration to America starting with the Native Americans traveling over the land bridge from Asia and to the beginning of the immigration of Slovenians. Sam passed the Slovenian National Language exam in August of 2006.

Sam continues to attend Princeton University; he has a double major of social anthropology and linguistics. When asked why he had attended the school and gained certification in proficiency, he replied, "to volunteer in aiding our heritage preservation". He is our future.

A note from Sam Zegas: I was recently accepted for a 10 week internship at the US Embassy in Ljubljana this summer. For part of the time, this will mean I'll be working in the US Embassy to the administration of the European Union Presidency (Slovenia has the EU presidency until the end of June, I will probably be there from late May to early August.) The position they offered me is in the Department of Public Diplomacy. Public diplomacy, rather than being about communication between governments, focuses on the ways in which a country communicates with citizens in other societies - so it's largely about dialog and exchange between cultures and communities. I'm very excited for it!

From the Zarja Staff: Congratulations Sam, we'll be looking forward to your accounting of how you spent your summer vacation or job!

NOTE: The 26th Summer School of Slovene Language was held from July 2nd to the 27th in Ljubljana. It offered successful, fun and fast learning of Slovene. See the web site for information http://www.centerslo.net/l2.asp?L1_ID=1&L2_ID=1&LANG=eng. They now have a special class for 14 to 18 year olds, while Sam had to be 17 to begin the class.

Slovenian Heritage Museum

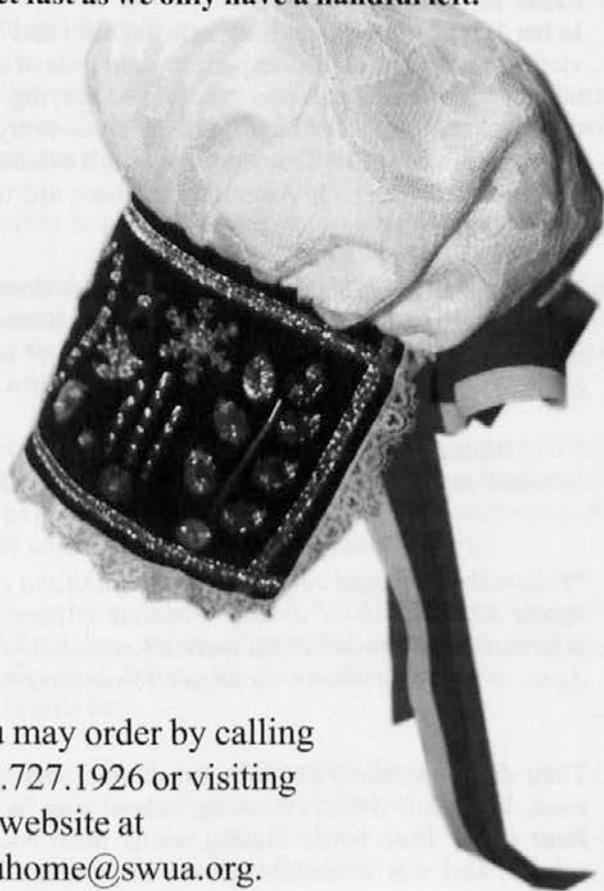
Here is a chance to purchase your own "table display" made especially for SWUA members by ladies of Branch 1, Sheboygan. On sale now for \$45.00 this handcrafted beauty is limited in supply. Be one of the few lucky members to own this exquisite piece. But act fast as we only have a handful left.

A long honored headpiece of the Slovenian costume, the Narodna Noša, is called the Avba, pronounced *au*ba. Several regional styles, primarily Gorenjska, have been donned by ladies of all ages throughout the years. What a sight to see ladies in full Slovenian garb at a special event, state or national convention. While the grandest costume might be the one that came over on the boat and was passed on from generation to generations, the recreations made here in America are equally beautiful.

A smaller version of the Slovenian Ethnic headpiece can be displayed on your dinner table, as a centerpiece on special occasions. It also is a beautiful display of Slovenian Heritage if placed in a china cabinet.

The Avba in the photo gives you an idea of the smaller size. The trim on the band of this Avba has special meaning. This hand-crafted design explains the thoughts of a young lady as she strolls through the wheat fields. She thinks of her future, while gazing at the stars and wonders where her heart will lead her.

These Avbas are available from the Slovenian Heritage Museum at 431 N. Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60432 for \$45.



You may order by calling 815.727.1926 or visiting the website at swuhome@swua.org.

The Path Taken...Dopoljena pot by Mary Lou Voelk ©

HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY to Antonia Koscak Rupar Hoefflerle!

On Monday, January 7, 2008 an article, *"Slovenian woman lives life fully"*, appeared in the News Tribune (LaSalle/Peru). The article was written by Shannon Crawley-Serpette in honor of Antonia Hoefflerle's 100th birthday. President Bonnie Prokup saw the article and contacted me. The rest is history.

Thank you to the following persons for making the story of Antonia Hoefflerle possible.

To Fr. Bernard Horzen of St. Thomas Church, Dalzell, IL. With his permission, this story can be told.

To Shannon Crawley-Serpette for allowing me to combine her story with historical data.

To Harriet Cowell, Social Rehabilitation Worker at St. Joseph Nursing Home in Lacon, IL for her compassionate interviewing skills.

To friends and interpreters, Sr. Justina, Olga Kitts and Dorothy Turczyn.

A most gracious thank you to Antonia herself, who allowed us to brush against tender scars of life.

LIFE In Slovenia

In her 100 years, Antonia Hoefflerle has seen and been victim to the worst of life's experiences. In spite of these horrors, Toni has not stopped smiling or praying. Her rosary is always in her hands, she receives everyone with a beautiful smile. Today, some of life's events and specifics are fuzzy for Antonia, but there are other events that are so very clear.

Toni, as she is called by her friends, was born on December 20, 1907 to Frank and Maria Klanchar Koscak in Pikovnik*, Slovenia. She was the 5th of 11 children.

*"lived on a small farm and had cows"
"work together with mother, cooking, cleaning
and patching clothes"*

**Pikovnik is located south (east) of Ljubljana on a windy Rte 643. It is a very isolated village. No information is available via Internet search and the Atlas of Slovenia shows no larger towns nearby.*

Their diet was mainly potatoes, bread, milk and some meat. War years meant rationing. School was *"a one hour walk"* from home. During winter there was no school, and war cancelled school altogether. Toni

completed 7 years of school and also attended a *"baking school"*.

*"had to walk miles and miles with no shoes
in the old country"*

Antonia Koscak and Louis Rupar were married in 1931 in Slovenia. She clearly remembers Louis being taken from their home. WWII was raging.

*"they took him
overnight"*

The next day, Louis and several other men were shot and killed. Toni had two brothers who were also killed. Grief was not deep enough when.....

*"several people
in a car came
and took me, but
no sisters"*

She was brought to a Concentration Camp in Italy where she spent the next 5 years.

The camp was void of children, doctors and dentists. Men and women were separated. The women were forced to sew, wash clothes and do the hard chores.

*"not afraid of the Italians"
"not lazy, I wash and sew for people...soap
sometimes, sometimes not"*

The only clothing the prisoners owned was the clothes on their backs.

*"slept on straw" - "allowed to eat two times a day,
stale bread, it was rotten"*

Toni met her future husband, John Hoefflerle in this camp. She managed to escape and made her way through Italy. Rev. Michael Zeleznikar, pastor of St. Roch's (Slovenian) Catholic Church in LaSalle became her sponsor.

"being sponsored I had to work hard"



Louis and Antonia Koscak Rupar, 1931

From Italy she set sail for America. She had heard that America was good. She does not remember the name of the ship. Her only memory is being so very sick the entire 11 days at sea.

“if I eat, I throw up...sick messy...everybody sick”

When asked about the Statue of Liberty she responded:

“too sick to look”

From New York, Toni traveled by train to Pueblo, Colorado where relatives of Louis had settled. The following information was taken from Toni's **Application for Membership** in Joliet. Toni became a member of the Slovenian Women's Union of America, Branch 3, Pueblo, CO in 1950. She signed her name as Antonia Rupar, was 43 years old and single. Her place of birth was Pikovnik, Slovenia.



John and Antonia Rupar Hoefflerle

24, LaSalle of the Slovenian Women's Union of America.

LIFE In Peru, IL

John worked as a janitor at the Coca Cola plant and Toni was employed at Electrical Utilities in LaSalle for 18 years before she retired. Toni was known for her beautiful roses. Her yard sported roses of every color and her garden was just as lush. She was known for her baking skills. Her picture perfect apple strudel and potica were a palette's delight. Each Christmas she and John would give out boxes of cookies, made from her recipe. Toni was active with a group that met at St. Roch's Catholic Church. The women would bake strudel, all using the same recipe. It was sold at bingo, but of course, for a PRICE! Toni was known for her "play to win" card playing! She was serious!

And now John was in America.

“John wrote letter to me.... in America”

Toni and John, now deceased, were married in Peru, IL, date unknown. Now living in Peru, IL Toni transferred to Branch

Toni and John made yearly visits to Slovenia. For many years, Toni and her nephew Janez Koscak of Slovenia would take turns telephoning each other.

Toni has resided at St. Joseph Nursing Home* in Lacon, IL since 2004. Today she continues to enjoy card playing and bingo. For sure, she always has her rosary and attends Mass daily. Sr. Justina visits Toni often. As Toni has some difficulty hearing, Sr. Justina talks with Janez via telephone, keeping him informed of Toni's well being.

* Over 60 years ago, the Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi traveled across the globe to Lacon, IL, where they settled and began work on their mission.

Toni has remained deeply rooted in her Slovenian heritage. Walk into her room and there in plain view is a copy of ZARJA! Even after decades, there is a sparkle in her eye when she hears Slovenian music or when she receives a Slovenian newspaper.

Her 100th birthday at the home is a day she remembers well. Members of Branch 24 of LaSalle were there to celebrate with her as were many well-wishers. She received over 100 cards. Yes, there was singing at her party, those Slovenian folk songs! When asked about her birthday cake, Toni uses her hands to estimate how large it was! She attributes her longevity to working hard and praying every day.

I personally extend my gratitude to Harriet Cowell at St. Joseph Home. It was an honor and a surprise to receive a phone call from Toni. This was Harriet's idea.

Harriet related one particular moment during their "interview conversation". It was a moment when two people make a "human connection".

In answer to one of Harriet's questions, Toni responded,

“I worked so hard” she then she sadly looked at me...into my eyes. And at that moment her eyes, her soul, spoke to me, **“look through my eyes and see...then you will understand”**

“And then she slowly shut her eyes as she bowed her head and cupped her rosary in both hands up to her (mouth) face as in prayer...she paused and with head still bowed...in a soft voice she said, **“I must finish rosary”**.”

Everyone loves receiving mail. Mail brightens everyone's day. Branches are encouraged to send Toni a belated birthday card. What a joy this would be for her. Send cards to:

St. Joseph Nursing Home
Antonia Hoefflerle
401 9th St.
Lacon, IL 61540

Slovenia: 1945

A perspective from Norm Setnicker, Branch 109

*A book authored by John Corsellis/Marcus Ferrar,
first published 2005*

This book was brought to my attention at one of our Twin Cities Slovenians' meetings in 2006. Shortly after our inception as Branch 109, Miro Medved, one of our native Slovenian members recounted his family's experiences in the refugee camp in Spittal, Austria. (I recounted Miro's story in one of our earlier branch reports). In the book *Slovenia: 1945*, the co-authors recount those months of refugee life in Spittal through a series of interviews and diary entries from surviving Slovenians that were caught in the turmoil near the end of WWII. It wasn't long after that Yul Yost, another of our native Slovenians in Branch 109, called attention to our membership about the book and the many references to mass killings near his village of Teharje. Yul's recollections were included in an article by Mary Grabar, "Mass Graves in Slovenia from 1945" (Google-"lest we forget mass graves Slovenia").

Slovenia 1945 is a must read for anybody who has Slovenian ancestry and grew up in areas where "DP's" (Displaced Persons) settled after leaving the refugee camps in Austria. I grew up in the 1950's in a small town on the Minnesota Iron Range- Biwabik. It was during the early 50's that five Slovenian families settled in Biwabik: the Medveds, Vidmars, Ferkuls, Strupe and Percic's. In fact the Percic family bought our garage and built a home next door where they raised seven children. Andrew and Mary are members of Branch 109. On occasion, usually Sundays, I would go with my father, John Setnicker and visit the Ferkul family who had moved into a small house behind Zallar's bar. (Dad helped furnish this starter home with some used furniture). I can recall listening to the Ferkul family singing Slovenian songs and recounting stories of their escape from Yugoslavia. However, being I could not understand "Slovenian" except for a few swear words, what I did hear many times were warnings that if the Ferkuls went back, especially Johnny Ferkul, that they would be shot by the Tito government. This apparently was the case for the other refugee families.

Looking back at those boyhood days in the 50's, we were growing up in what is called in American history, the Cold War, a war of words between Russia and the United States. A time when Communists were thought to have invaded the halls of Congress, the hauntings of Hollywood, or perverted the popular literature. It was under this umbrella of suspicion and xenophobia that children of these displaced persons attended the public schools on the Iron Range.

The Iron Range of Minnesota, through its public school system had long been a noted melting pot for the many ethnic groups that had migrated to the United States in the early 1900's: Finns, Croats, Slovenians, Swedes and Serbs. However within this xenophobic-"red scare" atmosphere some of the children within those five families of Slovenian DP's had a harder time adjusting to the public school. Two sisters of the Percic family recalled the tauntings they received from their nativist schoolmates: "Go home you Communist" "Your parents are traitors". Mary Percic

Bernard recounted the trauma and fear of going to school every day. They became socially isolated from their school mates. It got to the point that they did not want to participate because they were always picked last or not picked at all. Even the teachers showed little support save for Mr. Dolan the elementary school principal. On one particular occasion Mary felt the sting of her family being poor and not having a nickel to go to the circus. She had to sit in the principal's office the whole day while her classmates enjoyed the circus. Later on Mary received a letter from the president of her class Donald Dealing apologizing for the humiliation that she endured during her high school days (she still has the letter as a reminder of the trauma she experienced). Mary's sister, Angela had such a fearful experience growing up that she refused to ever want to visit Biwabik. There was even jealousy within the adult community over that fact that these refugee families built new homes. I remember hearing stories that these DP's brought suitcases of money to the United States and that was how they could build new homes. They built their OWN homes by THEMSELVES. Many times I would see the Percic family working well into the night after Mr. Percic had put in an 8 hour day at Erie Mine.

On the positive side these Slovenian immigrants who settled on the Iron Range communities of Gilbert, Biwabik, Aurora, Soudan and Ely were characterized as fiercely independent, deeply religious in the Catholic faith, keenly resourceful, extremely devoted to the family, highly industrious and above all thankful that they were able to escape from the turmoil embroiling in Yugoslavia after the War. Children of these refugee parents continue to lead successful lives in many parts of the United States and have inculcated their children with those strong Slovenian values of faith and family devotion.

The book *Slovenia 1945* gave me a new understanding of what these Slovenian refugees had to endure and the confusion which surrounded them in the closing years of the War. Questions such as: Was collaboration with an enemy always evil? Was resistance the right path? How would the victorious allies distinguish between friend and foe? Were the Communists any better than the 3rd Reich? Did helpless civilians have any direction in deciding their fate? The answers to these questions were clarified after reading *Slovenia 1945*.

For Slovenes, WWII was a tragedy setting brother against brother with the end result of families being broken and refugees scattered around the globe: Argentina, Canada, United States and Australia. For those of us wanting to understand our Slovenian legacy this book goes a long way to fill some major voids in Slovenia's history. It is a must read!

Postscript: This article was not meant as a book review. I would leave that up to better informed Slovenians that actually lived the experience and researched the material. For myself, this book answered a lot of haunting questions and served as a catharsis for the many emotions I share with being born in the United States with Slovenian parts.

Editors Note:

This book can be purchased from www.amazon.com.

Branch Reports

Poročila Podružnic

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Following an eventful and productive 2007, we in Branch 1 look forward to 2008 with high expectations.

Many of our members take part in a wonderful žegen experience at SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish. Our pastor, Fr. Glenn Powers, has taken to the Slovenian custom of blessing food with gusto. Over one hundred people of all generations bring their picnic baskets brimming with food to the church on Holy Saturday for the žegen service. All are invited to place their baskets on the altar. The smells of candles and flowers are overtaken by those of potica and kranski – it's truly a wonderful smell! We have a scripture reading, sing songs and Fr. Glenn has a special blessing for each type of food in the baskets. He also gives everyone a sweet treat for attending. We are blessed to have such a delightful service every year.

Another one of the highlights for Branch 1 will be to host the 2008 State Convention in June.

Our officers this year are President Aggie Gruenke, Vice-president Mary Ann Schellinger, Treasurer Julie Kinney and Recording Secretary Angie Fritz.

Every year at Christmas, a local bank and newspaper sponsor the "Festival of Trees", a popular event with the attendance of hundreds. Words cannot express this magnificent sight! Proceeds from various sales benefit local community agencies. We are happy to announce our Julie Kinney was awarded first prize in both the "People's Choice" and "Designer's Choice" Awards in her design of a 7.5 foot tree. Amanda Kinney, junior member, was awarded second prize in the tabletop tree category. Second prize in the 6.5 foot category was awarded to the Kettle Karver Club, a wood crafting group, of which Dick Jelovnik of Branch 1 is a member. Congratulations to these deserving and dedicated people!

In closing, the success of Branch 1 is due in part to the welcome interest, comments and input of our members. Let us continue with this enthusiasm in 2008 – and beyond!

Angie Fritz

BRANCH 2 - Chicago, Illinois

As you are reading our articles, we hope the weather in your area is warm and the spring flowers are in bloom. The unusual weather for the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008 was a welcome departure. We hope that everyone is safe.

At the National Convention at Starved Rock, we purchased a beautiful Slovenian doll. She was given the name Mary Lou and has blond hair and blue eyes. Everyone at our Christmas dinner wanted to take her home. Chances were sold and she was won by member Donna Benedict, who is a doll collector. Donna was very excited because this was her first Slovenian doll (Mary Lou found a great home).

New member: little Ethan David, born November 20, 2007 to mother Elizabeth Newbould and Grandmother Mary Newbould. Congratulations to the family.

On a sad note, Branch 2 lost 14 members during 2007. They will be missed. Some have been members of Zveza for over 80 years and participated in all the activities. Deceased members are Beverly Brniak, Anne Bunetta, Mary Habel, Josephine Intihar, Geraldine Kramer, Helen Kochevar, Mary Malloy, Mary Muller, Millie Paisoli, Mildred Persa, Mary Piscitiello, Theresa Banich Rhoads, Frances Silko and Bernadine Storcz. Our condolences to all their families and friends. Please remember them in your prayers so that they may rest in peace. Mass will be said for each by the Franciscan Fathers, St. Mary's/Lemont.

The following members were in the hospital over the holidays: Karen Cerjak Blue, Mary Newbould, Elsie Ciszek and Frances Yucevicius.

March 16th we will be celebrating St. Joseph's and St. Patrick's Day. Branch 2 will again purchase fried chicken. Each member should bring an accompanying dish to serve 8. Looking forward to all those delectable goodies!

Snow birds have returned from their winter homes. Happy to have them back. It's spring and once again we will be eagerly waiting for the Cubs and the Sox to PLAY BALL. Happy Easter to everyone.

Love, Daisy

BRANCH 12 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Since I missed the publication date, for the last issue of *Zarja*, I would be remiss not to wish all of our members and readers of *Zarja* a very Happy and Healthy New Year, as I imagine your Christmas holidays were joyous and everyone received their wishes from jolly old St. Nick.

At our November meeting, we re-elected our existing slate of officers for the interim period as we contemplated some changes for our Lodge, in 2008. So, we had our Christmas celebration on December 13th at our favorite eating establishment, the Brass Rail and after a wonderful lunch, we had door prizes and played Bingo. Everyone



thoroughly enjoyed themselves, as there were door prizes for everyone.

Our intention also at the end of last year was to postpone celebrating our 80th anniversary until the early part of 2008 because of conflicting events by various other lodges. Obviously we did not have our celebration as our plans were again interrupted, since the January dates had been reserved with events by SWUA Branch 43, the combined Slovenian Lodges, Annual Bowling tournament and The Domača Zabava planned by Branch 43. But our biggest problem was the lack of young and ambitious members. Our membership consists of some wonderful people, but unfortunately, they have been members for so many years that the old adage "the heart is willing but the body will not cooperate" has compelled us to forego our plans for a major celebration and we decided to observe this momentous milestone with a private dinner for our members.

As it seems with every article I write these days, I have to acknowledge the loss of a much loved and devoted member of Branch 12, Tony Starich, who was with us until the age of 95. I don't believe there was a Slovenian event that Tony did not attend and every Thursday after our monthly meeting, he would put on his dancing shoes and go to Serb Hall where he would dance with any of the ladies who needed a dancing partner. He was a friend to all and we will truly miss him. We extend our deepest sympathies to his daughters Janis and Carol together with their families.

Our President Nell Zietlow informed us at our Christmas Luncheon that she was not able to continue on as President and so we had a special meeting on January 3rd at which time, Virginia Strukel and Nell Zietlow exchanged officer positions. Our new slate is now: President: - Virginia Strukel; Vice President: - Rose Luebke; Recording Secretary: - Nell Zietlow; Secretary/Treasurer: - Fran Remshak and Auditors: - Al Jelinek and Joan Ostrander.

Our invitation to all of our Slovenian community to join us has not resulted in a rush of applications, so we continue to invite Slovenians from the Milwaukee Area to at least come to a meeting. You'll like it. So until next issue, here's hoping that everything is just right in your little corner of the world.

Fran Remshak

BRANCH 13 - San Francisco, California

We started the New Year at our January 3rd meeting with our new 2008 officers who were elected at our December meeting. The officers are as follows: President Doreen Sustarich, Vice President Louise Petrosich, Financial Secretary Moreen Spencer, Recording Secretary Barbara Chiodo, Treasurer Michele Twers, Auditors Virginia Sustarich and Ann Sustarich, Reporter Barbara Chiodo. The new officers are looking forward to an exciting

new year of monthly luncheon-meetings and planning our annual Mother's Day Luncheon. If you are interested in helping to plan our event, please come to our meetings on the first Thursday of the month at noon at the Slovenian Hall. All members are welcome.

It is with sorrow that I report the passing of longtime member Mary Yerman. It has been some time since Mary was active, but we shall miss her and send our sympathy and prayers to her family.

After reporting the passing of 50 year member Sophie Troya last month, it is shocking to report the passing of her son, Rudy Tony Troya at age 62. Our prayers are with his family.

I have been working on a story about five generations of two Slovenian families who are living in the Slovenian neighborhood of San Francisco, just a block away from the Slovenian Hall. This is really something for a city like San Francisco and so wonderful for the families to see a fourth and fifth generation of cousins becoming friends. I will tell you more in my next article.

Barbara Chiodo 650-593-9576 bchiodo@comcast.net

BRANCH 14 - Euclid, Ohio

Member and friends of Branch 14 met for their annual Christmas Party the first Tuesday of December. The lower hall of the Slovenian Society Home was filled with celebrants who feasted on a delicious Slovenian dinner prepared and served by Sophie Mazi and her staff, and then enjoyed a raffle.

The raffles we have at our two dinners are our only fundraisers during the year and, thank God, they are always very successful. The donated prizes from our generous members get nicer and nicer each time, and more and more people buy tickets.

We were very pleased to see Josephine Stupica at our dinner. Although she has difficulty getting around, she really wanted to attend this event and her loving daughter, Laverne, made sure that her mother's desire was fulfilled. Josephine now lives at Governor's Pointe, 8506 Hendricks Rd. in Mentor.

Josephine's sister, Vincie Lindic, was unable to attend as she is confined to a wheel chair. Vickie resides at Gateway Health Care in Euclid. Both Vickie and Josephine would enjoy hearing from their friends.

Florist Jim Slapnick, who faithfully attended our dinners for many years and always donated a beautiful plant, could not be there this year as he broke his ankle a few months ago and is still recuperating at home. He has permanently closed his flower shop which is a great loss to our Slovenian community. Almost every Slovenian funeral had flowers from Slapnick's. His wife attended our dinner and donated a beautiful huge poinsettia.

We will be having our second annual event, our Mother's Day Dinner, the first Tuesday of May at Slovenian Society

Home, where we will be honoring all our mothers. Our dinner will again feature a delicious Slovenian meal prepared by Sophie Mazi. You do not find too many cooks today who are able to prepare the traditional Slovenian meal starting with liver dumpling soup and ending with strudel. We invite you to attend.

One of the oldest members in the SWUA is our member, Anna Gacnik, who is 105 years old. What an achievement to live that long!

Many thanks go to Stana Grill who takes all the reservations and arranges the seating for about 80 people at both of these events. See you at our Mother's Day dinner.

Patricia A. Budzilek

BRANCH 16 - South Chicago, Illinois

We're ready to begin our New Year with the SWUA and are glad to be back and have some fun with our Bunco games and see our friends after a few months off. Our meeting will be on March 8th in St. George Hall on E. 96th St., off Ewing Ave.

Our sincerest sympathy goes out to our member Mary Ann Dandurand from Thornton, IL, who lost her husband, Marvin. There was a Memorial Mass said for him on December 14, 2007 at St. John Church in Glenwood, IL.

Get well wishes to Helen Battista, Fran Novak and Barbara Ireland, may they each have a speedy recovery; we will be praying for you.

We are combining with KSKJ Lodge #44 to have a Mass on May 25th for our Lady of Brezje, our plans are not complete yet, but we will advise you in our next article.

I enjoyed the recipes on the last page of the January-February issue. I hope I will be able to try them. I haven't had Struklji since my Mom made them years ago, so it will bring back many good memories. I also would like to try the Krofi recipe. Wish me luck.

I hope we have a few new members and those who have not been active come to our meeting on March 8th. Let's get active.

Dorothy Rossi

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Wishing you all a Blessed beautiful Easter. It's hard to believe that Easter will be in a few short weeks. Seems like I just boxed up and put away the last of our Christmas Decorations. Where does the time go?

Congratulations go to Peter and Kristine (Cepon) Collins on the birth of their daughter Katherine Frances and to grandparents Frank and Lillian Cepon. Kristine and Lillian are members of Branch 20. Congratulations also to Jeff and Amy (Tezak) Rodrigue on the birth of their son Alexander John, grandparents Jack and Judy Tezak and Great Gramma Josephine Tezak. Amy, Judy and Josephine are all members of Branch 20. Congratulations also to

member Tiffany Tezak on the birth of her son Hayden, who is now a member and Great Gramma Betty Tezak.

Anniversary Congratulations go to John and Mary Anzelc who recently celebrated their 60th Anniversary.

Condolences go to the families of members Florence Zupancic, Anne Mahkovic, Sophie Dirker, Zora Zelko and Agnes Maloney. Also to member Barbara Kociuba on the loss of her husband, Joseph of 65 years and member Marie Gulas on the loss of her husband, John of 60 years.

Attention Branch 20 junior members and adults wishing to continue their education. Please note the special notice printed in this issue regarding eligibility to receive scholarship funds.

Have you ever wondered where the proceeds of our annual Grape Festival go? There are many expenses pertaining to Branch 20. One of the main beneficiaries is the yearly dues paid for our insured members 85 years and older. When a member passes, either a mass stipend or a carnation (Slovenian flower) bouquet is given to a family member. This year 23 of our members passed. Also, a donation to the Scholarship Fund is made in their memory. Future issues will have more information regarding the use of the funds made through your generous donations and support.

We are still seeking nominees for the "Member of the Year" Award. There are many hard working deserving ladies out there, surely you know one of them. Send your nomination to Char Kobe.

Plans are in the making for Branch 20's 80th Anniversary celebration October 19, 2008. Keep watching future issues of the *Zarja* for updated information.

Any information you would like to share with fellow members, please feel free to contact Pat (815)741-1863 or figbar@sbcglobal.net Remember, a top banana is supported by the rest of the bunch.

Pat Figurowski

Branch 20 Offers the Following Scholarships to Its Members

Adult Continuing Education Scholarship to a member 21 years of age or over who is pursuing advanced or continuing education.

High School Scholarship to a graduating eighth grader who has been accepted to attend one of the Catholic high schools and is enrolled for the fall 2008 semester.

High School Scholarship to a current high school student who wishes to continue in a Catholic high school or is planning to transfer from a public high school to a Catholic high school.

Scholastic ability must be shown as well as an evaluation of the applicant's character and code of behavior. For detailed eligibility information and application forms, contact:

Branch 20 Scholarship Program % Theresa M. Burns
1109 Plaza Drive, Joliet, IL 60435-3844 Phone: 815-725-5319

Applications must be received prior to April 15, 2008

BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Dober Dan! Dober Dan is a warm and simple greeting, one familiar to Slovenians, yet a very rarely heard or spoken these days unless you are in the company of Slovenians or at a Slovenian function.

This greeting reached my ears last week in the dining room of Starved Rock Lodge, site of last year's fabulous convention. (Through a series of fortunate events that took place following the convention, I am now employed by the Lodge on a part-time basis as a dining room hostess.) Imagine my surprise when two lovely Slovenian ladies greeted me with "Dober Dan". Turns out they were both former St. Roch's parishioners, and one of them is a Branch 24 member who lives out of town. Our visit was extremely pleasant and we agreed that there is definitely a "bond" between Slovenians.

Branch 24 is very proud of our member, Antonia Hoefflerle who celebrated her 100th birthday on December 20, 2007 with a large gathering of friends.

(Editors Note: Be sure to read this issue of *The Path Taken* on pages 22 and 23 as the story is all about Antonia Hoefflerle.)

Speaking of nursing homes, let us not forget our fellow members and friends who are patients in them, and who welcome visits and cards - Adele Gensler, Jennie Pohar, Bernadine Kostellic, Frances Puetz and Antonia Hoefflerle. Remember, too, and pray for our sick and homebound members and friends.

With Easter approaching our thoughts are on the importance of and the preparations for the most holy day of the year. Once again our homes will be filled with the spirit and joy of the Easter season following the period of Lent and also the smells and scents of various foods being prepared for this celebration. Most of us will recall and relive the Slovenian traditions, especially žegen - the blessing of the food. We are pleased that here in our area the tradition still continues and every year there are a few more baskets placed by the altar waiting to be blessed. It's wonderful and important to see little children coming with their parents or grandparents to witness this beautiful custom.

Wishing all of you a most Blessed and Joyful Easter and until next time, may your hearts be filled with peace and love.

Loretta Story - 9lives@insightbb.com

BRANCH 32 - Euclid, Ohio

Branch 32 celebrated Christmas at their last meeting of the year. Good food and company highlighted the evening. In attendance were Ann Cooke, Anna Deptola, Elsie Frank, Adrienne Jager and her son JJ, Helen Kovacevic, Dorothy Lamm, Frances Ogoreuc, Charlotte and Rudy Perdan, Pam Dirk and our youngest member Mary Dirk. Pleasant thoughts of Christmas's past when life seemed to be simpler

and did not contain the aches, pains and sickness of old age were discussed. Gifts were exchanged and helped to brighten the night.

Sadly missed were several of the usual members who are no longer able to attend, they are dearly missed and our prayers are with them. We are sad to report the death of long time member Christine Verch.

Best wishes go out to member Cecil Znider who celebrated her 94th birthday.

We thank Dorothy Lamm for the excellent job she did in running the State Convention at St. Mary's in Collinwood, her efforts made the event take place. She enlisted the aid of her friend Dave and his daughter and son. Charlotte Perdan did her usual fine job selling tickets and it was wonderful to see Pam Dirk in her Narodna Noša.

We would like to thank all who attended and all who donated items for the raffle and to all who worked to make this a successful event.

Dorothy's ability to run the affair while she had on her mind her daughter who was going to be operated on the next day even makes her job that much more marvelous. Happily we report Denise is doing well.

The branch received a thank you note from the Euclid Public Library for the donation that was made. A name plate with Branch 32 on it will be placed in a book that will be purchased with the donation.

We send our thought and prayers to all our members but especially to those who were unable to be with us Livonia Avitt, Alma Eppich, Josephine Gornik and Marge Sas.

Rudy Perdan

BRANCH 35 - Aurora, Minnesota

Greetings from all our members! No weather change here, still cold. Sixteen members attended the meeting and we were happy to have Kris Walburn join us. She finally got a Sunday off. We discussed our plans for our September 2008 Minnesota Convention, which we will host. We have a long way to go before completing these plans.

I brought a Slovenian crossword puzzle for the ladies to solve. It was on the different pieces of clothing we wear. I assumed that the puzzle was correct being that it was published in a magazine. Well, it seems I was wrong. But, everyone enjoyed it despite the fact that the words did not fit in their proper place in the puzzle. I will certainly work out the other puzzle I have on the different vegetables.

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I would like to report that my grandson, a member of our branch, has left for his basic training in the U.S. Marine Corp today. Please remember him in your prayers along with all of the other troops. I can foresee many sleepless nights ahead.

For "Pust", I remembered to make the Ocvirkova potica. I make mine in rolls like cinnamon rolls.

Our thoughts and prayers are with George Plautz, we wish him well.

Stay well, warm and happy! Ostanite pri dobrem zdravju, tople in vesele!

Anita Vovk gospanita@yahoo.com

BRANCH 39 - Biwabik, Minnesota

It seems we just celebrated our Christmas season and suddenly Pust is over and at this reading, we will be preparing for the Easter season.

On January 7th, our 2008 ZVEZA year began with a celebration of our Epiphany dinner at Michaels on the Course in Virginia, MN. Twenty-three (23) members and guests were in attendance and enjoyed an afternoon of good dining, good conversation to renew friendships and "Button Box" entertainment by our own member, Carol Sherek. We had a sing-a-long of SVETA NOC (Silent Night) and the printed words were sent home to teach the grandkids. We ended our day by playing our dice game. You cannot imagine the laughter while "stealing" the gifts. Why is it that there is one gift everyone wants, it makes its rounds and ends up being a roll of toilet tissue? Oh-what fun we had!

At our February 3rd meeting, we will plan our agenda for the year, beginning with the Member of the Year designation. We also will have an update on the plans for the Festival of Nations to be held in May in St. Paul, MN. I am sure you will all read about the plans in upcoming articles from Branch 109 of the Twin Cities, MN. The representation of Slovenia and the Slovenian people will be a first for this event. We are all looking forward to it.



Seated: left to right Katie Zuponicich Bone, Phyllis Globokar Nisen
Standing: Our own—Carol Sherek on the button box

Also on the agenda will be an insight to the pending World Congress presentation at Ironworld on Slovenian culture, including folklore, foods, art and history. Hopefully this event will take place in June of 2008. More about this as plans solidify. A busy spring for us.

We hope your Pust has brought you closer to Christ and wishing all SWUA members and families the blessings of our Risen Savior.

Zbogom, Rosemary (Sertich) Ribich
rribich@northlc.com
(note e-address change)

BRANCH 40 - Lorain, Ohio

Our Slovenian community has suffered another loss with the death of Joseph Serazin who died in September after a long illness. He was 85. Joe was a true and faithful worker at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Slovenian Catholic Church where he was a lifelong member. Ever proud of his Slovenian heritage, he followed the traditions of his

upbringing. Just out of High School during the Second World War, he joined the navy. He loved flying and became a navy pilot, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade. He flew a navy bomber with a group of patrol bombers known as The Black Cats based in Guam, who performed sea-air rescue missions over the South Pacific. He treasured a replica of the plane he flew. He and Agnes Celik were married upon his return home from the service, and were married for 58 years at the time of his death. To Aggie, their three children and five grand-children, we extend our deepest sympathy. Rest in peace, dear friend.



Members of Branch 39 enjoying visiting prior to dinner

We had a nice group of members and guests at our luncheon in November at the clubhouse of a local golf course. The weather was such that there were even a few golfers out on the course. After the lunch, everyone was reluctant to leave and we just sat and visited. It was fun. We will do it again real soon.

Congratulations and thanks to our editorial staff for our beautiful and interesting *Zarja*. We look forward to each issue.

By the time we read this, we will already be in our Lenten season. Can spring be far behind? A belated Happy New Year to all, and love.

Stephanie Polutnik

BRANCH 42 - Maple Heights, Ohio

The following is a modified version of my original January/February branch report, which regretfully was replaced with a previously printed column.

Congrats go out to Jackie Albers who was successfully re-elected as president of the Maple Heights City Council. Belated congratulations to Betty Ann and Lou Kastelic who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 7, 2007. Along with their immediate family and grandchildren they spent the week-end at Seven Springs, PA. My daughter, Lynn and her husband, Gene Kossakoski celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on Jan. 8, 2008. They received a wonderful gift from their son, Alex, our 12 year old junior member who was nominated to represent his school and the state of New Hampshire as a student with scholastic and leadership potential. As such he will attend the Junior National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C. this Spring. Your grandma and our branch salute you, Alex, on this great honor.

We want to extend a warm welcome to two new members, Mary L. Day of Strongsville and Rose Marie Jisa of North Royalton. Hopefully they can join us at our May 10th meeting. We look forward to meeting you.

Marge Church and I attended the final mass at St. Wenceslas Church celebrated by Bishop Richard Lennon. Although the parish was Bohemian affiliated it also served the Slovenian community in its 84 year history by providing a place of worship for those with limited transportation. The elementary school benefited many a young Slovenian with a Catholic education and so once again another chapter closes in our Maple Heights story.

Our *žegen* theme for this issue brings back memories of my youth. Long before our National Home was built, the Pavla and Grega Hribar homestead served as our meeting place for Catechism and at Easter the place we went on Holy Saturday with our food baskets for the traditional Slovenian food blessing known as *žegen*. These treasure troves held the foods we would consume (or should I say devour) Easter morning after mass: colored eggs, *želodec* (smoked meat), *šarkelj* (sweet bread), *hren* (horseradish

root) and *potica* (pastry). Many people included butter and wine. After 6 weeks of not eating between meals, no movies, no playing the radio and attending Stations of the Cross 3 times week, Easter Sunday was the reward with the sky the limit. How sweet it was!

Best wishes to any ailing members. Don't forget our May 10th meeting, 11:00 A.M at the Maple Heights library. Happy Easter to all.

Zbogom, Lil Sadowski 216-398-4367

LRsadow@aol.com

BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday Season. May 2008, be filled with peace, love and joy.

Our Holiday Party was held on January 12, and all who attended enjoyed the afternoon. After a delicious lunch, there was an over abundance of raffle and door prizes. Many thanks to all who brought prizes, and to those who baked cookies. The new officers for 2008, were introduced and then were installed by Jack Kolesari.

Our next scheduled meeting is Saturday, March 22, at noon at the West Allis Library and will be preceded by a lunch prepared by the March Birthday members. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE. We are hoping to see those members who are unable to attend our usual Wednesday meetings.

In April we will meet on Wednesday, April 23, at the usual time and place.

Rehearsals for the *Uspeh* Slovenian Chorus have begun. They are held each Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. in the music room of St. John the Evangelist School. Do you like to sing? Come join us. Our Spring Concert will be held on Sunday, May 18, in the St. John's Church Hall. More information please call Mici Bregant.

It doesn't seem possible that Easter is just around the corner. Does that mean spring and warmth will soon follow? I hope so! Happy Easter to all.

Mici Bregant

BRANCH 47 - Garfield Heights, Ohio

Hi everyone. Our next meeting is March 9, 2008 at the Maple Hts. Library. Please try to bring our younger people to this meeting. We need more younger people involved to keep our Branch moving in the right direction. If we don't, what we have accomplished so far will be for nothing. Our Fore Fathers or Mothers wanted us to preserve our Heritage and that is what we are trying to do with the younger generation. Our families are the most important commodity we have. If we didn't have our families where would we be? Everything for me started with my Grandmother, Jennie Gerck. She was our President for quite a while. She instilled in me my values about our Heritage along with my mother Elsie Spellacy. Please try to bring our younger people into all of this prosperity.

Our Member of the Year Celebration is May 2nd at 4:00 p.m. at Piper's 3 in Broadview Hts., more details to follow.

Birthday wishes go out to all our March and April Members. See you at the next meeting.

Contact people: Elsie Spellacy 1-330-699-0031 or Katherine Wallace 1-330-253-0825 or Olga Dorchak 1-330-468-7989 e-mail Katherine Wallace webblekatt@hotmail.com

Katherine Wallace

BRANCH 50 - Euclid, Ohio

A very Happy New Year to members and friends of Branch 50! Our Christmas dinner at Tizzano's Party Center was a grand success with 40 members and guests in attendance; after a brief meeting, we enjoyed dinner, a sing-a-long and a Chinese Raffle with 30 prize-filled baskets donated by our members and assembled by Cookie Maxin and her family members. The special potica cake baked and donated by Rosemary Marn was auctioned in a lively (but friendly) bidding war.

The current officers were reelected unanimously. They are: President, Rosemary Toth; Vice-President, Cookie Maxin; Secretary, Josephine Wutchiett; Treasurer, Fran Kajfez; Zarja Reporter, Anne Tomsick; and Auditors, Lillian Homar and Louise Troglia.

Josephine Arko has been named the 2008 Member-of-the-Year by our Branch 50. Jo has been a truly active and supportive member since 1965. Congratulations, Jo, you are certainly loved and well-deserving of this honor. More details to follow.

Get well wishes are extended to Julie Sadar, Ivanka Matic and Anne Tomsick. Please keep them in your prayers.

Being a Zarja reporter has its pleasant surprises. Two of my nieces, Marie Gulas and Dorothy Brown from Joliet, Illinois, Branch 20, inform me they enjoy reading my report. Their mother, Mary (Tomsick) Juricic was also a member of Branch 20. Marie's husband, John, passed away on December 17, 2007.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 19th at 1 p.m. at Euclid Public Library. At this meeting our agenda will include planning for Member of the Year, which will be held in May, and the Ohio Regional Convention held on October 5th at St. Vitus Church with Mass and a Brunch to follow at St. Vitus Village. Please mark your calendar for these two important events.

At our October Regional Convention held at St. Mary's Collinwood, by Branches 10 and 32, President Olga Dorchak conducted

an election for the 2008 Ohio Regional President. Cooke Maxin was elected as President and Rosemary Toth as the Regional Vice President. We extend our heartfelt appreciation for a tremendous job by former President, Olga Dorchak, of Branch 47.

At the recent 20th Anniversary Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame Awards Show in Euclid, our member, Joey Tomsick, received the Trustees Honor Roll award. The annual Thanksgiving weekend show continually delights the audience from all over the US, Canada, the Netherlands and other distant lands. These glamorous awards shows have helped preserve our heritage and culture.

Let's all plan on attending the next meeting on March 19th. See you there! I wish everyone a Happy and Blessed Easter!

Anne Tomsick (216) 531-2745 cjaynow@yahoo.com

BRANCH 55 - Girard, Ohio

Hello from Girard, Ohio! With the days growing longer and the weather growing warmer, it is nearly time to say goodbye to the winter months that have provided us with cold temperatures and plenty of unpredictable winter weather. The spring season and the Easter holiday are fast approaching and bring with them a wonderful opportunity to spend time with family and friends and to welcome the new life that springtime brings! As in years past, I once again look forward to helping my mother, Maria Selak, prepare our Žegen meal. This year, I am particularly excited as I will be learning how to make potica.

In recent branch news, a 50/50 raffle was held at the annual Christmas party last November. Barbara Gantar, a



Branch 55, Mary Luzar and Delores DePietro (on button box)



From Left to right, Branch 55 members Anka Krakora, Kay Sefcik, Joan Twaddle, Milka Kregar, Dolores DePietro and Maria Selak

guest at the event, was the winner. She graciously returned her winnings to the branch coffers. Thank you, Barbara, for your generosity! Also present at the party was Mary Luzar, our local centenarian, who sang and danced at the event. Mary gave a generous donation to our scholarship fund. Hvala lepa, Mary!

On a sad note, one of our members, Helen Rita Dagati recently passed away. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends at this difficult time.

That's all the news for now. As always, we are actively campaigning for more members. If you know of anyone interested in joining Branch 55, please contact Maria Selak or Anka Krakora. Happy Spring!

Monica Selak

BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

A cold and windy snowy day didn't keep 24 members from meeting at Ray's place in Hennepin for our annual Christmas dinner. Ray's Place is very interesting; it is right on the bluff above the Illinois River, the same river that flows through Starved Rock State Park. The food was great and the company even better. Door prizes were won by Terry Kamnikar and Paula Snell. Thanks to Mary Jane and Janelle Gunderson for arranging a very nice day.

We kept up our Who's Who feature with a picture of Mary Legan; she is the ancestor of several of our members, grandmother to Marilyn Argubright and Paula Snell, great-grandmother to Mary Jane Gunderson, and great-great-grandmother to Mary Argubright and Janelle Gunderson. What a remarkable woman.

Donations were made to the SWUA Scholarship fund and our local food pantry. We parted company looking forward to our next meeting in March, which will be a strudel making demonstration by our President, Alice

Ebner. She is an accomplished baker and we are all looking forward to that day.

Alice's grand daughter Courtney Ebner was recently named the best volleyball player in the Illinois Valley by the LaSalle News-Tribune, she is a student at Mendota High School. Courtney is a junior member of our branch and the daughter of Tammy Ebner-Landgraff and niece of Terry Kamnikar, both members. She will play volleyball for Lincoln College in Lincoln, IL in the fall.

We'll see you at the next meeting.

Barbara Bruch

barbarabruich@yahoo.com

(815)339-2714

BRANCH 99 - Lemont, Illinois

Branch 99 is cooking in the New Year with an opportunity for three culinary classes! The aroma of žlinkrofe will be in the air on March 1st lead by Slavica Sovan, then potato dough on June 7th with Mary Mavec and Mihela Simrayh will finish the year baking strudel on November 1st upon many requests. Everyone is welcome to register with Julie at (630) 229-6416 and join the hands-on class for a small fee of five dollars. All classes are at 8 am on Saturdays in the Slovenian Cultural Center Kitchen.

Delicious pastries are not the only thing that Branch 99 is cooking up. We have also started a Juniors Birthday Club for our member's ages 1-13 who will receive a card and a special surprise on their birthdays!

In addition, we are proud to welcome our new spiritual director John Vidmar, our Deacon at Marija Pomagaj. John is the president of the local chapter of the Bishop Baraga Association and very busy arranging for the big event this fall: the BBA Days in Lemont-Chicago. It is safe to say that in 2008, Branch 99 will be growing spiritually with our 134 members, now including 30 juniors. All members are invited to the Palm Sunday breakfast hosted at the SCC on March 16. We are co-sponsors and are asked to donate home made pastries for this joyous occasion.

We would also like to extend out best to Mary Vlasich and all our members for a healthy new year, and invite anyone who needs our prayers to call Paula Mavec. If anyone would like to help start a Calling Committee for telephone listings, this would be greatly appreciated.

In order to truly ring in the New Year, we must commemorate the old! We did well and had lots of fun in 2007 with our Member of the Year Party, Bunco and Christmas Cookie Sale. We ask for your continued support with all these events. So start off great in 2008 by coming to our next meeting on April 6th!

Olivia

BRANCH 100 - Fontana and Southern California

More than 30 members and guests celebrated the Christmas holidays on December 15th at the Candlelight Pavilion in Claremont, CA. After enjoying a lovely luncheon we were treated to an enjoyable fun filled holiday musical featuring Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus and most of the elves at Santa's workshop in the North Pole. It was a funny and heartwarming show. Too bad more of our young children and grandchildren weren't able to attend. It was also a great time for us to enjoy the company of our members and friends during this special time of the year.

Quite a few of our members traveled to San Francisco to celebrate the "Pust" pre-Lenten celebration at the Slovenian Hall on February 2. We Southern Californians really enjoy the trek up north for this and other special events in the "Bay Area".

We want to congratulate Ron and Jan (Jeanette) Eckert on their 50th Wedding Anniversary. They were married at St. Joseph's Church in Fontana on November 30, 1957. They have a son, Michael, and a daughter, Rhonda. Michael lives at home, and Rhonda and husband Brad Becker have two children, Sam and McKinsey. The Eckerts are regular attendees of almost every meeting and event sponsored by our Branch, unless they happen to be at their summer place in Minnesota. It's always great to have this cheerful couple in our midst!

Sadly, I must report the death Nell Phillips, a long time member of the Branch, who passed away in Fontana recently. Another loss just after Christmas was Frank Vidergar, husband of Mary Lou, who has been a staunch supporter and long time member of Branch 100. Frank is known within the SWUA for being the "Palačinke Chef" at many Branch 100 brunches in past years. Mary Lou and Frank also hosted many "after lunch" Christmas parties at their home in more recent years. We express our deepest sympathy to the Vidergar family.

On a happier note, we announce our "Member of the Year 2008" Frances Ambrozich. We will celebrate with a luncheon at the Marie Callender Restaurant in Corona on April 19. Frances has been a great asset to our Branch, encouraging friends and acquaintances to join and take part in our events. She truly enjoyed her trip last summer to Starved Rock for the SWUA Convention and activities. Meeting other "Minnesotans" was fun, as well as visiting the Museum and Home Office of SWUA in Joliet. You'll learn more about Frances in future issues that feature the

Member of the Year nominees. To make reservations for the luncheon, please call Rosemary Mlakar at 949-654-8229. Na svidenje!

Jean Koci 949-495-0097 ajkoci@cox.net

BRANCH 102 - Willard, Wisconsin

Greetings from Willard! Winter is quiet here in our tiny community. Now as glimmers of spring are visible from our picture windows, we once again appreciate the rebirth of our forests and fields, as we plan our gardens or just appreciate the warmer weather.

Officers for the coming year were elected at our December 8th meeting. Rose Pakiz was elected President, Aggie Debevec, Vice-President and Sue Pakiz, Secretary-Treasurer. Our officers have held these positions for several years and we members are deeply indebted to them for everything they do to keep Branch 102 vibrant and growing.

Congratulations to Sue and Larry Pakiz on the birth of their first grandchild. Brayden David was born on December 12th. Proud parents are Todd and Kaysie Pakiz.

Birthday greetings are sent to Judy DiPasquale on March 8th, George Plautz (Dad of George Plautz, Jr.) celebrating 90 wonderful years on March 18th and Dickie (Hedwig) Bauer on April 25th.

We welcome new members Ruth Zwieg and Monsignor Matthew Malnar.

Plans are underway for Willard Slovenian Days, July 11 - 12, 2008. Mark your calendars for a wonderful weekend of polkas and good food.

As we celebrate Easter here in Willard our memories turn to years past and simpler times. Žegen has always been observed at Holy Family Parish and now takes place after the Mass of the Resurrection on Holy Saturday.

Branch 102 President, Rose Pakiz remembers taking her family's basket of food and her Godmother's basket too. Rose remembers her Godmother would always give her a quarter when she returned. My own Dad drove to Willard with a pony and cart and told me that



**Holy Family Catholic Church
Willard, Wisconsin, 1968**

the roads were so muddy the pony barely had the strength to make it to town. Vice President Aggie Debevec remembers the altar of Holy Family filled with beautiful baskets of food all covered with delicate white clothes. Times have changed but the spirit that our parents and grandparents instilled in us is still strong as we celebrate our Slovenian traditions.

Until next time...

Karen Hribar-Spires
kleespires@comcast.net

BRANCH 103 - Washington, D.C.

Branch 103 hopes that this year started well for all of you. We held our first meeting in 2008 on January 6. We held elections and all of the officers remained the same: President is Mary Lou Terselic, Vice-President is Angela Stare and Secretary is Mimi Mejac.

My name is Tatjana Zunko. I have been involved with several events in the past and recently became a member of Branch 103. The members selected me to be the *Zarja* reporter. I am flattered to take on this responsibility and am interested in learning more about the SWUA and *Zarja*. I was born in Slovenia and have lived in the states for eight years. I work for Language Service Center Inlingua in Rosslyn, Virginia, and am a language project manager for the International Monetary Fund. I am glad that we keep our culture and traditions alive and I believe that with hard work and new ideas our branch can grow much stronger.

For upcoming meetings we are planning events that include a lunch on Sunday, April 6 at the cafeteria of Catholic University. More information about that event will be sent to our members. On that day we will have the opportunity to thank our Spiritual Director, Father Raymond Wadas, for his loyalty to the Slovenian Community in the Washington-Metropolitan area.

Father Wadas, of Polish descent, has been saying the 11 a.m. Mass on the first Sunday of the month at the Maria Pomagaj Brezje Chapel for the past 30 years. We look forward to his deep and insightful sermons, which are always flavored with a little humor. He actually started a recent sermon by saying, "What Elizabeth Taylor told each of her eight ex-husbands: 'I won't keep you long'". With his colorful and simple words challenging us to live in accord with Jesus, he makes coming to the Slovenian Mass at the National Shrine a special occasion.

Vice-President Angela Stare held our interest as she told us about her encounter with a Maryland politician, when she challenged him in a conversation about some political and moral issues. Hats off to Angela for upholding her faith.

Tatjana Zunko slotats@yahoo.com



Estelle presenting the Grand Prize Winner, Daniel with her original water color painting

BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

In November our branch celebrated its 4th Anniversary with a pot luck luncheon, election of officers and a heartwarming presentation by Mrs. Estelle Zorman about her recent trip to Slovenia. The grand prize winner of the original water color by Estelle was won by junior member Daniel, Lisa Kokal's three year old son. Daniel's stara mama, May Kokal (Auditor), and teta, Erika K. Roda

(Historian) were both present as he accepted the prize. A warm welcome to Marjeta Cedilnik (Vice President), and Erika Maxel (Recording Secretary) as they take on their new roles as officers in our branch. Thanks to all our member attendees and guests help in coordinating this event.

In late January, an officer installation ceremony will be led by Lynn Koiner, (Publicity Chairperson). Mrs. Blaza Cedilnik, native Slovenian visitor will speak on the topic of "Nova Zaveza" a cultural, political Slovenian organization that questions past and present crises, and the impact of war throughout Slovenia's history.

We met in February to honor France Preseren and had a Pust luncheon, including krofi. Our authentic Kurent doll was on display to celebrate the old Slovenian custom of chasing winter away before Easter Sunday; with Easter arriving early this year, we hope it works for us here in Maryland.

Weather permitting, members and guests will participate in Slovenian costume in the Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade of Gaithersburg at the Washingtonian Center on Saturday morning, March 15 at 10:00 a.m. For details, go to parade@hssg.org. We've had fun participating in this event in the past, so all are invited to come out and enjoy!

Vesela velika noč (Happy Easter)

Bernadette K. Fitzsimmons

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4th Anniversary meeting of Branch 108, November 7, 2007



BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities, Minnesota

Branch 109 held its holiday meeting on Sunday, November 18 at the Nectary Restaurant. One of our goals this year was to involve children and grandchildren in sharing our Slovenian legacy. While the adults conducted their meeting, Mary Percic Bernard, a former elementary school teacher, taught 7 children and grandchildren some basic Slovenian phrases along with teaching them to sing "Silent Night" in Slovenian. Mary had less than an hour to prepare for what was to become a proud moment for all of us in Branch 109.

At the meeting it was announced that Branches 109 and 39 had collected close to \$400 for the MLI project of Ambassador Zbogor. We then completed a matching exercise for twenty Slovenian/English words dealing with Thanksgiving Day (Zahvalni dan) and twenty Christmas (Sv. Miklavž) words: Miro Medved helped us with the "correct" pronunciation: Here is a sampling: turkey (puran), stuffing (nadev), sweet potato (sladek krompir), cranberry (brusnica), pumpkin (buča); toy (igrača), switch (šiba), snow (sneg) and children's holiday (otroški praznik).

Then it was time for the children and grandchildren. After they greeted the adults with an enthusiastic "Dober Dan", they began singing "Sveta Noč". The parents and grandparents just beamed with delight. The adults then joined in. Mary ended that portion of the program by presenting a rose to each of the children who in turn gave the rose to their parent or grandparent. Each of the children then received a freshly baked "gingerbread cookie. It was a proud

moment for all. The children who participated were: Madeline Percic, Sydney Wood, Brittany Wood, Grace and Jack Tait, Elizabeth Palkovich and Sophia Eshiti. Thank you again Mary.

Being that our Branch did not meet in December, our highlight was our 3rd annual Anniversary Dinner on January 19th at the Nectary Restaurant hosted by our own Andrew Percic. In addition to the excellent hors d'oeuvres, great Slovenian wine, and superb button box music, two slideshows were continuously playing-Carol Ryba's recent trip to Slovenia and the Medved's family reunion in Slovenia in 2006. We also raffled off a copy of Slovenia 1945. Jim Smrekar, vice president of Branch 109 unveiled the plan for our Slovenian exhibit at the Festival of Nations in May.



(left to right) Grace Tait, Sophia Eshiti, Madeline Percic, Jack Tait, Sydney Wood, Brittany Wood, Elizabeth Palkovich and Mary Percic Bernard, teacher

Entertaining...

With a Touch of Slovenia by Jenka

My mother always continued the Slovenian tradition of žegen after arriving in America. Each year Holy Saturday, was a busy day in our house. My mother would start preparing the feast for our Easter dinner so she could have it blessed on this day. I can remember her taking great care into placing each essential item into the basket.

Following Slovenian tradition, our žegen basket always consisted of a loaf of bread (representing the body of Jesus), potica (the crown of thorns which was placed on Jesus' head), klobase (the ropes which tied Jesus in the

Mount of Olives), red colored eggs (the wounds of Christ), an orange (the vinegar soaked sponge offered to Jesus), horseradish root (symbolizing the nails used to fasten Christ to the cross) and of course the cloth covering the food (represents the Holy Shroud).

I have prepared a žegen basket for you plus a few dishes that are great for an Easter brunch. I hope you enjoy and may this Easter strengthen the Slovenian spirit in you. -

Jenka

Braided Sweet Bread - *Praznični kruh*

Yeast Starter:

2 pkgs. (1/4 oz. each) dry yeast
2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 cup warm water

Dough:

3 cups milk
1/4 lb. butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
3 eggs, slightly beaten
5-6 cups all-purpose flour

Mix the yeast starter ingredients in a small bowl. Cover and let stand in a warm, protected place for 20 to 30 minutes, or until it bubbles and the yeast rises. In a large saucepan, heat the milk (do not let it boil) with the butter until the butter melts. Remove from heat and let cool. In a large bowl, mix the 1/2 cup sugar, salt and eggs with the cooled milk mixture. Add the yeast. Mix in 3 cups of flour. Stir until smooth. Continue adding flour until you have created a soft dough that is easy to work with. Cover and place in a warm, protected place. Let rise until it has doubled in size (1 to 2 hours).

Divide the dough into 6 equal parts. Form a 12-inch long roll with each piece of dough. Take 3 pieces of the dough and braid them together. Pinch the ends. Do the same with the remaining 3 pieces of dough. Place each loaf in a well-greased loaf pan or on a cookie sheet. Cover, and place in a warm protected place. Let the dough rise again until the loaves have doubled in size (about 1 hour). Brush the top of each loaf with the beaten egg. Sprinkle with sliced or slivered almonds, if you wish. Bake at 350 degree for 45 to 50 minutes, or until the loaves are slightly browned and baked all the way through. - *Makes 2 loaves*



Frittata with Fresh Herbs - *Zeliščna Frtalja*

Olive oil

1 cup finely chopped, mixed fresh herbs such as basil, parsley, oregano or sage

8 eggs

1 cup 2% milk

1/2 teaspoon salt

Freshly ground pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degree. Coat the bottom of an 8-inch pie plate or round baking dish with olive oil. Sprinkle the fresh herbs on the bottom of the baking dish. Beat the eggs in a small bowl. Blend in the milk, add the salt. Pour the egg mixture over the herbs. Season to taste with freshly ground pepper. Bake for approximately 20 minutes until the frittata is slightly browned on the top and the eggs have puffed up. Make sure that the eggs are cooked thoroughly, but do not overcook. *Serves 4*



Easter Scones *Velikonočni kruhki*

- 2 ½ cups flour
- 1 package dry yeast
- 2 cups raisins, plumped in water and drained
- ½ teaspoon cardamom
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 2 ounce candied citron
- Juice and zest of ½ lemon
- 1/3 cup warm milk
- 1 ½ sticks butter (room temperature)
- 2 tablespoons vanilla sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup coarsely ground almonds
- Egg wash (1 yolk and 1 tablespoon water mixed)

Sift flour and place in bowl; pour warm milk into the center of flour. Add dry yeast and mix by hand, include a little of the flour in this process. Cover with more flour and let rest, covered, for 20 minutes. Wash raisins and drain. Mix butter with powdered sugar and vanilla sugar, cardamom and salt. Blend into the flour-yeast mixture and make a smooth dough. Into the dough knead the almonds, raisins, citron, lemon juice and zest. (Floured hands make this job a little less messy).

Form the dough in a ball and let rise in warm place 50 minutes. Knead again forcefully, and again, place in a ball to rise 20 more minutes. Form a large ball of this dough, then cut into 10-12 pieces and form these into separate balls. Place the balls on the a parchment-lined cookie sheet. Brush generously with egg wash. Bake 30 to 35 minutes at 350 degrees.

Asparagus with Prosciutto *Beluši s Šunko*

- 1 pound asparagus
- 12 to 14 slices prosciutto
- Olive oil
- Salt
- Freshly ground pepper

Soak the asparagus in cold water. Trim to remove hard ends. Pour ½ to 1 inch of slightly salted water into a large saucepan. Add the asparagus; the asparagus should lie flat in the pan. Place on high heat and cover for 5 to 7 minutes. Do not overcook. They should be tender but firm and not mushy. Drain. Take 3 or 4 stalks of asparagus and wrap them in a slice of prosciutto. Drizzle with olive oil, and season to taste with salt and pepper.





Gostilna Lectar

Owners: Lili in Jože Andrejas

Linhartov trg 2
4240 Radovljica, Slovenia
www.lectar.com

History

The restaurant is located in a 500-year-old building and has been open to the public since 1822. Originally there was a famous bakery where the most different kinds of sweets used to be produced. They were chiefly made from a dough whose main ingredient was honey. The cakes were baked in special shapes representing Saint Nicholas or a heart. Hence the name of today's restaurant: Lectar, which in Slovene means gingerbread heart.

The place offers a rich variety of local food and drink which you can enjoy in a very pleasant and appealing atmosphere. They also offer a great variety of vegetarian food.

In the summer while having your meal in the shade of the old chestnut trees in the garden you can enjoy a splendid view of the surrounding mountains.



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