

Zarja

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Volume 87 Issue 4
August/September/October 2015

SUA's 27th National Convention

The Dawn

*Stephanie Polutnik (age 95), Branch 40 - Lorain, OH and Vince Rigler, Branch 99 - Lemont, IL
performing at the banquet of SUA's 27th National Convention.*



Zarja - The Dawn

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Communications for the next issue of publication

Do you have something SUA-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 Slovenia, SUA events, or members. The deadline for articles is the 10th day of the month, two (2) months preceding the issue. For example, articles for the November/December issue must be received by September 10. Thank you.

Submission Guidelines

Tell us how to reach you: Include your name, daytime phone number, e-mail address, and mailing address with each submission, including e-mailed submissions.

Go Digital: We regret that we can no longer return submitted materials. It is best to e-mail your photos. Use a 3.2-megapixel (or better) camera set for the highest picture quality, and attach your photos as jpeg files. If you have an old photo that is irreplaceable, please make a good-quality copy to share with us. (Scanned copies must be a resolution of 300 or higher.)

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

At the National Convention we heard a preliminary report of the 2014 survey, which was an open-question survey (as opposed to "yes/no" questions). SUA had almost 300 participants who contributed nearly 2,000 free-form answers to questions that included, for example:

- How often do you visit Slovenia?
- What are your favorite Slovenian events or activities and how do you participate (ex.- online, in person), where and when, with what organization?
- Do you have ideas for new volunteer-organized activities, *Zarja* columns, or other suggestions?
- What is the most important thing SUA is doing or can do for you, your family, your community?
- What year(s) did you or your family first come to America from Slovenia? Who came?
- Are you a member of other organizations (religious, professional, non-profit, business, academic)? Which ones and for how long?

Here are some of the themes that emerged from our initial review:

- Heritage - the first purpose of the organization is to promote our Slovenian heritage, not just from the 20th century, but from Slovenia today. Many of our activities center around our common heritage, including language classes, which many participate in and many more are asking for.

- Community - the highest priority for our members is a sense of community and family, which is best supported by the outreach created through *Zarja*, and by their involvement in church-related activities. Some elderly members have become more isolated and can no longer participate in Slovenian activities. Perhaps there could be a focus for Branches and volunteers to reach out to these long-time members over the phone or even on Skype?
- Tension between and amongst Slovenian groups was mentioned, and this is seen not only in the USA but in Slovenian politics today - perhaps there is a role for SUA to open a dialogue between various groups to find common ground.
- Travel is a big priority - both with the *Zarja* tours and with family members - this is our best opportunity to learn about Slovenia today. Hopefully we can continue to help travel in both directions to promote interaction between the USA and Slovenia.

The answers in the survey are all anonymous and the committee analyzing the results welcomes new members. Special thanks to Branch 93 - New York City, NY, members for coordinating the survey - Elizabeth Gross, Joan Walker, Maria Whitmire, and Tanya Vajk - together with Jan King. You can contact SUA's VP of Home Office, Jan King, if you would like to participate in preparing the final report at neighbor2slovenia@yahoo.com.

President's Message

Dear Members,

Is it possible that 15 years have gone by so fast, but yet with so much progress? WOW! WOW! WOW! That is all I can say about the 2015 National Convention of SUA. The ENERGY was beyond anything I ever thought possible 15 years ago. The ENTHUSIASM made it loud and clear – the Slovenian Union of America has a future!

We have come such a long way from the mid - 90s when I first joined. Now, it's a new, excited member who wants to embrace their heritage in SUA. It's a member who knows more about their heritage than potica, sausage, and polka music.

My message to the attendees at the Convention took everyone back in time to my early beginnings with SUA/SWUA. In most cases my stories were not pretty. I simply used my motto, "*Lead, Follow, or Get out of the Way!*" And it worked! This Convention proved our organization was going in a different - more positive - direction.

Everyone attending any part of the Convention should be proud of yourself. You truly made a difference! For those sitting in the Convention meetings, you were amazing! That was the first time ever where so many people wanted to help! Wanted to make a difference!

I can't be more thrilled with the choice for SUA's next National Convention in 2019. It will be hosted by the Ohio

group. Such an important choice for our organization. Each one of us needs to keep this future date open and be a part of another wonderful weekend.

My greatest joy was finding the next National Board that can take us into another direction. I can't imagine anyone more perfect to fulfill the new team of President - Mary Lou Voelk, VP of Outreach - Diane Hohenwater, VP of Home Office - Jan King, VP of Culture & Heritage - Nancy Henkel, VP of Marketing & Fund-Raising - Norm Setnick, Corresponding/Recording Secretary - Cookie Maxin, and Treasurer - Robert Kuhel. Congratulations to the 2015 - 2019 National Board! Their terms started on July 1. Great things are going to happen; I can feel it!

On a final note, thank you to my 2011-2015 National Board of Debbie Pohar, Jan King, Mary Lou Voelk, Carol Ryba, Karen Taylor Willis, and Denise Bartlett. Together we made the impossible happen.

Thank you everyone for believing in SUA! For believing in me! For allowing us to make a difference! The past 15 years have been very rewarding for me.

Bonnie Pohar Prokup
National President
June 2007 - June 2015

Welcome to Our New Branch Members

2	McKay, Lee Ann	23	Bohn, Katie	50	Godnavec, Bobby
3	Morley, Michelle	23	Nemanich, Sr., Thomas	50	Godnavec, Cherie
3	Slavec, Paul	23	Rolando, Cecilia	50	Godnavec, Stanley
3	Tate, William	23	Theobald, Shirley	50	Godnavec, Trevor
13	Panian, Donald	24	Baker, Regina	50	Pavsek, Eleanor
20	Dumyahn, Genevieve	24	Spelich, Janice	71	Staron, Veronica
20	Hammond, Nancy	30	Smrtnik, Tiffany	99	DePratt, Cortnie
20	Just, Jeanne	35	Bovitz, John	99	Lavoie, Julie
20	Lehman, Laurie	35	Bovitz, Kathy	102	Urban, Mary
20	McKay, Donna	35	Bovitz, Lisa	109	Brewer, Siegfried
20	McKay, John	42	Skocaj, Rosalie	109	Meinhardt, Teresa
20	Muren, Robert	47	Wade, Victoria		

Thank You for Your Support!

SUA's fund-raiser – "April's Showers of Wishes" - for the month of April 2015 was a huge success. Your entry was very much appreciated! The profit of over \$4,000 will help SUA procure many of the items on our "Wish List."

Winner's List

1st Place Top Seller - (31 Sold) Kathy Cufar - Branch 99 - Lemont, IL	\$130
2nd Place Top Seller - (30 Sold) William Zerial - Branch 99 - Lemont, IL	\$90
3rd Place Top Seller - (16 Sold) SUA Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI	\$50

<u>Date</u>	<u>Entrant</u>	<u>Amount Won</u>	<u>Seller/Branch (Each Received \$10)</u>
Apr. 1	Terry Juricic, Jr., Joliet, IL	\$200	Lauren McFarland, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 2	Deena Manna, Crest Hill, IL	\$60	Wanda Kocinec, Branch 99 - Lemont, IL
Apr. 3	Karen Janezic, Milwaukee, WI	\$60	SUA Branch 43, Milwaukee, WI
Apr. 4	Chris Thelen, Caledonia, WI	\$60	Karen Goodman, Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI
Apr. 5	Ann Bruno, Parma, OH	\$130	Bill Zerial, Branch 99 - Lemont, IL
Apr. 6	Walter Lustik, Joliet, IL	\$60	Jo Lustik, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 7	Don Kambic, San Diego, CA	\$60	Don Kambic, Branch 100 - Fontana, CA
Apr. 8	Anne Antich, Darien, IL	\$60	Anne Antich, Branch 99 - Lemont, IL
Apr. 9	Dorothy Rozman, Bradenton, FL	\$60	Dorothy Rozman, Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI
Apr. 10	Myra Fisher, Woodland Hills, CA	\$60	Myra Fisher, Branch 100 - Fontana, CA
Apr. 11	Hollis Wildman, New Bedford, MA	\$60	Mary Ellen Anzelc, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 12	Judith Ovnik, Western Springs, IL	\$60	Judith Ovnik, Branch 2 - Chicago, IL
Apr. 13	Cheree Lewis, Plainfield, IL	\$60	Char Kobe, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 14	Mary Edgeton, Ramsey, MN	\$60	Mary Edgeton, Branch 35 - Aurora, MN
Apr. 15	Mildred Bulaga, Oak Forest, IL	\$200	Mildred Bulaga, Branch 99 - Lemont, IL
Apr. 16	Nancy Jonas, Brookfield, WI	\$60	Rose Chepeck, Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI
Apr. 17	Lois Pelander, Duluth, MN	\$60	Lois Pelander, Branch 33 - Duluth, MN
Apr. 18	Barbara Lyons, LaSalle, IL	\$60	Barbara Lyons, Branch 89 - Oglesby, IL
Apr. 19	Kim Glavan, Carmel, IN	\$60	Sue Glavan, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 20	Breda Loncar, Wiloughby Hills, OH	\$60	Breda Loncar, Branch 42 - Maple Heights, OH
Apr. 21	Anthony Golobitsh, Joliet, IL	\$60	Anthony Golobitsh, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 22	Jo Lustik, Joliet, IL	\$60	Jo Lustik, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 23	Janet Cerk, Waukegan, IL	\$60	SUA Branch 43, Milwaukee, WI
Apr. 24	Elaine Kosman, Chicago Ridge, IL	\$60	Lynn Zalokar, Branch 93 - New York City, NY
Apr. 25	SueAnn Yovanovich, Indianapolis, IN	\$60	SueAnn Yovanovich, Branch 5 - Indianapolis, IN
Apr. 26	Carol Ann Sherek, Biwabik, MN	\$60	Carol Ann Sherek, Branch 35 - Aurora, MN
Apr. 27	Marlys Rabb, Aurora, MN	\$60	Marlys Rabb, Branch 35 - Aurora, MN
Apr. 28	Lauren McFarland, Joliet, IL	\$60	Lauren McFarland, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 29	Sophia Goodman, Oak Creek, WI	\$60	Karen Goodman, Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI
Apr. 30	Raymond Oviyach, Kingwood, TX	\$130	Raymond Oviyach, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL

Top Branch Support

79 Sellers: Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
 24 Sellers: Branch 2 - Chicago, IL
 24 Sellers: Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI
 22 Sellers: Branch 24 - LaSalle, IL

18 Sellers: Branch 50 - Euclid, OH
 16 Sellers: Branch 3 - Pueblo, CO
 16 Sellers: Branch 30 - Home Office
 16 Sellers: Branch 89 - Oglesby, IL



SUA Donations - Thank You!

NOTE FROM EDITOR

We apologize for our error in the spelling of a generous donor to *Zarja - The Dawn*. The donation was made by Roberta Palmer, Branch 2 - Chicago, IL, in remembrance of her mother, Josephine Zadel Palmer.

Technology Donations

\$500 Donation

Kathleen Ferrante, 47

\$250 Donation

Karen Taylor Willis, 89

\$100 Donation

Nadi Bajda, 109

Mary Lou Voelk, 23

Jacquelyn Smith, 43

Norman & Mary Ann Setnicker, 109

M. Virginia Roland, 103

\$100 Donation

Boudreau, Jennifer, 100, +Dragar Family
(Anton, Frances, Martin, Edward, & Theodore)

Lukancic, Dr. Louis, 20,

+Louis & Paula Lukancic Family

Pecharich, Martha, 99

Sherek Sr., Robert, 35

Swiebert, Diane, 99, +Ray & Fran Schultz

\$75 Donation

Ferlic Arredondo, Joyce, 40, +Mary Ferlic
Louthan, Barbara, 93, +John & Gertrude Toni Polajnar

\$50 Donation

Bruening, Francine, 47

Louthan, Barbara, 93

Ostrander, Gail, 1

Pecharich, Martha, 99, +Maria (Pecharich) Vlasic

\$35 Donation

Zalar, Edward, 42, +Anna Sustersic Zalar

\$25 Donation

Bender, Georgene, 30, +Emma Zalar Guch

Bissell, Heather, 3, +Sally Glavich

Capon, Margie, 99

Dovnik Jr., Karl, 43, Honor of Rosalie Dovnik

Grisham, Linda, 20

Hartnett, Janet, 30

Inga, Joyce, 93, +Henry F. Ostanek

Jex, Erin, 43, +Ann Grambow

Lanari, Ann Bartovich, 35

Lanari, Vida, 35

Mavec, Michael, 99

Montgomery, Bernice, 20, +Frank & Frances Oviyach

Peppard, Linda, 20, +Luke & Jennie Benedick

Petrich, Diana, 23, +Julia Marie Chimzar Mavetz

Plovic, Marian, 71

Shanyfelt, Ralph, 30

Susa, Frances, 26, +Mary Zunic Susa

Teitelbaum, Mary Ann, 40, +Mary Ferlic

Walker, Elizabeth, 5

Yassine, Carol, 10, H/O Marriage of

Daniella Vespoli & Allison Gieraci

Zimperman, Mary, 10, +Donald E. Zimperman

\$20 Donation

Hurst, Betty, 24, Father Henry Lushina

Shine, Elsie, 54, +Jennie Shine

Tomsick, Faith Anne, 50, +Anne Tomsick - Branch 50

\$15 Donation

Ostrowski, August, 43, Honor of Rose Chepeck

\$10 Donation

Benedict, Ashley, 13,

+Grandma Sophie Troya & Auntie Ann Nanut

Benedict, Haley, 13, +Mary Troya & Mary Klepec

Bokar, Margaret, 50

Bossard, Mary Kay, 47, Honor of Mary Kociancic
Branch 13, Heritage Museum Donation

+Agnes Petrovich Leach

Cummings, Sherrill, 20, +Edward M. Makovic

Finc, Robert, 35, +Cyril Finc

Jermenc, Murielann, 24, +The Anton Jermenc Family

Kolosov, Helene, 99

Laposa, Josef, 5, Honor of sister, Anne Laposa Henry

Pasderetz, Cole, 2, +Louis & Irma Pasderetz

Reddy, Patricia, 43, +Zefran & Reddy Families

Russ, Charlotte, 35

Spendal, Dorothy, 10, +mother, Antonia Kapel

Tate, Alyssa, 3

\$5 Donation

Yost, Yul, 109

List of "Wishes" Donations in SUA's April 2015 Fund-raiser

\$300 Donation

Dave & Linda Abstetar, +Dave's mother,
Helen Abstetar, long time member of Branch 1 -
Sheboygan, WI, towards the Cookbook Production.

\$50 Donation

Francine Bruening

Barbara Louthan

\$10 Donation

Sylvia Downie

The proposed amendments to SUA's Bylaws were approved!

At SUA's 27th National Convention in June in Naperville, Illinois, the 12 proposed amendments to the Corporate Bylaws of The Slovenian Union of America, Inc. were discussed and approved. Only the Member Representatives/Delegates from the individual Branches were authorized to vote, however all members of SUA in attendance were welcome to express their thoughts and ask questions. The Delegates listened intently, asked pertinent questions, and voted for the good of SUA. Ten of the proposed amendments passed unanimously. The entire list and wording of the proposed amendments can be found on pages 2 thru 5 of the March/April 2015 issue of *Zarja - The Dawn*. The amended Bylaws may be read/printed by going to SUA's website www.slovenianunion.org. Following is a brief explanation of the changes:

ARTICLE 1 - CORPORATION

SECTION 1.1 Corporate Name

The name as translated in the Slovenian language was added - **SLOVENSKA ZVEZA AMERIKE, INC.**

SECTION 1.4 Not-For-Profit Organization

(e) SUA will provide its services without regard to race, gender, age, creed, color, condition, religion, ancestry, or national origin. Gender and religion were added; sex was deleted.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERS

SECTION 2.1 Members

Members must pay their dues to remain in good standing.

SECTION 2.5 Voting of Membership Interests

Branches with up to 200 adult members shall have one (1) Member Representative and shall have one (1) vote and Branches with 201 or more adult members shall have two (2) Member Representatives and have two (2) votes.

SECTION 2.7 Term of Member Representative

Member Representatives shall serve according to the election decision of their respective Branch.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

SECTION 4.1 Officers

National Officers of SUA must remain in good standing.

SECTION 4.2 National President

The National President shall be at least 21 years of age and a member in good standing for at least two (2) years.

ARTICLE V - COMMITTEES

SECTION 5.1 Establishment of Committees

The National Board of Directors may create committees to work specifically in preparation of and conducting of National Conventions and may create an Advisory Committee.

SECTION 5.2 Appointment and Removal of Committee Members

Deleted the phrase "and a majority of its membership shall be Directors."

SECTION 5.6 Standing Committees

(e) Deleted the Scholarship Committee as a standing committee. Scholarships are currently offered by the SWU Scholarship Foundation, a separate entity.

ARTICLE VIII - REGIONAL PRESIDENTS AND REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

Section 8.1 Regional Presidents

Regional Presidents of SUA must be members in good standing.

Section 8.6 Regional Conventions

Regional Conventions shall be held at least once every two (2) years in each region.

SUA Bylaws Chairperson, Denise P. Delopst Bartlett

Scholarship Donations

\$2,000 Donation

The Frances & Jane S. Lausche Foundation to fund the 2016 Frank J. Lausche College Scholarship

\$1,000 Donation

Anonymous

\$500 Donation

Sean & Rae Anna Tucker, +Carol Tucker
Branch 23 - Ely, Minnesota

\$325 Donation

Branch 3 - Pueblo, CO, members: Norma Becco, Margaret Cullen, Andrea DeGarbo, Francesca DeGarbo, Gianna DeGarbo, Patti Derby, Mitza Drobnick, Agnes Glavich, Barbara Greenwood, Eileen Kaplan, Mary Frances Kelly, Jerica Khosla, Madeleine Khosla, Judy Kochevar, Kathy Kochevar, Bernice Krasovec, Josephine Krasovic, Marilyn Kristan, Peggy Martin, Halcyon Mathis, Angela Mock, Marie Mutz, Gertrude Pachek, Angela Perez, Eileen Perez, Linda Secora, Betty Skul, and Mildred Stofac

\$130 Donation

Kathleen Dorchak, +Olga Dorchak

\$100 Donation

Margaret Francel

\$25 Donation

Michael Progress
Sandra Farrell, +Edward Kurnick
Mr. & Mrs. James Debevec, +Olga Dorchak

\$20 Donation

Clara Mihelich

SWU Scholarship Foundation

CELEBRATING 66 YEARS OF FINANCIALLY ASSISTING STUDENTS

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

SLOVENIAN WOMEN'S UNION SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2015 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS



Left to Right: Patricia Budzilek, Marge Church, Jan King, Mary Turvey, Diane Hohenwater, Catherine Maxin, Kathleen Ferrante, and Pat Figuirowski at the 2015 SUA National Convention.

The Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation is pleased to present the scholarship recipients of 2015. Current SWU Scholarship Committee Members have served for the past four years and are thanked for their work. The Committee Members are: Kathleen Ferrante, Patricia Budzilek, Jan King, Rita Majerle-Klug, and Catherine Maxin.

JOSEPH PRINC MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP of \$2,000 has been awarded to Stephen Fon of Brownsburg, Indiana. Stephen has graduated from Cardinal Ritter High School and will enter college in fall to study physical therapy. During his high school years, Stephen carried a 3.9 GPA, tutored trigonometry and physics students, belonged to the National Honor Society, Campus Ministry, and is a Student Ambassador. He has been active on academic basketball, soccer, and golf teams at his school.

As an active member of Branch 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana, KSKJ, and the Slovenian National Home, Stephen is a willing helper in supporting their functions. His mother has been the president of Branch 5 for a number of years. All of his great-grandparents came from Slovenia and settled in Haughville, Indiana, where his grandfather owned a

grocery store. Stephen was fortunate to have already visited Slovenia in 2002 and plans on another visit this summer to see family members. During Christmas season each year the Fon family gathers to prepare Grandpa Fon's secret sausage recipe while enjoying polka music.



Stephen Fon

ROSE MARIE PRINC SCHOLARSHIP of \$2,000 has been awarded to Megan Hlade of Joliet, Illinois. Megan has graduated from Plainfield High School and plans to study



Megan Hlade

accounting and finance at Joliet Junior College. Megan has been on the honor roll the past four years, was selected a State Scholar, served as a Link Crew leader, helped freshmen transition into high school, is a member of the National Honor Society, and did a great deal of community volunteer work. Megan's parents are both of full Slovenian ancestry. Her grandmother and mother were both active members of Branch 99 - Lemont, Illinois, for years, as well as Megan. She loved to participate in the Sveti Miklavz Program sponsored by the Slovenian Catholic League at her grandparent's church. Megan learned to prepare krofe and potica, volunteered at the SUA Home Office, and was able to travel to Slovenia in 2012 to visit her family's ancestral villages, and the mass grave in which her great-grandfather was buried. Megan treasures these memories.

JEAN KURILICH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP of \$2,000 was awarded to Ellen Koci of Laguna Beach, California. Ellen received her diploma from Dana Hills High School and will enter a program of nursing and/or psychology at a college of her choice this fall. Ellen's 4.5 GPA reflects the last two years of advanced placement in calculus classes. She interned with the U.S. Geological Survey research group in San Francisco, assisting scientists with their studies of the bay and estuary environments, was part of a Boy Scout of America Venture Crew that took excursions into the mountains and deserts of southern California, took a babysitting business course and started her own successful babysitting/pet sitting business, along with being a devout member of St. Timothy's Catholic

Church. When Ellen was a sophomore she organized the Roman Catholic Club at her high school, and since that time has managed its website and served as its vice president.



Ellen Koci

One thing that Ellen is most devoted to is her reverence of her family's cultural heritage. Her great-grandparents emigrated from Slovenia to California where they joined the Slovenian National Benefit Society and The Slovenian Women's Union of America, of which her grandmother was the regional president and Ellen's great-grandmother was an early member of Branch 100 - Fontana, California. Throughout her life Ellen has reveled in celebrating Slovenian holidays, dancing and singing their songs, and cooking native dishes with her grandmother. Ellen was told she was carried onto the dance floor before she was even able to walk. As an accomplished violinist and pianist, music is also a great part of Ellen's life.

FRANCES COLNAR BARMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP of \$2,000 has been awarded to Valentina Yapel Ronning of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Valentina is studying dentistry at Marquette University. She is a graduate of Tartan Senior High School, St. Paul, Minnesota, where she lettered 30 times, studied piano for 9 years, played tennis, raced Nordic skiing and was captain of the varsity golf team. She was vice president of the National Honor Society and Math Team, served as an officer of the American Cancer Society Relay for Life Program and was involved with the St. John's Hospital Health Career Explorer Program. Valentina worked as a lifeguard instructor, as president of the Pre-Dental Club, and has volunteered in community events such as the diocese of Duluth Confirmation Retreats and the Catholic UMD Newman Center where she played the piano at Mass and



Valentina Yapel Ronning

served on a leadership team as the Missions and Outreach Coordinator planning series. Currently Valentina is a member of the Student Dental Association, Christian Dental Association, and the Special Care Dentistry Association. She volunteers at clinics and provides dental care to those in need. She is currently a member of St. Anthony Catholic Church, teaching religious education and singing in the choir. Valentina states that her membership in the SUA is most important. Her great-grandfathers were born near Ljubljana and came to the Iron Range (Soudan, Minnesota) for work. Her Slovenian grandmother, a dental hygienist, taught Valentina to make potica and inspired her to go into the dental field.

SLOVENIAN UNION BRANCH 2 - CHICAGO SCHOLARSHIP of \$2,000 has been awarded to Sean Voelk of Seattle, Washington. Sean is a graduating senior at Ballard High School and plans to study international business at Santa Clara University. Sean is in the top 20% of his high school senior class, holding a 3.6 GPA. He took advanced placement classes in a number of the sciences, histories, and mathematics fields. As a leader of the Link Crew, Sean mentored 9th grade students, tutored elementary students, and worked 40 hour weeks as an intern with Key Bank Internship, where he learned bank operations and financial planning. His volunteer work with Starbucks at a Seahawks training facility was a fun event for him. Sean's main interest has been spending summers with the Camp Fire USA Day Camp. As a camp counselor Sean provided his campers with a positive role model, someone who they respected, which was his goal. After logging over 300 volunteer hours with Camp Fire USA, during a three-summer stint, Sean states that he speaks with great certainty to the value of giving back to one's own community. He believes making a positive difference is so



Sean Voelk

essential to the cohesion of a community, whether that be a small group of 15 kids or a small town. Sean hopes in his future to become a finance professional, helping businesses and organizations to realize their full potential. Sean's grandmother, Mary Lou Voelk, a Slovene-American, and prolific historical researcher for *Zarja - The Dawn* and the SUA, organized a visit for Sean and his family to Slovenia during the summer of 2010. Sean was a 13 year old at that time, and was most impressed with the care and welcoming they all received from their family in Slovenia.

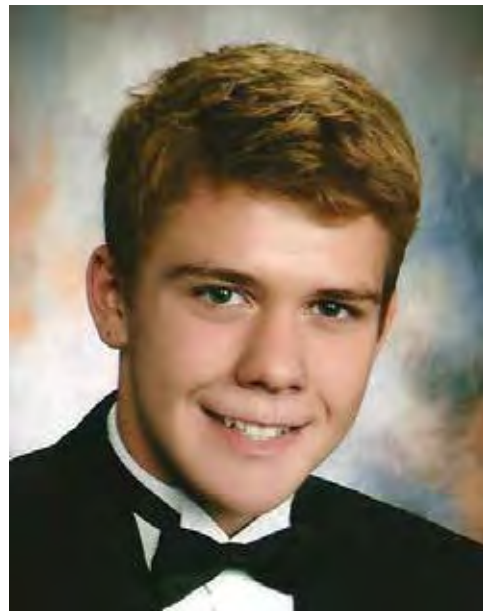
SLOVENIAN WOMEN'S UNION BRANCH 20 - JOLIET SCHOLARSHIP of \$1,000 has been awarded to Thomas Fitzsimmons of Gaithersburg, Maryland. Thomas will graduate this spring from DeMatha Catholic High School and will begin his study of graphic design/marketing and communications at St. Vincent College. Thomas was admitted to DeMatha Catholic High School on a partial music scholarship and took on the sport of rugby to annihilate any perception that musicians were not athletic. During his senior year at DeMatha, Thomas earned an academic honors award and received superior ratings for his solo clarinet performance at the PG County Secondary Solo and Ensemble Festival. In addition, his Wind Ensemble performed at a spring competition in Virginia Beach. Thomas' theatre interests included a role in "A Dead Man Walking." Thomas has worked as a restaurant bus boy, is active at the St. John Neumann Catholic Church as an usher, and is a member of a high school youth group that participated in March for Life in Washington, D.C. His Slovenian grandfather's spirit is still alive. As a displaced person following WWII, his grandfather lived for years at various DP camps in Austria before immigrating to the United States in 1949. Making education his priority, he eventually moved to the



Thomas Fitzsimmons

Washington, D.C. area. Through his grandmother, Thomas has become quite proficient in the Slovenian language. His mother, Bernadette Fitzsimmons, president of Branch 108 - Olney, MD, has inspired Thomas to learn and experience Slovenian culture through national holiday celebrations at home, as well as visits to our Lady of Brezje Chapel, the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and also the Slovenian Embassy in Washington, D.C. Thomas states the following: "I am passionate about life. To push forward, accomplish, and move past the metaphysical walls holding me at bay. If I wasn't moving forward in some way, I feel like I would be standing in quick sand which would slowly pull me down into a land of boredom."

OLGA DORCHAK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP of \$1,000 has been awarded to Matthew Fitzsimmons of Gaithersburg, Maryland. Matthew is entering his junior year at the Catholic University of America majoring in music and biological sciences. Matthew is on the Dean's list at CUA, taking a heavy load of classes during the regular school year, and also at a community college during the summer, enabling him to pursue two majors. The highlight of his music career was playing for the first time at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in both the CUA Symphony Orchestra and the Wind Ensemble during April of this year. With his busy schedule, Matthew finds time to be an active member of the Knights of Columbus and the National Resident Hall Honors Society. He is currently working as a Hall Security Assistant for the Catholic University of America Residence Life. With continued interest in the endeavors of the Slovenian community and his church community at Gaithersburg, he plays his trumpet for them whenever he is at home. Matthew has been deeply affected by the life story of his immigrant grandfather, who had accomplished much



Matthew Fitzsimmons

through hard work and perseverance, but died before Matthew was born. Therefore, Matthew is sensitive to the difficulties of individuals and families being uprooted and starting anew in a foreign country.

Applications are welcomed from high school seniors or college students of Slovenian ancestry. The SWU Scholarship Committee evaluates applications using the following criteria: financial need, essay, FAFSA, civic and community involvement, interest in Slovenian culture, and scholastic achievement.

If students are not currently members of the Slovenian Union of America (SUA), they may make a one-year payment of membership in the SUA organization, prior to applying for a scholarship. A student may not receive more than two SWU Scholarships, total. For more information visit <http://www.swusf.org>.

Our 66th year of successfully helping college students with their expenses has been completed. Education is truly the pathway to reaching one's goals and the SWU Scholarship Foundation investors are totally aware of the extreme increase in college expenses. Our program exemplifies and honors the spirit of our Slovenian ancestors. Thank you to all who continue to make the SWU Scholarship Foundation function in fine fashion.

Contact Mary Turvey, Director, 4 Lawrence Drive, Marquette, MI 49855, mturvey@aol.com or Marge Church, 1028 Skyland Drive, Macedonia, OH 44056, yemec1@windstream.net. Contributions of any amount are sincerely appreciated!

Checks should be addressed to SWUSF (Slovenian Women's Union Scholarship Foundation.)



27th SUA NATIONAL CONVENTION

Naperville/Lemont, Illinois
June 18-21, 2015

SUA's 27th National Convention was held June 18-21, 2015, at the Chicago Marriott Naperville hotel in Naperville, Illinois, with the final day at the beautiful grounds of the St. Mary's Franciscan Seminary and the Slovenian Catholic Center in Lemont, Illinois. Thank you everyone for a successful convention!



Oldest and youngest National Convention attendees:
Stephanie Polutnik (95), Branch 40 - Lorain, OH and
Edén LaJoie (age 3 months), Branch 99 - Lemont, IL.

After so much planning and preparing we are proud that the Slovenian Union of America's 27th National Convention was a huge success. We are so grateful for all the help from the committee members, volunteers, SUA National Board, special guests, presenters, entertainers, and attendees. You all made the convention fun and worthwhile!

Welcome Event

Members of Branch 24 of LaSalle and Branch 20 of Joliet organized an Open House at the SUA home office and Heritage Museum in Joliet, Illinois. The museum event included a presentation of the God's Corner of Slovenia and the dedication of the Masa Grom



Library and of course, potica and strudel. Attendees were able to view many Slovenian exhibits and displays,





and also tour the office and apartment above. They also had the opportunity to visit the historic St. Joseph Catholic Church and the Ancel Museum, formerly St. Joseph School, located across the street.

Later, the National Board members planned a Welcome Party at the hotel with appetizers and live polka music by Eddie Kororsa. This is where the amazing new cookbook, *The Slovenian - American Table*, was unveiled. It was a fun evening!







Lipizzan Horse Show

A highlight of the convention was the Lipizzan Horse show at Tempel Farms in Old Mill Creek, Illinois. The Lipizzan horses originated from Slovenia and have been protected by empires and sought after by royalty for centuries. Attendees were able to ride one of two coach buses to this private event which looked like a little slice of the Lipica stud farm in Slovenia. The weather was perfect and the show outstanding. Later, the staff answered questions and allowed our group to tour the stables and pet these magnificent horses. It was a show to remember!





Honeybees Presentation

Another interesting event was the Honeybee Presentation. Frank Cepen and his daughter, Margie Cepen, prepared a fun and fascinating presentation of honeybees. Beekeeping is a large part of the Slovenian culture and is one of the oldest and most traditional rural activities. Frank has been cultivating honeybees for over 40 years and talked to us about his experience and knowledge about honeybees. And thank you to Albina Medved for showcasing her beautiful collection of beehive panels. These painted beehive fronts have gained international recognition in the area of folk art and are not known anywhere else in the world. Although the Chicago Marriott Naperville hotel cultivates their own beehives on the roof of the hotel and produces their own signature honey, this has not been a good year for their bees, so unfortunately we were not able to view their hives.





created by Slavica Sovan, a seamstress by trade, and four of the costumes were recently made in Slovenia. This was the first time they were worn. It was an amazing afternoon, and we thank all those involved for an incredible display of the Slovenian costumes.

Slovenian Costume Fashion Show

Another highlight of the Convention was the Slovenian Costume Fashion Show. Corinne Leskovar and Slavica Sovan organized and directed this trip through the various regions of Slovenia. We were able to see the traditional costumes of each area and learn about the different cultural folk dress, when and how they are worn, the special fabrics used, sewing techniques, and accessories. There were about 25 models showing various costumes, and each attendee received a souvenir program portraying the model's dress and describing the costume. Most of the costumes were





Potica Contest

Thank you to all who participated in the potica contest! The judges were Albina Medved, who also contributed to the new SUA cookbook, and two chefs from the hotel, Erica and Nick. The poticas were judged on taste, texture, form, and presentation. First place was awarded to Helen Frohna of Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI, second place to Mary Mavec of Branch 99 - Lemont, IL, and third place to Rose Bell of Branch 89 - Oglesby, IL. Congratulations to these talented SUA bakers!



Convention Banquet

The banquet of the Convention was held Saturday evening with almost 200 people in attendance. The Slovenian Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar, from Washington D.C. was the guest speaker. A fun feature of the night was the murder mystery written especially for the banquet by accomplished Slovenian playwright, Evald Flisar. It was fun to see many of our members acting in this play and they did an outstanding job with so little time to rehearse. And yes, the clown did it!

The newly-elected 2015 - 2019 National Board was introduced and attendees enjoyed music by polka band Zadnja Kaplja. Also, SUA member Stephanie Polutnik from Branch 40 - Lorain, OH, sang at the banquet. Stephanie is 95 years young and sang and danced the polka! She is a true inspiration!





Slovenian Catholic Center – Mass, Picnic, Art Show

On the last day of the Convention, attendees were able to meet in the Slovenian Catholic Mission Church in Lemont, Illinois, where Father Metod and Deacon John Vidmar explained the significance of the Marija Pomagaj painting and spoke of the St. Mary's Franciscan Monastery. Later, Deacon John lead us on a walking tour of the grounds, around the pond with a miniature rendition of Lake Bled in Slovenia, to the cemetery of Franciscan priests, and then to the grotto for an outdoor Mass. Attendants, dressed in the Slovenian costume, welcomed parishioners and guests. After Mass, we were able to join the picnic featuring “great Slovenian food!” hosted by the Prekmurje Social Club. Later, attendees had the opportunity to tour the Slovenian Catholic Center and view the various pieces of artwork by Slovenian artists. It was a great day!



SUA's New 2015 - 2019 National Board

National President - Mary Lou Deyak Voelk

National Vice President of Outreach - Diane Hohenwater

National Vice President of Home Office - Jan King

National Vice President of Culture & Heritage - Nancy Henkel

National Vice President of Marketing & Fund-Raising - Norm Setnick

National Corresponding/Recording Secretary - Cookie Maxin

National Treasurer - Robert Kuhel



SUA National Board (left to right): Cookie Maxin, Robert Kuhel, Norm Setnick, Nancy Henkel, Mary Lou Deyak Voelk, Jan King, and Diane Hohenwater.

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Linda Schultz and Julie LaJoie

Jana and Sara Hlade

The ZARJA Project

The first issue of *Zarja - The Dawn* was published in July 1929. From the onset, policy stated that five copies of each issue of *Zarja - The Dawn* be preserved. Every year or two, depending on the thickness of the issues, the magazines were to be leather-bound. Today, two sets of bound volumes are available for public use.

Eighty-six years have passed and approximately 1,000 issues of *Zarja* have been published. For the past five years, this vast amount of magazines had made for evocative, poignant, and haunting thoughts.

1. The safety of the issues.
2. The availability to our membership throughout the United States.
3. How to access historical information from this vast amount of history.

As time passed, questions were being answered. The Illinois Association of Museums (IAM) and the National and University Library of Ljubljana (*Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica* - NUK) recommended issues be removed from SUA's home office basement, stored in acid-free boxes and placed in a safe climate controlled repository. It was also recommended that digital copy be made of each magazine.

In the meantime, Denise P. Bartlett and Betty Ann Kolosari of Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI, had been removing magazines from the files and placing them in containers identifiable by years of publication - but dollar signs and human labor were the issue. The possibility of removing staples from 1,000 magazines to ready for scanning, and renting a large flat bed scanner was out of the picture. It was a hallowed day when NUK librarian, Helen Janezic, listened to our plea and announced the library in Ljubljana would do the scanning. The project was to proceed as follows:

- NUK creates inventory of the *Zarja* in their collection and submits to SUA.
- SUA would retrieve the missing *Zarja* from their hold, and ship to NUK.

This project looked good on paper, then to find out that not all issues had the five required copies; some had only one copy; some issues had none.

Carol Novak, staunch and dedicated volunteer for SUA, stepped up to the plate.

- Locate issues not in NUK collection for shipping.
- Locate missing issues from the bound volumes.

- Transport all to Office Max for scanning and eventual shipping.
 - Provide shipping information/address to Office Max.
 - Return any scanned or original issues to the Heritage Museum.
 - Total cost of scanning, \$500.

It was another hallowed day when Mary Ann Vranesich Palmer of Branch 109 - Twin Cities bequeathed \$500 for the shipment of *Zarja* to the NUK. (Total shipping cost: \$525.)

Today, all *Zarja* issues through 2012 are now on the NUK site for your viewing. At the request of SUA, the latest two years of *Zarja* will not be for viewing.

Step-by-Step Procedure to Access *Zarja*

<http://www.dlib.si/menu/sodelovanje?&language=eng>

See: advanced search

Enter the year you are requesting: (ex. *zarja* 1957). All 1957 *Zarja* publications will appear on desktop.



Click on PDF:

- The magazine will automatically download to your desktop.
- Rename the publication for quick identification (ex: May 1957).
- It is now a permanent document on your computer.

Click on Preview:

- Preview is meant to be a search engine.
- The entire magazine appears with no breaks.
- To search, enter a word or words (ex: in the search box enter Albina Novak). Albina Novak will be highlighted in **RED** throughout the publication.



The Slovenian National Home on St. Clair Ave. in Cleveland, Ohio.

In Search of Slovenian National Homes

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

Probably unfamiliar to fourth generation and us third Slovenian descendants are the existence and purposes of Slovenian National Homes (SNH) that were built within the hearts of ethnic communities, wherever neighborhoods of Slovenian immigrants settled. These SNH were called by many names, but generally, they all reflected essentially the same theme... they were a “home,” a comfortable, familiar place to gather and be with your friends. Many of these buildings were referred to as a *Dom* (pronounced as Dome), an affectionate shortcut of *Slovenski Narodni Doms*. Some were called Slovenian Halls, or were named after the fraternal organization that might have built them, such as the SNPJ and KSKJ Lodges and Halls. In my parent’s home community of LaSalle, Illinois, there was a *Slovenski Narodni Dom*, affectionately called “The Dome,” where my father once played his button box at polka dances. The *Dom* was nestled in the heart of the residential and mining industrial area and at the foot of the hill from the Slovenian Church, St. Roch’s. The cornerstone was laid on August 20, 1916. Yet, I never comprehended or appreciated the significant role these SNH played in our immigrant history of acclimation, adjustment, and acceptance in America.

Construction of Slovene National Homes in the United States began during the first decade of the 20th century, most likely as a result of the upsurge of Slovene immigrant settlements that sprung up everywhere at the end of the 19th century. Historian Matjaz Klemencic points out that the population then was primarily of single men laboring in the workforce. By the 1890s, the single women arrived in large numbers; they married quickly, settled, and families began booming. These SNH became centers of family activities. After World War I began, American Slovenes became more united in concern about the destiny of their old homelands, which prompted the construction of more new National Homes in the Slovene communities as gathering places, to discuss the news, hear about the development of the war fronts, to understand in their own language what was transpiring back home.

These National Homes weren’t unique to only America, but had their roots back in the homeland. To those native-born Slovenians, *Slovenski Narodni Doms* were an important symbol of nationality in a country constantly under the dominance of foreign rule. The halls were built

in the period from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. The first National Hall in Slovenia was established in Ptuj, and then followed by construction of Halls in Celje, Ljubljana, Maribor, Brezice, and Trieste. There was a revival of national pride and consciousness spreading amongst the Slovenians, and spectacular halls became the symbol of that stirring loyalty and growing strength. Those National Halls and Homes built in Slovenia became showcases for cultural, social events, and were meeting places for various fraternal organizations, which would foreshadow the same purposes of those constructed in America during the immigration period.

The association of fraternal insurance organizations with Slovenian National Homes, at first was somewhat confusing to me. It is important to note, that insurance opportunities were not always available to immigrants to our country; there were not any social security benefits either. So these fraternal organizations often served as the only source in obtaining insurance. Most of these fraternal organizations were for the men only. Eventually fraternalism for women emerged, such as the *Slovenska ženska zveza Amerike*, founded in 1926, a burial insurance society, which became our Slovenian Women's Union of America (SWUA) and then evolved to today's Slovenian Union of America (SUA). Some of the major fraternal organizations were: Carniolian-Slovenian Catholic Union (KSKJ), Joliet, IL, (1894); South Slavonic Catholic Union (JSKJ), Ely, MN, (1898); Slovene National Benefit Society (SNPJ), Chicago, IL, (1904); Western Slavonic Association (ZSZ), Denver, CO, (1908); Slovene Free-thinking Benefit Association (SSPZ), Chicago, IL, (1908); Slovene Mutual Life Association (SDZ), Cleveland, OH, (1910); South Slavic Benevolent Union "Sloga" (JPZ Sloga), Milwaukee, WI, (1915); and Slavonic Workingmen's Benefit Union (SDPZ), Conemaugh, PA, (1908). These first fraternal organizations offered libraries,



A Slovenian National Home was originally located in this building in Chisholm, Minnesota.

singing and dramatic groups, shooting clubs, along with sport societies to serve the purpose of cohesiveness and fraternity with fellow immigrants who spoke the mother tongue. Sports teams would compete against other NSH teams, even from other cities.

Many of the first Slovene National Homes were built by these fraternal benefit societies. Klemencic points out that back in 1905 there were only two homes of Slovene societies, in Chicago and Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

Over the next 10 years construction increased, mostly in mining communities, as National Homes sprung up in Rock Springs, WY (1913), Frontenac, Kansas (1910), Herminie, Pennsylvania (1908), and Ely, Minnesota (1911). The lodges of the St. Barbara Society built some homes in Pennsylvania, in Willock (1911) and Presto (1911). The number of Slovenian National Homes reached a peak close to 100. It was frustrating to get results from doing "Google" research to locate where exactly these homes were located and if they remained active today. It seemed most of the National Homes were in the State of Ohio, with the clustering of others in cities in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, and Minnesota! Most of these homes are either in disrepair or gone today.



The Cornfield Hall is still active as the Slovenian Hall in Flycreek, New York.

Most of the Slovene National Homes in the United States consisted of two to three floors with a main hall, a stage large enough to accommodate singing choirs, drama groups, or gymnastics performances. The kitchens had to be large enough to prepare food for banquets or weddings. In addition, where it was allowed, there was also the all-important *gostilna*, a saloon. There were many Slovene National Homes with bowling alleys, libraries, and smaller community rooms where the different committees and fraternal or social groups could meet. Reading rooms provided a place where people could read Slovene ethnic newspapers and other periodicals and Slovene and English books. Some National Homes were not fancy mortar and brick, but simply local gathering places, such as a corner bar. Some of the larger Homes proudly displayed the artworks of their country's renowned artists.

The City of Cleveland, OH, has done a remarkable job of restoring, promoting, maintaining, and advertising their SNH facilities. As Gerri Hopkins, the current Business Manager of the Slovenian National Home in Cleveland, proudly pointed out, their SNH is the largest and showiest, not only in Cleveland, but across the United States. This seems very fitting, as Cleveland has long been considered as home to the largest population of Slovenians, outside of Slovenia, in the world. The old Italianate Diemer Mansion was purchased in 1918 and converted as the heart of the Slovenian National Home that is still extremely active today. Fraternal organizations like SNPJ and KSKJ began having their meetings there and English language instruction was offered to any willing participant. In 1924, the final construction of the Slovenian National Home on St. Clare Ave. was completed after a two-story addition was erected around the existing Diemer Mansion. This SNH offers a 1,000-seat auditorium that has been well used for cultural, educational, social, and recreational events, even political rallies. There is a second smaller auditorium, as well as offices and meeting rooms, along with a library within the complex. Gerri extended a warm welcome to visit first-hand and to tour this amazing facility. Mrs. Hopkins further explained that St. Clare's is a part of the Federation of Slovenian National Homes that was established in 1963. This Federation helps oversee and support all the active National Homes in the Cleveland area.

Becoming increasingly intrigued by the existence of these National Homes, an e-mail was drafted and forwarded to some of the current SUA Branch officers to see what they might know about National Home locations in their regions. John Zakelj of the Twin Cities area of Minnesota was quick to respond to my inquiry; the only home that he knew of was in northern Minnesota, in Chisholm. He even attached a newsworthy article that appeared in the *Mesabi Daily News* back in 2012 about the Chisholm Home's resus-



The Slovenski Narodni Dom in LaSalle, Illinois.

citation and conversion into a joint business and cultural venture as a Slovenian Heritage Center and an Italian restaurant. The main floor of the home, where the bar was located, was featured in scenes from the movie "North Country," but there has been little else going on there for years. Tanya Vajk from Branch 93 in New York was not aware of any Slovenian National Homes in New York City or the surrounding area, but was willing to spend some time inquiring among Slovenian friends and Branch members. Several of her contacts came through with e-mails. One such contact was Anton Malensek, who wrote that out in Fly Creek, NY, there was a historic Slovenian settlement. The people resettled there from West Virginia, where they had been working in unhealthy coal mine conditions, and settled in the area to become farmers in this fertile land. In 1928 they built a wooden structure called "The Cornfield Hall" (also known as Farmers' Independent Benevolent Society Hall), set out in the cornfield. The one-story, wood frame building served as a dance hall and meeting place for the area's small Slovenian immigrant community. Anton frequented the Cornfield Hall for a Slovenian heritage event held every September; he was there last in 1999. Anton was also aware that there was another Slovenian settlement area in the Mohawk Valley region of Little Falls, NY. The first arrival of the Slovenian people in the Mohawk Valley took place just before the turn of the century. Early in 1905 this group organized a cultural, social, and beneficial Slovenian society known as St. Joseph Society, #53, and became affiliated with the JKJS of Ely, Minnesota.

There were many more responses from Branch members across the country, but to mention them all and relate some of the stories shared about these Homes would exceed my allotted print space, ultimately frustrating our *Zarja* editor, Debbie Pohar. So we've decided to follow-up with a series of stories in future issues on the many National Homes we've heard about since first digging into this topic. If there is anyone out there that didn't have time to respond back to my queries, "hey, keep looking" and shoot me an e-mail. We'd love to have any photos as well. We've learned of many Slovenian National Homes, some of which were in Haughville, IN; Bethlehem, PA; San Francisco and Fontana, CA; Newburgh, OH; Krain, WA; Gowanda, NY; Ely, MN; Joliet and Waukegan, IL. Where were the Homes in your part of the country?

It's absolutely amazing how much we don't know that is out there, unless we ask! Thanks to all of you who contributed to this search. Many of the old SNH we found were in bad shape and were forced to close for any number of economical, deterioration, and neglect reasons. But, many are being revitalized by various civic, heritage, and Slovenian groups who refuse to allow these halls just to be the memories of their immigrant grandparents and great-grandparents. It was encouraging to see that many of these facilities offered online Facebook sites with postings of polka fests, fish-fries, educational displays, and cultural presentations being offered weekly and monthly in the National Halls and Homes all across America. There seems to be a resurgence of interest in maintaining a connection with our forefathers' cultural experiences and not letting that disappear. My own family roots had numerous immigrant relatives who arrived, resided, or passed through the cities of Cleveland, Joliet, Chicago, and LaSalle. I'm sure they all joined in on the holiday celebrations and family festivities, and on many occasions swigged a beer while swaying to the lively beat of the polka band playing, while enjoying the aroma of klobasa, sausages, and fried chicken coming from the kitchens of these Slovenian National Halls! Ah! Dom Sweet Dom!

This is hopefully the first in a series of articles featuring various Slovenian National Homes that were identified or we were given leads as possible locations by fellow SUA members.

If you are aware of a SNH in your part of the country, please e-mail to me any pictures, stories, or locations at: bdsodac@gmail.com.

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Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar

**Nuška Zakrajšek
Cultural, Press, Educational,
and Public Diplomacy Officer**

On May 9, 2015, the Delegation of the European Union to the United States and the Embassies of the 28 EU Member States opened their doors to the public for a rare look inside; a chance for entire families to experience authentic music, dance, food, film, and art. The ninth EU Open House was a highlight of the Washington May calendar. The yearly event is celebrated during the European Month of Culture in the nation's capital.

Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. more than 3,500 people walked through the Slovenian embassy doors. The queue extended out the door, down the block, and around the corner. They were greeted with a spirited "Welcome to Slovenia" as they passed over the threshold.



From Slovenia were the Cooking Kids from the Danila Kumar Primary School in Ljubljana who cooked and served traditional foods, and entertained the crowd with a



traditional dance. Representing Minnesota SUA Branches 23, 35, and 109 were Rose Antilla, Nadi Bajda, and Albina Medved, whose potica and strudel demonstrations brought verbal gasps from the crowd as the dough was stretched. Guests snacked on sausage from Azman's of Cleveland, Ohio, bread dunked in Kocbek pumpkin oil, potica by Sophie Mazi from Cleveland, and freshly baked strudel. Slovenia's buckwheat vodka and wines by Edi Simčič and Vina Koper were there for the tasting.



Traditional and original items were exhibited by President Bernadette Kovacic Fitzsimmons and family of Branch 108 and the SNPJ Heritage Museum from Pittsburgh, PA. John Stark of Branch 35 played the accordion the entire day, next to Kara Maruszak of SNPJ Cleveland, Frank Videgar of Branch 108, and Alex Gergar from Bethlehem, PA. The Bethlehem/Murska Sobota Sister City Association presented activities from the Prekmurje region. Also in attendance was the SUA National V.P. of Culture and Heritage, Mary Lou Deyak Voelk (Branch 23), who came for the occasion from Alabama and President Tanja Vajk, Branch 93, of New York, who conducted an online class of Slovene.



The highlighted musical performances during the day were by distinguished accordion player Marko Hatlak from Idrija, Slovenia, who later in the month performed



also at the Kennedy Center. Children could listen to traditional Slovenian stories, play in the special kids' corner, and enjoy painting with Beesels, presented by Nadi Bajda. Throughout the day, the guests were addressed from time to time by the Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar. They also could learn about Slovenian tourist attractions and talk to embassy staff about the history, economy, and politics of Slovenia. The highlighted tourist destination was Bled, presented by Tourism Bled and PrimoTours company. At the event, guests could admire Rogaška crystal and Idria lace. On this occasion, the works of authors who participated at the Independent Illustration Biennial were exhibited. The exhibition was presented by curators Irena Silić and Saša Kerkoš.

Promotional films on Slovenia attracted a great number of people, many of whom were photographed with the embassy staff in national costume.

...Once again, "Welcome to Slovenia. Enjoy your visit!"



MINNESOTA'S FESTIVAL OF NATIONS

EMPHASIZES THE ARTS

For the eighth straight year, the Twin Cities (TC) Slovenians participated in the largest ethnic festival in the United States - the Festival of Nations. Under the aegis of the International Institute of Minnesota, the four-day festival included more than 80 ethnic groups, each celebrating their cultural heritage through world-class performances, exhibits, ethnic cuisine, and personal connections.

This year's theme for the ethnic exhibits was "International Arts." The TC Slovenians developed and staffed an exhibit showcasing stories connected to the beehive panels (*panjske koncnice*), Idrija lace (*idrijska cipka*), and the artwork of Maksim Gaspari. The exhibit was enhanced by the video showcasing Anna Zakelj Jesenko - Slovenian Bobbin Lace Maker, along with a printed, colored brochure highlighting the Slovenian art culture.

Perhaps the most engaging activity of the exhibit took place on Thursday and Friday when some 5,000 - 10,000 students, traveling from North Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and out-state Minnesota, descended on the Excel Center in St. Paul to experience the ethnic bazaar, food court, dance stage, and the large exhibit area. Not only did students try to fill their "passports" with a country's unique stamp (for Slovenia it was its iconic flag), but they were invited to read a short description of one of the beehive panels and then to match it with the correct picture from the 15 that were exhibited. The students were then given a "sticker" of the *Slovenska Cebela* which they proudly displayed in their passport next to the Slovenian flag. The interaction prompted much discussion, questions, and genuine curiosity about the various themes of the beehive panels.

Ida Gnillsak, curator of the apicultural museum in Radovljica, Slovenia, made an interesting point about the beehive fronts. "You don't find these anywhere else in the world. They may be the only thing that is truly Slovenian, as our culture has always been influenced by those who ruled us." Today it is difficult to get hold of any original beehive panels, but it's still possible to buy replicas. They remain an "indispensable" part of the Slovenian folk art.

Also on display within our Slovenian exhibit area was a panel of different examples of Idrijan lace (*idrijska cipka*) that drew some "oohs and ahs" from students and adults. They were amazed at how the pieces were technically and artistically accomplished. Norm and Mary Ann Setnicker, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in August 2014, were given a framed, fruit compote of Idrijan lace by their distant cousin, Marjan Bradesko, and his wife,

Mojca, who had visited with the Setnickers in July. Sharing that story with different groups emphasized the beauty and uniqueness of this folk art. We also mentioned that in 2006 gloves and a handkerchief were given to Princess Sayako of Japan for her wedding, and a lace, baby bedding was given for the cradle of Prince George of England in 2013.

Another panel of the exhibit highlighted a replica of Maxim Gaspari's, "Easter Procession," of children holding *butarica*. Our own Tom Moren painted the replica and received many accolades. Even though Gaspari's paintings were purchased by intellectuals, he became "one with the Slovenian people" in large part due to the literary illustrations and postcards which reached out to all people. In the United States we could compare Gaspari with Norman Rockwell. Marjan Marinsek, a Slovenian art critic, pointed out that Gaspari's postcards or greeting cards represent a special chapter in his work, as they reached every Slovenian household like "tiny artistic swallows, while contributing to the artistic transformation of people in the countryside and in the city." Marinsek also points out that "everyone could afford a postcard for a small price; this small work of art, which praised the home, depicted rural chores, national costumes, and national songs, day in - day out, wished merry Christmas and Easter holidays and spoke a comprehensive language to all."

Highlighting the front of the brochure was the painting "Mati Slovenija," which depicted mother Slovenia in *Narodna noša* and the iconic *avba* seated on a throne, surrounded by Slovenian children and farmers and some of the great figures of Slovenian culture - Slomsek, Askerc, Gegorcic, Cankar, Grohar, Tavcar, and Slovenia's foremost poet, Dr. France Prešeren.

The arts represent a back drop of Slovenian culture and hold a special place in Slovenian history. For centuries the area of what is now Slovenia lacked a national political and governmental identity. The arts helped compensate for the lack of a Slovenian identity. The Twin Cities Slovenians tried to capture the essence of Slovenian arts through its exhibit, the printed brochure, the video, and the interaction with the different audiences that attended the Festival of Nations 2015.

Credit goes to our co-chairpersons, Sue Rademacher and Michael Koski, along with the 30-plus volunteers who constructed and manned the booth over the four days. *Hvala Lepa!*



Michael Koski



Sue Rademacher



Slovenian

Union of America

Branch Reports

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Mary Ann Schellinger
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It is said that April showers bring May flowers, but what happens when the weather for the day includes sunshine, light snow showers, snow hail pellets, and rain? Well, 41 members of Branch 1 did not let the weather prevent them from attending the Member of the Year celebration at Al & Al's in Sheboygan to enjoy an evening of food and friendship. The tables' decorations included blue, pillow, candy boxes donned with various shades of blue flowers, brightly colored spring flowers on white doilies, and "Happy Spring" handmade cards with a passion flower and its symbolism (information obtained from the *Slovenian American Times* publication). And, of course, a decorated cake using Slovenian colors to congratulate our Member of the Year.

Denise Schueffner, our Branch Vice President, was honored at the event. Aggie Gruenke and Agnes Wiltzius presented her with an *avba* handmade, and a small wooden plaque of Marija Pomagi, hand painted by Dick Jelovnik.



Mary Ann Schellinger and Denise Schueffner

In keeping with the flower theme decorations, I ended the meeting with a poem entitled "A Garden of Friends."

*Open a packet of sunshine and sprinkle it on the wind.
It will go traveling widely and soon it will find a friend.
Open a packet of flowers that bloom wherever they blow.*

*Smiles and kind words are the sunshine
they need to take root and grow.*

*Each friend will share with another a deed or so,
every day til the sun and seed you have scattered
have formed a giant bouquet.*

MARY ANN SCHELLINGER

BRANCH 2 - Chicago, Illinois

Contact Information: Judy Stoll 708.479.2864

Twelve members attended our meeting on Thursday, April 23, at Portillo's Restaurant. Besides getting to visit and chat with each other, we also enjoyed some terrific food before our short meeting. This is the second time that we have been to Portillo's on a Thursday afternoon for our meetings (rather than on Sundays at Cristo Rey High School in Chicago) and it seems to be working out okay. It's a bit noisy in there, so nobody noticed when we sang HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Dolores Puhek (the big 80!) and to Elsie Wojdula (93 years young). Judy Ovnik shared dessert of tiramisu and éclair cake with everyone and we even had some potica slices to sample. Discussions centered on the upcoming Convention and plans for our annual Zveza Day picnic on Sunday, July 19, in Lemont.

Earlier this year, Jennie Kovacic celebrated her 90th birthday at Greco's in Willow Springs. Her granddaughter, Beth Manion, organized the event and everyone that attended enjoyed both the great food and an afternoon with the birthday girl. Our Member of the Year dinner, honoring Lorraine and Judy Ovnik, will be held at a later date, probably in the fall.

For the date and time of our next meeting, please contact me. In the meantime, keep our sick members in your prayers.

JUDY STOLL

BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information: Annette Charron

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The regular monthly meeting was held on April 7, and Josephine Krasovic was the hostess. She served a delicious orange chiffon cake and ice cream. Secretary-Treasurer Eileen Kaplan's financial report noted that the Branch donated \$30 to St. Mary's Church for Easter flowers and \$50 to the SUA National Convention. Betty Skul shared two recipes: her recipe for *struklji* (rolled dumplings) and a brunch casserole recipe, which her family likes to have on Easter morning. Eileen Kaplan gave handmade trivets, which she crocheted, to the Branch members who have participated so far in the Recipe of the Month. Annette Charron won the door prize, which was a fat cat pillow, made and donated by Eileen Kaplan.

The annual Mother's Day Luncheon was held at Park East Restaurant with 30 in attendance. The celebration honored Branch 3's Member of the Year, Betty Skul. Since the party was on Cinco de Mayo, the party had a Mexican theme with tables decorated with handmade muchachos sewn by Eileen Kaplan and given as door prizes. Guests included Joan Perez and Rose Papish. Eileen Kaplan distributed copies of her apple "dew" dumplings. She said that the story behind the recipe is that when there is no time to do strudel, apple "dew" it! Several Branch 3 families were represented with three generations at the luncheon, including members, their daughters, and granddaughters. The Gersick family

outdid everyone with four generations of Branch 3 members attending: Mary Gersick, her three daughters, Patti Gersick Derby, Barbara Gersick Greenwood, and Angela Gersick Mock, Angela's daughter Michele Mock Meegan and granddaughter Natalie Meegan, and Angela's future daughter-in-law, Megan Mowery. Branch member Norma Becco was also honored for recently being named 2015 Pueblo Senior of the Year by the Pueblo Area Agency on Aging due to her extensive community and charitable contributions.

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON &
BARBARA KARLINGER

BRANCH 13 - San Francisco, California

Contact Information: Moreen Spencer

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We hope everyone had a wonderful Mother's Day and Father's Day with their families. We want to brag a little bit! We had such a wonderful time at our Member of the Year Luncheon at Val's Restaurant on May 3. There were members, families, and friends from the Church of the Nativity in San Francisco. Best of all, our new member Jenny Collins, beautiful three-month-old baby Grace, and grandmother Betty Wiley visiting from Bayfield, Colorado, attended the luncheon. Jenny's grandfather, George Skube, emigrated to the U. S. from Slovenia years ago.

Thank you to everyone who bought raffle tickets. We are so grateful to our members who donated raffle items. Beverly Jackson made three aprons,

eight tablemats, and a lap quilt. Margie Schleiger made a black and orange trimmed afghan. (Our San Francisco Giant's baseball team colors.) Virginia Sustarich gave brandy. Michele Twers gave two bottles of wine and a See's Candy gift certificate. Shirley Cooper brought Giant baseball tickets and Great America tickets. President Doreen Sustarich donated a bottle of wine and six teacakes. We are so thankful to these wonderful families and would like to acknowledge them - the Sustarich, Spencer, Twers, Jackson, Schleiger, Cooper, Fir, Brahney, Chilcoat, Vidergar, Bacich, O'Brien, and Collins families. Members who could not attend but bought raffle tickets were the Leach, Kurnick, Farrell, Jensen, and Petrusich families. Thank you so much for all your support!



Four generations of the Gersick family celebrating at the Branch 3 luncheon.

Front row: Mary Gersick and Patti Gersick Derby.

Second row: Megan Mowery, Michele Mock Meegan, Natalie Meegan, Angela Gersick Mock, and Barbara Gersick Greenwood.

Marie and Joe Fir are so proud of their grandson, Joseph Gremmet, who is seven years old and just made his First Holy Communion. Agnes Kurnick has an adorable one-year-old great-grandson, Jack Metz. Jack brings so much love and happiness into her home. Dennis Brahney has been under the weather, as is Virginia Sustarich. To all our members who are not feeling up to par, we send them our best wishes.



Betty Wiley, Jenny Collins, and baby Grace.

Our Branch has sad news to report. Our Vice President, Agnes Petkovich Leach, passed away May 13, 2015. Agnes was such a sweet and wonderful person, always attending our monthly meetings. We send our sympathy to Agnes' family, Dr. Thomas (Karen), Sister Mary Virginia, OP(MSJ), Father Jerome, Vincent, Joseph, and grandchildren, Thomas, Stephen, and Christine Leach. Rest in peace our dear Agnes.

Have a wonderful summer.

MOREEN SPENCER

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Contact Information: Diane Hohenwater
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We wish to thank the members of Branch 99 - Lemont, IL, who worked so hard and hosted a truly wonderful National Convention. It was so much fun to meet members from around the country while participating in all the enjoyable Convention events.

Another successful Member of the Year program was held in May, when our treasurer, Georgene Agnich, was recognized for her hard work and dedication to SUA.

Our condolences go to the families of our members Josephine Vranesic, who passed away in April, and Margaret Gasperich, who passed away in June.

The first meeting in our 2015-16 schedule is set for Tuesday, September 15. We have worked hard to put together an exciting program of monthly meetings. Please consider joining us on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Our biggest event of the year is our annual Grape Harvest Festival Dance, to be held on Sunday, September 27, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Eddie Korosa will provide wonderful music



Branch 20 member Marianne Wolf-Astrauskas (right) holds one of the writing awards presented to her by Rebecca Sarwate, President of the Illinois Woman's Press Association on May 16, 2015, in Chicago, IL, during the 74th Mate E. Palmer Communications Contest.

and lots of fun. We work hard to host this cultural event and hope you will make plans to attend!

DIANE HOHENWATER

BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Contact Information: Diane Data
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Happy to report that we have had four new members join our Branch. This is so encouraging for our Slovenian group.

I would like to welcome new officers - Shirley Eide as Secretary and Lois Hollerich as our Treasurer. Thank you for stepping up and filling these valued positions.

Recently, Loretta Story presented a program on Marija Pomagaj in our former Slovenian Church, St. Roch's. She shared her thoughts and photos from her trip to Brezje - an awesome presentation in a surreal setting. About 25

members and guests enjoyed a buffet lunch at our spring gathering at the Maples Supper Club. Our hostesses, Loretta Story and her daughter, Mary Pryde, and Sharon Brady, as always outdid themselves with their mouth-watering desserts.

In the past, our Branch has paid dues for a member once they reach age 80. After much discussion, effective January 1, 2016, we will discontinue this practice. We will attempt to work with any hardship cases.

Thank you to all that have contributed to our one fund-raiser, The Bakeless Bake Sale. Donations are still being accepted.



Branch 24 members baked and served treats at the Open House on Thursday at the Slovenian Heritage Museum.

I attended my first National Convention just last week. What an enriching experience! Branch 99 - Lemont, IL, hosted an outstanding Convention. Our Branch 24, along with Branch 20, hosted the Open House on Thursday at the Slovenian Heritage Museum in Joliet. So many SUA members vis-

ited the Museum for the first time and were excited to see all it has to offer. A bonus was a trip across the street to view St. Joseph's Church and Parish Museum. Then, from Joliet on to Naperville for the Convention business. The outgoing National Board has done an inspiring job of managing the SUA and is turning the reins over to an exciting new Board. I felt proud and privileged to be a voting Member Representative at these meetings. Branch 24 has been honored to have Bonnie Pohar Prokup and Debbie Pohar as National Board Members. Thank you for your time and efforts.

Our summer picnic is planned for Thursday, August 20, at 6 p.m. at Starved Rock Family Fun in LaSalle. Utensils and plates will be furnished. Drinks can be purchased at the bar. Bring your favorite Slovenian dish. We always have an impressive variety of dishes. Let's hope the weather cooperates this year!

DIANE DATA

Branch 33 - Duluth, Minnesota

On June 15, Mary (Krmopotich) Pogorelec, a member of Branch 33 passed away. Her funeral was held at St. Elizabeth's Church. Honorary Pallbearers were Winifred Ellena, Jackie Rukavina, Renee Doble, Althea Tverberg, Sharon Bucar, and Polly Stojevich. All carried red carnations and a rosary was prayed before Mass by our fellow Slovenian sisters. The funeral was beautiful with our Branch president, Mary Spehar White, leading the congregation in song and singing a solo of the Ave Maria. Before the closing of Mass a farewell prayer was read by Ann Menart and a carnation was presented to Mary's daughters.

Mary Pogorelec was a loving and giving person. She had open arms to anyone entering her door. There would not be enough room to write about all the good things she did for her church and fellow man. The love of Christ shined through her; we will all miss her very much. May she now be in the loving arms of Christ.

We have had no meetings in June or July but will meet the first Thursday in August. We see each other in passing and we give our loving greetings when we do meet. This happens most often in church where we also meet our Lord.

ANN MENART

BRANCH 35 - Aurora, Minnesota

Contact Information: Vida Lanari vmfjl@mchsi.com or Tina Bajda tinabajda1@gmail.com

At our April Branch meeting, Tina Bajda and Vida (Michelich) Lanari demonstrated how to decorate traditional Slovenian Easter eggs with greenery. The eggs were colored from onion peel dye. Previously decorated eggs were shown as examples. A social hour complete with homemade blueberry strudel and sweet bread was provided after the demonstration.



Theresa Moravitz and Vida Lanari

In May we had our Member/Mother of the Year dinner, honoring Francine Stalmach from Babbitt, Minnesota, a Branch member for 26 years. Members and guests celebrated Francine and enjoyed a roasted pork meal catered by Mary Skorjanec and crew. Don Sherek provided home-made wine for the event. The dinner was a great success. Thank you to all who attended and helped organize the event.

THERESA BAJDA MORAVITZ

BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Jan Gehm

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May 27 was the special evening for the men of our Branch - our Members of the Year. A delicious Italian dinner was served in their honor and the evening was filled with entertainment and socializing. The highlight of the evening was the crowning of each male member in attendance by June Znidorka, our Member of the Year for 2014. Members Tony Gorenc and Ed Vidmar provided Slovenian musical

All of our members who attended the Convention were in agreement that the event was well organized - from the welcome party at the Heritage Museum in Joliet to the grand finale banquet to the Mass and picnic in Lemont, IL - and were enjoyed by all in attendance. The business meetings were held democratically and handled efficiently. Our member, Denise Bartlett, served as Convention parliamentarian and Bylaws chairperson.

Congratulations to Helen Frohna for winning the potica-baking contest at the Convention! Our Branch is very proud of Helen, who is our treasurer and is always willing to do whatever is needed and always willing to share her culinary baking skills.

Congratulations also to all the new officers elected during this Convention and our very best wishes and gratitude to all of the outgoing officers. Best wishes and Good Luck to the Branches who will be hosting the 28th National Convention in 2019, in Cleveland, Ohio.

Besides the Convention report, our June 24 meeting was a celebration of the Independence of Slovenia, celebrated



entertainment, which all enjoyed.

Another major SUA event has passed and happy memories of the 2015 National Convention are still fresh. Helen Frohna, our Member Representative, John Cerar, our alternate, and Jackie Smith, the Wisconsin Regional President, along with other members of our Branch attended the Convention. At our June 24 dinner meeting Helen gave her detailed report and also a very interesting review from Jackie Smith, who was not able to attend our meeting.

in Slovenia on June 25. Red was the color of the evening and red, blue, and white carnations were the table decorations and the Slovenian flag was proudly displayed along with our own red, white, and blue. The Slovenian National Anthem was sung and a copy of it was given to each member present.

The new SUA cookbook is now available and the cost is \$25. If you are interested in purchasing *The Slovenian-American Table* cookbook, you can contact Helen

Frohna by calling 1.262.821.5295. Our members were all so pleased to see our Branch 43 members, Rose Chepeck and June Znidorka, pictured in their *naroda noša* on page 40 of the cookbook! It's a beautiful, full color book.

Congratulations, Dr. Katie Berlin, DO! Katherine Elizabeth Kaye Berlin graduated on May 30, from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg, West Virginia. Katie graduated in the top 12% of her class and will be doing her residency at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Best wishes and best of luck, Dr. Berlin. Katie is the daughter of Kathy and Jim Kaye.

Sincere condolences are extended to the family of Stanley Janezic who recently passed. Stanley was the husband of Josephine, our former Branch President, and the father of Patricia Goldmann. *Naj pociva v miru.*

MICI BREGANT

BRANCH 47 - Garfield Heights, Ohio

Contact Information: Debbie Duris 330.467.2281

I have been very fortunate to travel to beautiful Slovenia many times. Each trip was special and memorable as I was either with members of my family or special friends. However, visiting Slovenia in May with my granddaughter, Sky, was too amazing for me to put into words. I so enjoyed the looks on her face as we saw so many amazing sights. Sky described it



Sky overlooking Piran.



Sky and Kathy enjoying Slovenia.

this way - *"Before I went on our trip I didn't really know much about Slovenia. Now after experiencing Slovenia on such a personal level, I am so grateful that I was able to experience such an amazing part of the world. Slovenia has the most beautiful landscapes that I have ever seen, and I hope to get the chance to travel there again one day!"*

Sky and I actually traveled to Europe for three weeks. The first 10 days in Slovenia were unique since we were the only two on the tour. So we actually had a very special private tour. We then traveled to the French Riviera for 3 days to fulfill my dream of seeing Monaco. The final part of our trip was a tour through Italy, Switzerland, Paris, and London. What an adventure we had. We ate and drank a lot, shopped quite a bit, and laughed endlessly. It was a trip of a lifetime for both of us.

It was truly an honor to be the Branch 47 Member Representative at the SUA National Convention. I always enjoy seeing the friends I have made through the years and keeping up with the business of our organization. Debbie Duris and I had an enjoyable time.

How wonderful it will be to see everyone in Cleveland in 2019 as we showcase our Slovenian sights, sounds, and tastes Cleveland-style. The Ohio members are looking forward to hosting a memorable event.

Branch members please plan to attend our meeting on Saturday, September 5, at 1 p.m. at Panera Bread in Solon at 6130 Kruse Drive.

I also encourage all Ohio members to attend the Ohio Regional Convention on Sunday, October 4, at St. Vitus Church. This will be a great opportunity to hear the latest news from our National Convention as well as hear what is happening in our Ohio Branches.

For your convenience we will have *The Slovenian-American Table* cookbook available for purchase so you will not need to pay an additional cost for postage from the Home Office. This new cookbook is an awesome collection of favorite recipes and historical facts of our Slovenian heritage. It sells for \$25.

Please call Debbie Duris at 330.467.2281 to make your reservation for our meeting in September and the Ohio convention in October.

Have a beautiful autumn!

KATHLEEN FERRANTE

BRANCH 50 - Cleveland, Ohio

Contact Information: Rick Tomsick

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Greetings from the "5-0" on America's North Coast, Cleveland, Ohio! We've been getting a lot of rain here in the tropical region of northeast Ohio.

Branch 50 is again proud to report that we will be the sponsor of the Ohio Regional SUA Convention, which will be held on October 4. The Mass will be at 10:30 a.m. at St. Vitus Church in Cleveland, with a brunch following

at the St. Vitus Village across the street.

As I write this, Rose Toth and Pat Budzilek are just returning from the National Convention. Cookie Maxin and Ivanka Matic served as Member Representatives/Delegates representing Branch 50 at the National Convention. Hopefully they ran into my cousin, Sandy Brown Rodeghero, in Naperville, Illinois. I am proud to report that Cookie has been named as the new National Corresponding and Recording Secretary for the SUA!

There's a lot to report on the success of the Convention, and you can get more details elsewhere in this issue of *Zarja*. The BIG NEWS is that Cleveland will be the host city of the 2019 National Convention. Many Branches, including our own 50, will collaborate to welcome our members from around the world.

For our first monthly meeting of summer we hosted an indoor picnic at the Euclid Library on June 17. Many thanks to Dorothy Lamm, Josephine Markatos, and Elsie Frank for the wonderful fried chicken and to all who brought delicious dishes and pastries. Our monthly Branch meetings are held on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Library. Please join us for the meetings, coming up on September 16, and on October 21. Check with me or Rose Mary Toth (rosemarytoth@msn.com) for up-to-the-minute details and changes.

Proud Great-Grandma!! I'm so happy to report on the birth of Kynzee Denise Rector, great-granddaughter of Dorothy Lamm. Baby and the parents are all doing well!

You know it's finally summer when your kids want you to take them to Eddie's Grill for a kielbasa sandwich in Geneva on the Lake Ohio.



My terrific sister-in-law, Lisa Baco Tomsick, and my niece and nephew, Faith and Ryan Tomsick, were spotted at the vacation fun spot this week (*see photo*). Faith has become quite the actress, appearing in of two-year



ly discovered als and orange Joey Tomsick,

will have a helper in the back yard (*see photo*). Joey attended the recent Branch 50 Mother's Day festivities, and while yours truly could not attend because of business matters, I bet that Joey played the button box for all members in attendance (including our dad, Ken Tomsick).

Let's each remember to keep one another and all members of Branch 50 and all of the SUA in our prayers, especially

remembering the dead and the poor souls in purgatory, and those they have left behind, to bring comfort and joy to all who mourn.

I always like to hear from members near and far. Cherie Godnavec recently wrote about membership and wants to follow in her mother-in-law's footsteps. Her three sons, Bobby, Stanley, and Trevor, attended our picnic meeting in June and were welcomed as new members. We just heard from Debbie Duris in Branch 47 - Garfield Heights, and Ray Stopar checks in from time to time to report on his wife, Florence, whom he visits every day at the Slovene Home for the Aged. Please write to me at ricktomsick@gmail.com with any family news and I will add you to our list of updates for Branch 50 (you don't need to be a member of Branch 50).

That's all for now. Many thanks to everyone for all you do in SUA!

RICK TOMSICK

BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

Contact Information: Barbara Bruch

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Branch 89 is proud of the Junior Members who are graduating this year. Megan Rehn is graduating from high school and Josie Walter, Annalise Sabotta, and Jordan Duffin are graduating from grade school. They have all participated in Branch activities and we wish them well as they continue their education.

Our fourth annual Slovenian Heritage Day was a big success. There were groups of siblings and cousins meeting for little family reunions and children and grandchildren of former members attending. Our hardworking President Alice Ebner was home with the flu and we missed her being with us for the good time everyone had.



We colored traditional Slovenian Easter eggs like we made at Paula Mavec's house two years ago at our last meeting. Everything went very well until the stove would not heat up enough to cook the eggs! After



an hour and 20 minutes of trying to get them to boil we gave up and took our eggs home. The images turned out more pastel than they should have. We used onion skins, red cabbage, and beets to make the colors and plan to do it again next year with a properly working stove. Everyone had a fun time doing the craft with bits of plants and stocking squares. Meetings where we do something are always the most fun. Bridgit Gunderson, her daughter Janelle Lucach, and guest Anica brought a wonderful *Žegen* meal of sausage, potica, eggs, and *kifeljčki* for us to enjoy.

We met for our closing dinner at the Valley Bar and Grill and had another great time. Elizabeth Fox and Annabelle Bryant planned a fun dinner and four of us were winners of Slovenian carnation plants. Branch 93 is lucky to have members who are all willing to pitch in and contribute their time and talents. Best regards to everyone.

BARBARA BRUCH

BRANCH 93 - New York, New York

Contact Information: Elizabeth Gross

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We're fortunate that so many young Slovenians are coming to New York City to pursue their education and careers. Over the past few months we have had the joy and pleasure of meeting many of them at these events in New York:

- 3/6 – Anthology Film Archives – Avant-Garde Cinema from Ex-Yugoslavia, 1950s-80s: “*8mm experiments by Karpo Godina and Davorin Marc*” – **Jurij Meden**, curated and presented the screening of Slovenian film.
- 3/21 – Live poetry reading, with audience participation on Face Time: *Look Back, Look Ahead* by **Srečko Kosovel** (1904-1926) - translated by **Barbara Siegel Carlson** and **Ana Jelnikar**, who read from their collaborative translation in English and Slovenian, organized by **Marta Stemberger**.
- 3/24 – **Maja Haderlap** and her U.S. translator, Tess Lewis, reading in English and Slovenian from her groundbreaking novel, *Angel of Oblivion*, at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York.
- 3/28 – **Društvo VTIS – Slovenians Educated Abroad** dinner at Balsem on the Lower East Side, organized by **Igor Cesarec**.
- 3/31 – **Eva Petrič** – Display of the centuries: F. Kiesler and Contemporary Art, at Austrian Cultural Forum New York: This Space Is A Box installation and video White Box by artist Eva Petrič, who had also previously designed the window displays at Bergdorf Goodman – twice!
- 4/1 – *Gilgamesh: A Musical Epic* – book and lyrics by **Peter Petkovšek**, Department of Theater, Columbia University, based on the epic from Mesopotamia, one of the oldest pieces of literature known to us today.

- 4/2 – **Tjaša Ferme** – *Wild Child In The City* at the Flying Solo Festival – written, produced, and performed by Tjaša Ferme, directed by Ana Margineanu
- 4/16 – **Žan Tetičkovič** - Senior Recital at the New School, premiere of his big band project, *Oasis*, an original composition inspired by Balkan music, jazz, and classical music.
- 4/27 – Columbia University/Harriman Institute: **Srebrenica** – film screening and discussion in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, ‘*Neither Here Nor There*,’ documentary traces a family’s journey to America after the Bosnian War.
- 5/9 – European Union Open House at Embassy of Republic of Slovenia in Washington, D.C. – **Slovene Conversation Online** participants broadcast a live Slovene Study Buddy session at the Embassy using GoToMeeting.
- 5/15 – Architizer A+ award for Velenje Car Park by Enota Architects – **Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar** welcomed prize-winning architect, **Dean Lah**, at the Center for Architecture in New York City.
- 5/17 – Slovenian Cultural Hour – filmmaker **Carole Ryavec** and **Darko Herič**, director of photography for “*Dear Lastan!*”
- 6/5 – **Dejan Valentinčič**, assistant professor of Constitutional Law at University of Nova Gorica, visiting and researching Slovenian communities in America –coffee hour at Church of Saint Cyril.
- 6/14 – A Time To Improvise “*Čas za improvizacijo*,” film presented by producer **Tina Lešničar** featuring eight young, Slovenian, jazz players in New York, Amsterdam, and Vienna; documentary screening followed by a live performance with composers **Jure Pukl** (saxophone) and **Žan Tetičkovič** (percussion), with Will Slater (bass), at MERIDIAN 23, 161 West 23rd Street.
- 6/18 – NYC-Branch 93 dedication of the **Maša Grom Library** at the **Slovenian Heritage Museum** on Historic Route 66, in Joliet, IL, - Maša Grom, a Slovenian community advocate, 1872-1949, was active in Sežana, Trst, and Ljubljana.
- 6/20 – SUA National Convention in Naperville, IL, – presentation of SUA membership survey and preliminary results prepared by **NYC Branch 93**.
- 6/30 – **Slovenian National Day** reception at the United Nations Mission with guest **Evald Flisar**, president of P.E.N. Slovenia, and his wife, children’s author **Jana Bauer**, and their son Martin.

Our warmest thanks to Nuška Zakrajšek, our Republic of Slovenia Embassy’s Cultural, Press, Educational, and Public Diplomacy Officer, for informing us about most of these events through Embassy Newsletters!

ELIZABETH GROSS

BRANCH 99 - Lemont, Illinois

Contact Information: Jana Hlade/jmhlade@hotmail.com

Hello Everyone! Hope you are enjoying your summer! Our Branch hosted the 27th National Convention in June and are so happy that the weekend was a huge success! We are so grateful to everyone who helped with the Convention and for all those who attended. Special thanks to our Branch members and volunteers: Julie LaJoie for her time as Convention Chairperson and to all the committee members. Many thanks to Frank Cepon and Margie Cepon for the Honeybee Presentation. Thank you to Corinne Leskovar, Slavica Sovan, Maria Sovan, Vince Rigler and all the models for their help with the Slovenian Costume Fashion Show. Thanks to Father Metod and John Vidmar for arranging the church and grounds tour, and to Slavica Sovan and Tina Ruda for organizing the art show and tour at the Slovenian Catholic Center (SCC). Thank you to Matt Copot and the Prekmurje Social Club for welcoming the Convention attendees to their Father's Day picnic. Also many thanks to Bill Zerial and Sonja DePratt for representing our heritage and dressing in the Slovenian costume, and to Joan Kaczmarek for being our Member Representative for Branch 99. You all are amazing people!

Upcoming events: On August 22 we are hosting a Potica class at the SCC at 8 a.m. Cost is \$20 per person and includes all supplies. Registration is required. Contact MaryAnn Partyka at craftermar304@comcast.net or 630.661.3600.

Our Branch board has decided to cancel the annual Bunco fund-raiser for October 25. Unfortunately, because of low attendance, our Branch does not profit from this event. Our apologies to those annual attendees we did see every year. We appreciate your support!

On November 15 we will be holding officer elections. Meeting will be at 1 p.m. in the SCC library. Some of the current board has been in position for over six years and

have to step down. We would love to see some new, fresh faces representing Branch 99. Please consider attending this meeting to elect your new board members, and also consider nominating yourself or a friend!

There are no meetings in July or September. See you all very soon!

JANA HLADE

BRANCH 100 - Southern California

Contact Information: Jean Koci

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Summer is here and the SUA National Convention is over, but, I am certain it will be remembered by those who were



Francine Phaller with husband, Dave, son, Tony, and his wife, Jennifer, at the Branch 100 luncheon.



fortunate enough to attend. We are still thinking about the May/June issue of *Zarja* and all the tributes to the "Members of the Year." The past month or so has been full of celebrations with Father's Day, graduations, weddings, anniversaries, and memorable vacations either already enjoyed or anticipated in the next weeks. It is, indeed, a joyous time!

Branch 100 had a lovely luncheon celebration featuring Francine Phaller and her family who was present at Napoli's Italian Restaurant on April 25. It was wonderful meeting them and I hope that this will be the begin-

ning of many more visits with Francine's husband, Dave, her son, Tony, and his wife, Jennifer. Tony did the reading of Francine's biography, which was very interesting for all of us in attendance. Congratulations, once again, dear friend!



Graduate Ellen Koci with her brother James Koci - Dana Hills High School.

Ellie made her decision to attend St. Mary's College of Notre Dame. Through the encouragement of her brother, James, and other friends of his, she decided that St. Mary's would be a good place to be. Congratulations, Ellie!

Some of our young adult members either have or will have been home for short periods during breaks this summer. James Koci is currently home for a few weeks, but will return to school at Notre Dame for a research project in physics, which will take most of the summer. Garret Jancich



Garret Jancich with his mom Carol Jancich, and grandmother Jean Koci - Cornell University.

It was also a pleasure to hear that our own Ellen Koci received a letter notifying her of her SUA Scholarship Award. She was very excited to receive the Jean Kurilich Scholarship, especially since Jean Kurilich had been a very active member and officer of Branch 100 for many years, and was well known by many of the Fontana ladies and other long time members of the Branch.

graduated from Cornell University over the Memorial Day Weekend with a degree in environmental engineering. He is currently touring the U.S. with two other graduates as they make their way out West. Sara Lundgren, who had received a SUA Honorable Mention when she graduated from high school four

years ago, is already finishing her first year in a PhD program at Dartmouth. She will take a short break to visit family sometime in July.

Some of you may have heard recently of the very serious illness of Phyllis Sadar Wood. She was fortunate to have had a successful liver transplant in March, and is recovering nicely and getting her strength back day by day. We wish you well, Phyllis! We send our thoughts and prayers, also, to other more elderly members who are ill or homebound - Anne Kapel, Martha Nagy, Frances Ambrozich, and others who do not come to mind at this time. Anne was able to attend our luncheon with her visiting daughter, Kristina, from Ohio. It was wonderful to see her after a long absence.

Branch 100 was happy to make a donation to the American Slovene Education Foundation, the program established by Fr. Peter Rožič, s.j. about a year and a half ago. A number of students have already had the opportunity to study in the Bay Area of California last summer and several others will qualify this year, as well. This is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation and information can be found on their website.

As I write this article, Dorothy Jerneycic, our Member Representative to the National Convention, has arrived back home after a very enjoyable and informative experience. Thank you for the update of your weekend, Dorothy. Mary Lou Jensen, our very special Branch President, also attended. Accolades to all the outgoing and incoming officers, as well as to those who worked so hard to make the weekend so special. *Nasvidenje!*

JEAN KOCI

BRANCH 102 - Willard, Wisconsin

Branch 102 members got together on Palm Saturday for our regular meeting and to prepare for our annual bake sale that evening. Members brought all kinds of baked goods.

Theresa Zorman brought her traditional Easter cross, cutout cookies to celebrate the season. After a prayer, we sat down to a delicious potluck lunch. It's always amazing the variety of food we get.

After adjourning, the real celebration started. This is when



Member of the Year, Sarah Trunkel.

we honored Sarah Trunkel, our 2015 Member of the Year. Joining Branch 102 in this celebration was Sarah's husband, Jack, daughter, Ashley, and grandson, Andrew. Sarah is of English and German descent, but Slovenian by marriage. She learned how to make potica and apple strudel from her mother-in-law, and does it better than most natural-born Slovenians. She's been a wonderful member of Branch 102, and we are proud to call her one of our



Megan Johnson preparing to zip line in the Monte Verde Cloud Forest in Costa Rica.

kayaked, hiked, drank a lot of tequila, ate a lot of tacos, and met people doing the same thing from all over the world. And she'd do it again in a heartbeat.

Branch 102 lost two long-time members in February - Vicki Krultz (mother of Branch 102 president, Bonnie Brierton) and Ed Bayuk. You could always count on Vicki to bring authentic Slovenian dishes to our meetings - blood sausage was one of her specialties. Ed enjoyed coming to the meetings to get the lunch and he'd always go home with leftovers. Their friends in Branch 102 will miss both Vicki and Ed.

Branch 102's next activity will be a summer picnic at member Mike Sixel's new home on Lake Wissota. And, the Holy Family Parish's annual bazaar and breaded chicken dinner is coming up in August. Can't miss that!

BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

Contact Information: Bernadette Fitzsimmons
bettefitz@verizon.net

Branch 108 participated with a display of Slovenian hand-painted Easter eggs and handmade folk art of wooden, cookie molds at the European Union (EU) Open House at The Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, D.C. held on May 9. Branch members, Bernadette Fitzsimmons, her

own! In other news, Megan Johnson spent two and a half months traveling on her own in Central America from January 7 through March 17. She spent time in Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica. She volcano boarded, zip lined in a cloud forest,

husband, Tim, and mother, Nika Kovacic, volunteered at the display table which included a Slovenian Mother's Day, Birthday, or Get Well card-making project with paper replicas of Slovenian lace. There was also Slovenian story-book reading from the *Forget Me Nots* Slovenian/English books for the many young guests to enjoy as a respite from the abundance of activities offered at the nearby embassies on EU day. Member Thomas Fitzsimmons' original pencil sketch of Lake Bled was displayed, and noticed by many who recognized this popular Gorenjska region landmark. Thomas and Juliana Fitzsimmons were a big help in setting up and taking down the display; their assistance was much appreciated on this busy occasion. Branch members, Margie Whitmore and Lea Plut-Pregelj, were volunteers at the Embassy of Slovenia EU Day and enjoyed circulating with guests. Bernadette was happy to see SUA member volunteers from around the country, including Mary Lou Voelk, new SUA National President, Tanja Vajk, President of Branch 93 and Minnesota Branch 35 members, Albina Medved and Nadi Bajda, who have done a spectacular job demonstrating Slovenian apple *strudelj* and potica making at EU Open House Day in recent years. All of the volunteers were quite busy with their responsibilities and making contacts with prospective new members from the Washington, D.C. area and beyond. Ambassador Dr. Cerar was a gracious host, helping with the serving of authentic Slovenian food samples, and as always welcoming guests with his warm smile and making conversation with American Slovenians whom he warmly welcomed and was open to hearing their Slovenian heritage story.



Bernadette Fitzsimmons attended The SUA National Convention as a Branch 108 Member Representative in Naperville, IL. She would like to congratulate Branch 99 - Lemont, IL, for hosting an unforgettable, unique Convention filled with interesting activities such as the Tempel Lipizzan's performance, the beekeeping presentation by Frank Cepen, and the fashion show featuring Slovenian national costumes from all nine regions of Slovenia. The Fitzsimmons family joined the festivities at the banquet and were delighted to meet Mary Turvey, SWU Scholarship Director, Corinne Leskovar, former *Zarja* Editor, Kathy Ferrante, former National President, Carol Ryba, former Treasurer, and many others who have seen them in

photos from *Zarja - The Dawn* magazine over the years. Bernadette reports that it was a pleasure for her to spend time socializing with so many members from around the country and to be a part of an extended Slovenian family through our heritage at such an awesome event that connected members and friends from the Slovenian Union of America.

The Bajda sisters' story of coming to America is a fascinating story and Bernadette had the opportunity to spend some time conversing and learning the details of their amazing immigrant story, plus the opportunity for some polka dance lessons! The Fitzsimmons were happy to meet again with Evald Flisar, Jana Bauer, and family after all these years, and being able to congratulate them in person for their striking literary accomplishments. Evald and Jana passed through Washington, D.C., on June 23 to attend the National Day Celebration at the Embassy of Slovenia, and once again there was more conversing before they moved on to visit New York City. The month of June was truly a whirlwind of Slovenian reunions!

Bernadette has brought back lots of information and ideas to share with her home Branch, and looks forward to meeting with everyone soon to share and summarize her National Convention experience from June 2015.

BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities (TC) of Minnesota

Contact Information: Norm Setnick
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To paraphrase John Adams, second President of the United States... *how swift the moments fly-how flash the years go by*. Branch 109 reflects on our busy spring, basks in the summer sun, and reflects on our 10-year anniversary.

April-May was marked by the most unique "Member of the Year" celebration in our short history. Mike Koski's mother, Pat Koski, president of Branch 23 - Ely, MN, traveled 250 miles to highlight her son's involvement in the Slovenian community and led our members in singing *Cescina si Marija*. Sue Rademacher, our "Ms. Festival of Nations coordinator" surprised Michael with a vintage recording (1950s) of the Ely Slovenian chorus of which his mother has been a part of for the last 60 some years. How is all that for passing on our Slovenian heritage?

Our Branch 109 "flashed" our upcoming events for summer and fall:

- 2016 Slovenian picture calendar contest headed by Rick Pisa.
- New Branch 109 TC Slovenian Directory, complete with member photos, headed by Jean Podominick.

- June 18-21 SUA National Convention. Norm Setnick, Member Representative/Delegate.
- June 27 Slovenian Independence Day Celebration hosted by Honorary Consul Miro Medved along with the Kristina (Tina) Medved Nelson Memorial Balianje (Bocce ball) tournament. Honored Guest, Jure Žmauc, Consul General, Republic of Slovenia.
- September 28 Peter Krečec, a Slovenian scholar, will speak at the University of Minnesota about the accomplishments of the noted Slovenian architect, Jože Plečnik. This event is sponsored by the UWM - Milwaukee, WI, Slovenian Arts Program, Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI, Branch 109 - TC, as well as St. Thomas University of St. Paul.
- October 24 Ten Year Anniversary Dinner and Celebration. Video presentation along with a historical rendering of our Branch written in book form. Norm Setnick and Mary Ann Palmer.
- Our last meeting was highlighted by a strudel demonstration by one of our newest members, Veronica "Ronnie" Boucher. She might be new as a member but was born and raised in the Hibbing area of the Mesabi Iron Range. "Ronnie" has been a prominent thread in the Slovenian fabric of Minnesota for decades and her baking skills are well recognized.

On an added note, Dr. Seth Hawkins, who is the director of the Julian Sleeper House Museum, as well as the Slovenian Exhibition, announced that he has obtained a complete set of Slovenian postage stamps along with a plethora of Slovenian memorabilia. If in the Twin Cities and have the time, stop in the Slovenian Exhibition located on the basement floor of the Julian Sleeper House Museum in St. Paul.

NORM SETNICKER
"Born in USA with Slovenian Parts"



TC Slovenians: Slovenian Independence Day Celebration.

Membership Application and Renewal

Slovenian Union of America

(Formerly known as Slovenian Women's Union of America)

slovenianunion.org sua@slovenianunion.org 815.727.1926

For RENEWALS use form at BOTTOM of this page

☐ Adult Dues \$25.00 ☐ Adult Dues (International Address) \$35.00 ☐ Junior Dues (Birth to 18) \$5.00

If this is a gift and you agree to continue paying for this membership next year, please advise us of billing address:

Dues are for January through December

If you join after August 31 you will not be billed in January of the next calendar year

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

Slovenian Union of America, 431 North Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432-1703

Last Name _____ First Name _____ M ___ F ___

Street Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

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

Maiden Name _____ Do you speak Slovenian? _____

Please describe your Slovenian ancestry and provide SLOVENIAN SURNAMES

How did you hear about us? SUA Member ___ Newspaper ___ Website ___ Other _____

I would like to volunteer for the SUA. My area of interest or expertise is _____

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

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Mail to: SUA/SWUA, 431 N. Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432-1703

The Potica Contest

by Patricia Budzilek, *Zarja* Staff Writer

One of the popular activities at our SUA National Conventions is the potica contest where members bring in their homemade poticas, which are then judged to determine the best three. This year the contest was organized by Sonja DePratt and Jana Hlade, both of Branch 99 - Lemont, IL.

This Convention was no exception and 12 poticas were entered in the competition. About half of them were round, made in bundt-type pans, and the rest were loaf poticas. In Cleveland and in my experience, most poticas are made in long, loaf, potica pans made specifically for this purpose, and round poticas are quite rare with the specialized pans being even rarer. I have since found out that the true, traditional, Slovenian potica is a round potica, which, if desired, is made with golden raisins, but dark raisins are also quite common as some bakers prefer their stronger flavor.

The poticas entered were of various kinds, from very high round ones to quite small loaves, some with nuts and golden raisins, others with nuts and dark raisins, and some filled only with nuts. They were first individually shown to the judges for the presentation criteria, and then cut to be tasted. There were four areas for judging: presentation, taste, texture, and form, each area receiving one to five points. Water was available for the judges to cleanse their palate after each tasting so they would be able to taste the next one without the flavor of the last one interfering. The bakers of the poticas with the most points each received prize bags, which included large, lipa leaf, cutting boards.

This year the judges included two pastry chefs, Erica Tomei and Nick Salmieri, from the Chicago Marriott Naperville Hotel, the site of the Convention. They are both in their mid-thirties, are of Italian descent, and knew little about potica - never having even tasted one! They provided a new perspective on our traditional pastry. The third judge was an experienced, well-known, Slovenian cook, Albina Medved from Ely, MN, who has demonstrated and baked poticas and strudels at the Slovenian Embassy in Washington, D.C. The last four years she has demonstrated and prepared for the European Open House at the Embassy, which is held every Mother's Day weekend - this year the event drew over 4,000 guests who sampled our Slovenian pastry and klobase.

There were a few rules for the convention judges: scores are private, each must judge alone, and the poticas were numbered with no names visible. The entrants were to present their poticas fully baked, unsliced, and with a complete recipe. The

entrants were Mary Mavec, Richard Grill, Bill Zerial, and Christine Martincic, all from Branch 99 - Lemont, IL; Loretta Urh and Helen Frohna from Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI; Mary Jo Sweeney from Branch 20 - Joliet, IL; Amy Brandt and Marija Rigler from Branch 2 - Chicago, IL; Jeanne Somrak from Branch 50 - Cleveland, OH; Rose Bell from Branch 89 - Olgesby, IL; and Rea Rossi from Branch 23 - Ely, MN.

The winners were: first place, Helen Frohna; second place, Mary Mavec; and third place, Rose Bell. Although these were judged the best, all the poticas were delicious. The poticas were served as dessert at the banquet on Saturday night.

Many thanks to all our bakers; poticas are very costly to make, and we are grateful for all the time and effort you put into your entry. May God bless you.



First Place Winner:
Helen Frohna from Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI.

Editor's Note: Helen's recipe will be featured in the next issue of *Zarja*.

To place your order for
The Slovenian-American Table please:

Send your check with payment to:
Slovenian Union of America
431 North Chicago Street
Joliet, IL 60432-1703
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**Please include e-mail address and phone
number in case we have a question
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Plus \$4.50 for shipping and handling

Most of us have many Slovenian cookbooks, so why do we need another? I thought this until I saw the book, and ultimately purchased four! This is not “your mother’s” cookbook, but as described, “a generous balance of cookbook and entertaining inspiration utilizing Slovenian crafts and cultural ideas.”


The cookbook (I hesitate to call it that because it is so much more) is large, the size of a sheet of typing paper, and printed on glossy paper totally in full color. This book has no drawings, only beautifully composed photographs, many full-page and borderless. It is not like older cook books, with chapters on appetizers, salads, desserts, etc., all typed one after another in boring black and white. This book is arranged chronologically starting with “Celebrating the New Year,” and ending with “The Christmas Season.” The chapters present the recipes corresponding to the seasons, holidays, and special times during the year with an explanation of the traditions associated with each and a description of the food normally served at that time. There is also a recipe index by category at the end of the book.

As an example, one double page, “Wedding with a Touch of Slovenia,” has on the left page a beautiful, borderless, full-page picture of Lake Bled taken from an unusual vantage point, with the right page having an explanation of Slovenian wedding traditions along with the start of a recipe for a Slovenian wedding necessity, “Flancati,” Angel Wings, and a picture of the dough. The next four pages present the rest of the instructions, along with pictures showing how to make the dough, and two more recipes, one for “Artistic Twist of Flancati,” and the other for “Oven Baked Flancati.”

This book could certainly be called a “Coffee Table Book,” to be kept on display for anyone to casually pick up and read about our Slovenian heritage. There are many pages of information about traditions and customs and one could spend much time reading about them. The cooks could peruse the recipes, some of which are familiar, some of which grandma used to make, and others which may be new because they are from Slovenia. Everyone who sees this book is very impressed and wants a copy. It would be a wonderful Christmas gift, not only for the cook, but for the non-cook who could read the commentaries.

- Pat Budzilek - *The Slovenian Times*

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The Slovenian - American Table