

Zarja

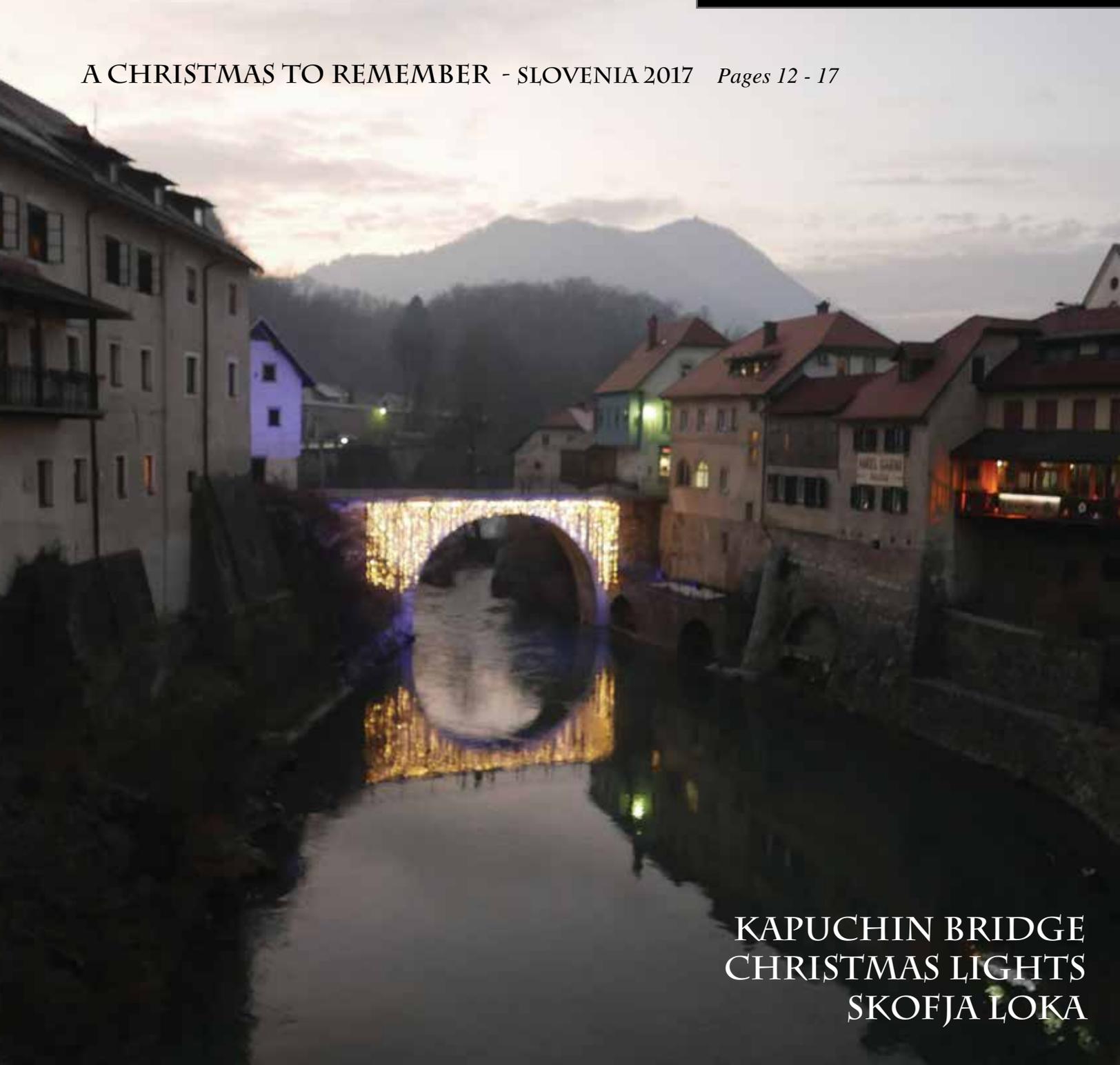
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Winter 2018

The Dawn

A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER - SLOVENIA 2017 *Pages 12 - 17*



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Slovenian Union of America

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Zarja - The Dawn

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Communications for the next issue of publication

Do you have something you would like to share with readers? We would love to hear from you! Please e-mail the editor at wprokup@aol.com. We reserve the right to edit any article submitted. 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 Spring issue must be received by January 10. Thank you.

Submission Guidelines

E-mail your photos attached 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 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.



THE STATE OF THE UNION

Let's Sing and Dance - 2019 National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio and the SUA Website

The SUA 2019 National Convention registration form is now on the SUA website. Get your reservation in early! John Voelk and son Connor stepped up to the plate to clean up and make necessary changes to the SUA website. It has been a huge task; much had to be downloaded/removed before any changes could be made. Connor was instrumental in installing PayPal. Please support your SUA and make a donation.

National Board Meeting

The SUA National Board met on October 19-20, 2018, in Joliet. The minutes of the meeting will be sent out to all branch presidents and member representatives.

SUA Collegiate Scholarship (formerly Educational Scholarship)

Congratulations to Morgan Schuchard of Branch 35 Aurora, Minnesota, the recipient of the SUA Collegiate Scholarship. Morgan is an active young lady at school, church, and with the SUA. Morgan recently traveled to Slovenia.



Morgan Schuchard of Branch 35 Aurora, Minnesota, the recipient of the SUA Collegiate Scholarship.

To All Branches: Let's Advertise Our Heritage

Branches who have a Facebook page, PLEASE share/include your activities with the SUA Facebook editor. Branches, each time you meet, PLEASE send out the minutes to everyone on your membership listing and to the Facebook editor. You are the main advertisers of our heritage. Let the world know who we are: Slovenians who take pride in their heritage. Facebook editor, Mary Glaise (tankandfrog1@yahoo.com) is waiting. What a fantastic advertisement for the SUA!

Branch 1, Sheboygan, Wisconsin

I received a lovely greeting card from Mary Ann Schelling, a greeting card that each person attending the Wisconsin State Convention received for the October event. Mary Ann is a card designer and maker. Such an added touch made for a great event.

Branch 20 Joliet, Illinois

This is being written for the October 10th deadline for the Winter Issue of *Zarja*. So much is going on in Joliet at this time; their 90th anniversary on October 21 is guaranteed to be a memorable occasion! Just today I received two copies of "Gor čez Izaro," the favorite song of Marie Prisland last sung during the 1987 National Convention hosted by Branch 20. You will read all about the celebration in the Spring Issue 2019 of *Zarja*.



SUA Collegiate Scholarship recipient, Morgan Schuchard, in Slovenia.

Branch 23 Ely, Minnesota

I was in Ely, Minnesota for the August 3rd *Taste of Slovenia* event at which 250 people were lined up to the top of the hill. To be there was to realize the monumental planning that took place: baking, cooking, and setting up the hall. Twelve different foods were served; each station attendant was identified by the one-of-a-kind

apron made especially for the occasion. Hats off to the accordionist Bernie Palcher and to Otto and Jan Merhar who danced the most beautiful waltz. Someone needs to record them! Congratulations to Branch 23 for an absolutely splendid event!

Branch 89 Oglesby, Illinois Barbara Bruch Makes Pogača

The pogača recipe on page 89 in *The Slovenian-American Table* has been brought up again. Barbara has perfected the recipe. Please make the following corrections in your book. Increase flour to 4 cups; decrease salt to 1¼ teaspoons. Recipes for larger batches of pogača can be found in *Pots and Pans* (page 63) or *More Pots and Pans* (page 96). Thank you Barbara!

Literary Award of the SUA

The SUA Literary Award is becoming a reality thanks to a phone call to Stephanie Owens of Branch 93. Meet the exuberant committee members: Annette Charron, Branch 3; Joe Valencic, Branch 50; Tanya Vajk, Branch 84; Bernadette Fitzsimmons, Branch 108; Mary Lou Voelk, Branch 23. Also on the committee, and a first, is Barbara Skubic of Slovenia! This Literary Award of the SUA is the first in the nation. The SUA aims to follow in the footsteps of our great Slovenian culture, celebrating our own members on Prešeren Day, the Slovene cultural holiday. In Slovenia it is known as **Prešernov dan, slovenski kulturni praznik.**

Mark your calendar, February 8. Read all about the award in this issue.

Češpljevi cmoki, (Plums Dumplings)

It was late summer and Italian plums were in the supermarket. That always meant (Češpljevi cmoki) plum dumplings in the Deyak house. The



recipe in *More Pots and Pans*, page 114, called for 2 cups of mashed potatoes. I pondered and then did what any Slovenian American would do when feeding two people. I cut the recipe in half AND brought out the box of instant mashed potatoes. IT WORKED! The dough was superb! The bit of remaining dough was filled with sautéed mushrooms left from another meal. A few slices of the famous Alabama Conecuh Sausage gave the meal a kick! Now to be creative and make dumplings all year long! Please note, the misshapen shaped dumplings did not alter the taste! Dober Tek!



Slovenian Literary Award by SUA

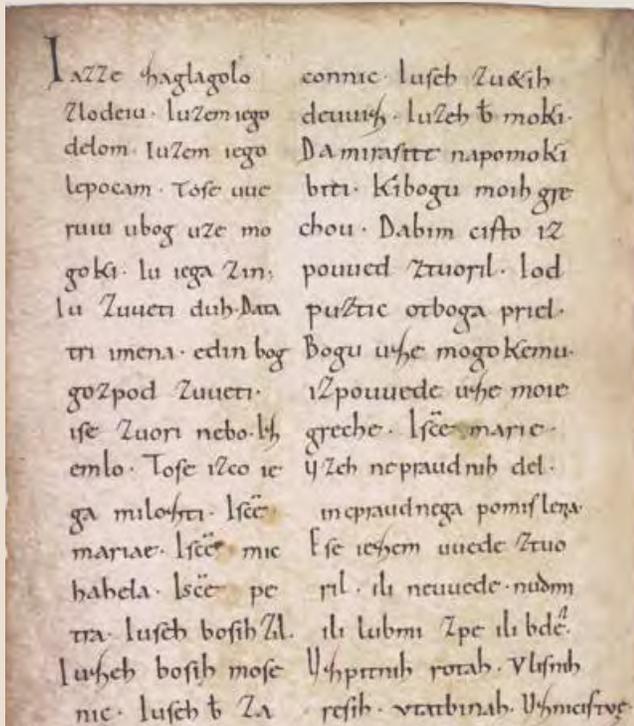
Calling all Writers, Poets and Essayists!

The Slovenian Union of America is proud to announce its Slovenian Literary Award for writers of Slovenian heritage.

Budding and seasoned writers are encouraged to submit an entry!

- Submit complete work online, and complete application at <https://slovenianunion.org/literaryaward>.
- The deadline to submit your work and application is April 1, 2019.
- Submissions of all types of writing accepted, limited to recent non-published, self-published, or published pieces.
- Writings in English or Slovene accepted; no residency requirements.
- Include a narrative biography of between 50-100 words.

For questions, please contact slovenianliteraryaward@gmail.com



The Freising Manuscripts, dating from the 10th century, most probably written in upper Carinthia, are the oldest surviving documents in Slovene.

Donations

Thank you! - Hvala lepa!

\$35 Donation

Brian Benkse, 24, +Josephine Benkse

\$30 Donation

Patricia O'Neill, 42, +Jean & Ben Melko

Matthew O'Neill, 42, +Mary & Lou Fink

Josephine O'Neill, 42, +The Franetic Family

\$25 Donation

Janet Morrissey, 100, +Rose Sleyko McCarthy

Linda Fon Rusie, 5, +Mary Vertacnik Fon

New Members

Welcome - Dobrodošli

20, Hrpcha, Susan

23, Dusich, Jessica

24, Dobosky, Sharon

24, Moskalewicz, Amy

24, Samolinski, Shelly

43, Smith, Susan

43, Tanzer, John F.

47, Starkey, Pauline

93, Luine, Victoria

100, DeCapite, Corrine (Connie)

109, Ozanich, Georgeann

Bring in 3 New Members and Get Yours FREE.

Complete the membership form on our website (slovenianunion.org) and submit with a \$75 check or 3 separate \$25 checks and send to 431 North Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432-1703.

If you already paid 2018 dues, we will defer for free 2019 membership.

The Slovenian DNA Pool: SUA & Slovenian Genealogy Society, Ljubljana

The Fall 2018 issue of *Zarja - The Dawn* introduced the Slovenian DNA Pool, a cooperative initiative between Slovenia's citizens and Slovenian Americans who are searching for their extended family. In turn, the genealogy society will be using the collection of DNA with Slovenian pedigree to put the Slovenian population on a DNA-based global ethnicity map by 2023. By purchasing your DNA kit now you will be able to share your findings at the opening event of the SUA National Convention on Thursday evening, June 13, 2019.

Below are two articles: *Purchasing a DNA Kit* by Mary Lou Deyak Voelk and *About the Slovenian DNA Pool Initiative* by Vlasta Knapic of Slovenia, the Project Administrator and a Slovenian Genealogy Society Board member.

Purchasing a DNA Kit

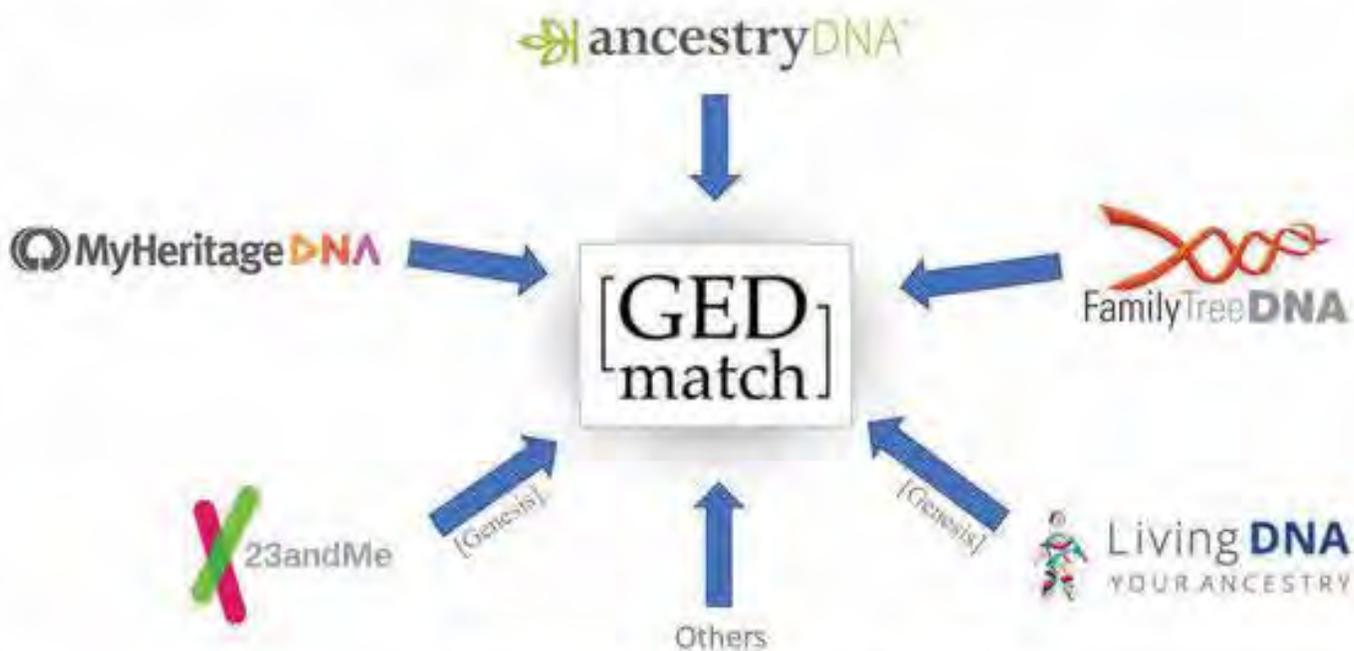
First, here is an explanation of DNA terminology:

The term *autosomal* is a term used in genetic genealogy to describe DNA which is inherited from autosomal chromosomes. Humans have 22 autosomes and one pair of sex chromosomes (the X and the Y chromosomes). An autosomal DNA test is recommended when detecting family ancestry and considered to be the best ancestry DNA test on the market with an accuracy rate of 90-95% for detecting a match with a third cousin.

The Slovenian DNA Pool Project recommends an autosomal DNA test kit to start your genetic search for matches. If you have **NOT** purchased a DNA kit, the Slovenian DNA Pool recommends the **Family Tree Finder DNA** test kit (<https://www.familytreedna.com>) which can be later upgraded by Y-chromosome and mitochondrial DNA tests.

1. Upon receiving your kit, create an online account.
2. Register your activation code number. It identifies you! Record this code number and save.
3. Read through the step by step directions and familiarize yourself with the testing equipment.
4. In taking the test, set aside time when you will not be interrupted.
5. Wash your hands; do not eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum for the allotted time as mentioned in the directions.
6. Follow directions for gathering and mailing in your DNA sample.
7. Once you receive the results, share your results with the Slovenian Gene Pool first by joining the project groups **Hawlina and Slovenia** within FT-DNA portal¹.

DNA Data Transfers to GEDmatch



If you had previously purchased an autosomal DNA kit other than Family Tree Finder DNA, transfer your raw results for unlock to FT-DNA and then join the **Hawlina** and **Slovenian** project groups. You will be able to get permission for access from the group administrators individually. Further guidance will be given by administrators. More advanced users can submit their results also to a general platform for comparison of DNA results at [GEDmatch.com](https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/hawlina) (GED stands for Genealogical Data used when creating a family history).

<https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/hawlina>
<https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/slovenia>

GEDmatch offers:

- DNA matching to relatives who have tested their autosomal DNA at any of the above companies and uploaded it to GEDmatch so that if you have only tested at one company, you may find matches to people who have tested at other companies.
- Tools to compare and analyze DNA shared with others.
- Admixture reports (ethnicity/heritage predictions)
- Extras: Archaic DNA, eye color, parent relatedness.

GEDmatch is extremely popular and highly regarded, providing tools you can't get elsewhere.

Mary Lou Deyak Voelk

About the Slovenian DNA Pool Initiative

The Slovenian Genealogy Society (SGS) has selected the Family Tree DNA as the lead testing and researching provider in genetic genealogy because the company is not only a pioneer in the field (operating since 2008) but also the only provider exclusively dedicated to genetic genealogy with the widest range of tests.

Family Tree DNA has a comprehensive database with nearly 1 million records containing more than a half of a million unique surnames. A lot of surnames originate in Europe, so you have a bigger chance to find a match related to your Slovenian ancestors. In addition to these matches, the Family Finder at DNA provides almost 685,000 Y-DNA and 314,000 mtDNA records in its database, which places personal genetic history into a wider perspective. Last but not least, Family Tree DNA offers free of charge a safe and intuitive environment for users who have provided enough samples to create their own project groups.

Using the GAP 2.0 Home Page, the SGS has recently created a project group within the Family Tree DNA portal with the surname Hawlina (Peter Hawlina is the SGS president and enthusiastic genealogist) to be able to compare results of Slovenian origin. Our country name was taken years' ago by another dual project group, based on geographic origin and surnames run by Slovenian Genealogy Society

Winter 2018

International. Talks to merge both initiatives into one project – the “Slovenian DNA Pool” – are in progress.

If you wish to interact with other Slovenian genetic genealogists and to upgrade your DNA tests in the future (mtDNA, Y-DNA, or dual-based internal project groups), you should either test at Family Tree DNA or transfer your raw data from other providers (like Ancestry, 23andMe, or myHeritage) by downloading and uploading your test results to the Family Tree DNA. Start with creating an account and follow the instructions at <https://www.familytreedna.com/autosomal-transfer>. The transfer is free of charge, but you will not be able to see a complete list of matches unless you “unlock” your results by paying a reasonable fee. It may take some time before the autosomal DNA raw data file is transferred to the Family Tree DNA profile and uploaded to the database so that you can receive a list of autosomal matches.

Once you receive your FTDNA account and enter your profile, you can select from a menu myProjects >Join a Project. Search for surname project Hawlina and join. During this process you will be asked for a consent for matching and a level of access for administrators. Giving the administrators a limited access to your results is sufficient. For the complete trust to the portal and our project initiative, you should realize that Family Tree DNA is a GDPR compliant company, taking into consideration all data privacy protection under EU rules. Moreover, the main administrator of the Slovenian DNA Pool has been recently certified as a GDPR Data Protection Officer. All of your genetic data will be safe and untouched until you download it from the FT-DNA portal by yourself. In any case, the administrators are neither able to directly see your profile nor the data you have stored there. Inside the FT-DNA portal, some summary tables are provided to administrators in which important data are shown (e.g. haplogroups if you tested also mtDNA and Y-chromosome, ancestral surnames, places of origin and ancestral pedigree - similarly, as you could give these in our survey at <https://dna-slovenia.com/slovenian-origin/>). If this data is not provided, further research is not possible. So the main task of administrators is to guide the users regarding how to complete the supporting data on their pedigree.

Hoping to see you soon at FT-DNA Hawlina project group¹ where we can also interact in a closed group activity feed with the other members of the group. Later you will be guided to provide your grandparents' origins and surnames.

Vlasta Knapic, Project Administrator
and SGS Management Board Member
(knapco.domain@gmail.com)

<https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/hawlina/activity-feed>

Let's Sing & Dance!

at the



S.U.A. National Convention Cleveland, Ohio

Thursday, June 13, 2019 - Sunday, June 16, 2019

Marriott Cleveland East, Warrensville Heights, Ohio

We hope that your resolutions for 2019 include attending the **SUA National Convention!** The SUA National Convention will be held from Thursday, June 13 through Sunday, June 16, 2019, at the Marriott Cleveland East in Warrensville Heights, Ohio. The conference planning committee has been working tirelessly to bring you an unforgettable weekend of activities, events, and fellowship, and we are counting down the days until we are all together, singing and dancing in Cleveland, Ohio!

The time has come to register for the convention and to start rolling up your sleeves and practicing your potica baking! Please make sure to review the complete registration form following this article, as well as instructions for participating in the potica competition.

Activities and Events

Thursday, June 13 at 4:00 pm

DNA Presentation and Testing

DNA testing has become all the rage for understanding more about one's heritage and familial patterns. Join us for a presentation by Vlasta Knapic on the use of DNA testing to uncover more about your family tree. *Note: If you are interested in this opportunity, make sure to indicate it on the registration form so that we will have plenty of space for everyone!*

Thursday, June 13 from 7:00-10:00 pm

Welcome Reception

The welcome reception on Thursday evening will kick off the whole weekend of events. Join us for hors d'oeuvres and cash bar as we reunite and reconnect. Attendees will have the chance to win door prizes, shop from an assortment of on-site vendors, and sing and dance along to our strolling musicians, Anthony Culkar and Hank Guzel.

Friday, June 14 from 8:30-11:30 am

Morning Business Session

SUA members are invited to join the member representatives and National Board for the business portion of the day.

Friday, June 14 from 12:00-6:00 pm (\$45.00 additional)

Faith, Song, and Dance Bus Tour

Attendees who elect to include the *Faith, Song, and Dance Bus Tour* will receive a boxed lunch on Friday and will board a chartered coach to travel to the Museum of Divine Statues, where we will get an exclusive arranged tour, and past iconic landmarks in Cleveland before touring the Polka Hall of Fame in Euclid, Ohio.

Friday, June 14 from 7:00-10:00 pm

90th Anniversary Celebration of the Zarja-The Dawn

Fred Ziwich and his International Sound Machine will join us for a night to remember - the celebration of the 90th birthday of *Zarja - The Dawn* hosted by Kollander World Travel, Bonnie Prokup, and Debbie Pohar! Come gather to sing and dance along to the band and enjoy an endless variety of sweets and treats on the dessert bar. Enjoy "Travel Slovenia" presented by Kollander World Travel and show your competitive side in our trivia game.

Saturday, June 15 from 8:30-11:30 am

Morning Business Session

SUA members are invited to join the member representatives and National Board for the business portion of the day.

Saturday, June 15 from 12:30-1:30 pm - Luncheon

Join us at Saturday's delicious luncheon for a family-style meal of Slovenian favorites, including Slovenian sausage from a local butcher shop, sauerkraut, fried potatoes, and oil and vinegar salad. *Dober tek!*

Saturday, June 15 from 1:45-3:45 pm

Educational Sessions

Following our theme of *Let's Sing & Dance!* attendees will have the unique opportunity to learn from two experts on the topic of Slovenian music - Charles "Chuck" Debevec and Joe Valencic.

Saturday, June 15 from 5:00-11:00 pm

SUA National Convention Banquet

Join us for the crowning event of the weekend – the SUA National Convention Banquet. We'll gather before dinner for cocktails at the cash bar, and then Master of Ceremonies Joe Valencic will guide us through an evening of awards, acknowledgements, dinner, and dancing to Cleveland-style polka and other party hits from the Frank Moravcik Band. Save your appetite for the bountiful buffet that will include different meat selections, a baked potato bar, and salad.

Saturday's banquet will be your chance to sample the entries from the potica contest as well as meet your new National Board!

Sunday, June 16 from 8:00-10:00am - Brunch Buffet

We can't send you home or off to church with an empty stomach! The brunch buffet will include fruit juices, seasonal fruit and berries, fruit yogurts, cereal with milk, scrambled eggs, French toast, bacon and link sausage, breakfast potatoes, and pastries.

Sunday, June 16 at 10:30 am

Slovenian Mass at St. Vitus Church

Join us for a Slovenian Mass at St. Vitus Church (*optional; on your own*), an integral part of the Slovenian community in Cleveland since it was founded in 1893 by the first documented Slovenian immigrants to the city. Following the Mass, we will be provided with a short guided tour of the church as well as a visit to Joseph House, a partnership between four Catholic churches in the Diocese of Cleveland that provides affordable housing, a clothing bank, and other support to refugees resettling in Cleveland.

Entertainers

The convention planning committee continues to work hard to bring you the very best event possible. Due to unforeseen changes, we have made some adjustments to our entertainment schedule and are proud to present to you the following lineup, including some new additions!

At the welcome reception on Thursday evening, we are pleased to welcome strolling accordions Anthony Culkar and Hank Guzel! Anthony Culkar has been playing the accordion all his life. Brought up in the Slovenian culture, picking up the accordion at an early age was natural. He has mastered all of the styles of polka music as well as other styles of



music in general. Anthony plays at Hofbräuhaus Cleveland as a soloist or in a duo, as well as filling in with some of the bands in the lineup.

Hank Guzel's father was among Cleveland's most popular accordion virtuosos when Hank was grow-

ing up, and at 13, Hank's parents purchased his first instrument for him, a piano accordion. By 25, however, Hank had decided to pursue playing the electric bass, which ultimately created the opportunities for him to achieve his lifelong dream to play music professionally. Soon, Hank was playing bass with a small button accordion band, eventually leading to performances with some of the most notable musicians including Joey Miskulin, Walter Ostanek, and America's Polka King, the late Frankie Yankovic. Hank joined JTO in 1998.

At Friday evening's celebration of Zarja's 90th birthday, we are thrilled to announce that we'll be entertained by Frank Ziwich and his International Sound Machine! Fred Ziwich and His International Sound Machine have been entertaining music lovers and dancers of all ages and nationalities for more than 40 years. In fact, the recording they released early in 2017 commemorating the band's 40th anniversary was selected as the Recording of the Year by the members of the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame. And that recording was also selected as the Recording of the Year by the members of the International Polka Association which is based in Chicago. Another big honor was in 2007, when they were a finalist for the Grammy Award in the



Polka Category. Though their recordings are well known to Polka Radio and Internet shows throughout the country, when seeing the "I.S.M." live, you will hear a big variety of music from different styles and eras. Because of their long experience and the wide variety of venues at which they have performed, they are well known for carefully picking their selections for each audience.

Fred has been elected into two different Polka Hall of Fames. Most recently, in September 2017, he was placed into the International Polka Association Hall of Fame. Drummer Mark Habat, who has played drums on more polka recordings than any other living person, is a Lifetime Achiever for the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame Sideman Christopher Byndas was the Polka Hall of Fame Sideman of the Year in 2007, and brother Gary Byndas won that award in 2010.

Saturday evening we'll welcome another legendary Cleveland band, the Frank Moravcik Band! Frank Moravcik has headed up his Cleveland, Ohio based band since 1995. The band is best known for Cleveland Style polka music; however, the group has the ability to perform a wide variety

of different styles of polka music including Czech, Polish, and German polka and waltz music in addition to popular dance and party songs. Frank's inspiration to play accordion



comes from his family of numerous accordion players including his mother who played in a polka band. He has been playing accordion and keyboard since age 16, and in his earlier career had a wedding band. The band has received honors from various organizations including awards from the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame for Best New Band when they were first formed, and individually, Frank received the Musician of the Year award. Throughout the years, they have also been recognized by numerous Hall of Fame nominations in the categories of Band of the Year and Album of the Year. Frank is also a recipient of the Musician of the Year designation by the Collinwood Slovenian Home in Cleveland, Ohio. The band currently consists of Frank on midi accordion, electronic bass and vocals, and Linda Hochevar on the button accordion, accompanied by drums, guitar and banjo. They generally keep a very busy performance schedule at local venues, private parties, and taking their music on the road.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! Please see the following SUA National Convention Registration form. You may complete the form and register by mail, paying by check, or you may register online by going to www.slovenianunion.org and using your credit card.

Please make your plans NOW to join us for the 2019 SUA National Convention! Convention attendees are currently able to book deluxe standard rooms at the discounted convention rate of \$129.00 + taxes. This is a great rate available to conference attendees only! To make your reservation, call (216) 378-9191 and mention that you are with the "SUA Group." Alternately, book through this link: <https://goo.gl/tLdnr2>. Please make your plans early to ensure that you can take advantage of the convention rate! Also, please note that dates extended beyond the duration of the convention may not be eligible for the convention rate.

If you have any questions or concerns about the 2019 SUA National Convention, please contact Kathy Ferrante, 2019 National Convention Chair
Call or text to: 330.730.8951
E-mail to: kjerrante@gmail.com

2019 NATIONAL CONVENTION POTICA CONTEST

Enter your home-baked potica for a chance to win a fabulous prize and the honor of holding the title of *Best Potica of SUA 2019!*



Rules and Instructions:

The prize for the Best Potica of SUA will be given on the basis of taste, texture, form, and presentation.

Entries will be evaluated by a panel of judges from outside of SUA.

The winner will be featured in *Zarja - The Dawn* along with the recipe.

In-person entries will be accepted Thursday afternoon, June 13 through Friday, June 14, 2019 at the Marriott Cleveland East Hotel in the Hospitality Room. A registration receipt will be given for each potica by the Potica Contest Committee. Member representatives may bring potica entries on behalf of another member. For delivery in person, present potica, fully baked, unsliced with complete recipe, entry number, and name of baker attached.

Entries will also be accepted via mail. Please make sure to follow the instructions carefully: Ship potica, fully baked, unsliced, with complete recipe, entry number, and name of baker attached. Potica should be well wrapped to preserve moisture, shape, and texture. Shipped potica must be received no later than Wednesday, June 12, 2019. Entries should be shipped to Cathy Maxin 37524 Ocean Reef Willoughby, Ohio 44094.

If you plan on entering, you need to notify Cathy Maxin by e-mail (cookie.maxin@gmail.com) or by phone (440.488.6314) no later than May 10, 2019. She will provide you with an entry number to be secured to your potica when submitted.

Winners will be announced at the banquet on Saturday June 15, 2019.

Attention! We need your assistance!

We are asking members and branches to donate an item for the Slovenian Raffle at the National Convention or a monetary donation. If you are able to donate an item, please let Lynn McKittrick (information below) know what item you will be bringing and the approximate value. *You can then simply bring the item to the convention.* If you or your branch are able to make a monetary donation, please make the check out to SUA and send to Lynn McKittrick. We greatly appreciate your participation in making the 2019 SUA National Convention an event to remember.

Lynn McKittrick 5521 Carol Jean Blvd, Garfield Hts OH 44125
Phone number: 216.663.0305 Email: lmckitt@sbcglobal.net

No contribution is too small!

Congratulations & Thank You For Your Support!

SUA's 2018 fund-raiser April's Showers of Dollars was a huge success.

Your entries were very much appreciated!

Our profit will enhance all aspects of the activities planned for Member Representatives and all attendees at SUA's 28th National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, June 13-16, 2019. We hope to see you there!

Top Seller Winner's List:

1st Place (31 Sold) Lori Bond, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL	\$150
2nd Place (21 Sold) Rose Ann Chinn, Branch 35 - Aurora, MN	\$100
3rd Place (20 Sold) Germaine Amato, Branch 50 - Euclid, OH	\$50

Daily Entry Winners:

<u>Entrant</u>	<u>Amount Won/Seller/Branch</u>
Apr. 1 James Carpenter, Merrillville, IN	\$200 Carolyn Zuzich, Branch 16 - So. Chicago, IL
Apr. 2 Christine Charron, Fairbanks, AK	\$65 Annette Charron, Branch 3 - Pueblo, CO
Apr. 3 Joe Kravcar, Michiana Shores, IN	\$65 Mike Kravcar, Branch 100 - So. California
Apr. 4 Tiffany Leff, St. Paul, MN	\$65 Rose Ann Chinn, Branch 35 - Aurora, MN
Apr. 5 Elizabeth Stratton, Annapolis, MD	\$65 Anne Stratton, Branch 108 - Olney, MD
Apr. 6 Courtney Ebner, Mendota, IL	\$65 Michael Ebner, Branch 89 - Oglesby, IL
Apr. 7 Millie Kaczmaryn, Waukegan, IL	\$65 Loretta Urh, Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI
Apr. 8 Germaine Amato, Healdsburg, CA	\$65 Same - Branch 50 - Euclid, OH
Apr. 9 Jennifer Otis, Minooka, IL	\$65 Same - Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 10 Richard Pryately, Ashville, NC	\$65 Margaret Pryately, Branch 109 - Twin Cities, MN
Apr. 11 Marla Lustik, Joliet, IL	\$65 Same - Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 12 Lori Bond, Joliet, IL	\$65 Same - Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 13 Erin Dzwinel, Grafton, WI	\$65 Dorothy Regis, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 14 Diane Sweigert, Oaklawn, IL	\$65 Same - Branch 99 - Lemont, IL
Apr. 15 Mildred Bulaga, Homer Glen, IL	\$200 Same - Branch 99 - Lemont, IL
Apr. 16 Joshua Biros, La Grange, IL	\$65 Dorothy Kabara, Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 17 MaryAnn Setnicker, Mahtomedi, MN	\$65 Norm Setnicker, Branch 109 - Twin Cities, MN
Apr. 18 Sara Cline, Brownsburg, IN	\$65 Same - Branch 5 - Indianapolis, IN
Apr. 19 Ivan Chinn, Iron Mountain, MN	\$65 Rose Ann Chinn, Branch 35 - Aurora, MN
Apr. 20 Diane Data, Peru, IL	\$65 Same - Branch 24 - LaSalle, IL
Apr. 21 Dottie Susdorf, Hoffman Estates, IL	\$65 Kathy Cufar, Branch 99 - Lemont, IL
Apr. 22 Mary Fran Smaron, Joliet, IL	\$65 Same - Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 23 Douglas Henkel, Peru, IL	\$65 Nancy Henkel - Branch 89 - Oglesby, IL
Apr. 24 Emily Collins, Manassas, VA	\$65 Same - Branch 24 - LaSalle, IL
Apr. 25 Margaret Bokar, Plainwell, MI	\$65 Same - Branch 50 - Euclid, OH
Apr. 26 Judith Grozdanik, Cleveland, OH	\$65 Same - Branch 50 - Euclid, OH
Apr. 27 Marianne Wolf-Astrauskas, Orland Park, IL	\$65 Same - Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 28 Linda Abstetar, Milwaukee, WI	\$65 Same - Branch 43 - Milwaukee, WI
Apr. 29 Dorothy Mahan, Cresthill, IL	\$65 Same - Branch 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr. 30 Germaine Tesovnik, Sheboygan, WI	\$200 Same - Branch 1 - Sheboygan, WI

Branch Support

202 Entries: Branch 20, Joliet, IL
 44 Entries: Branch 50, Euclid, OH
 43 Entries: Branch 43, Milwaukee, WI
 42 Entries: Branch 2, Chicago, IL
 36 Entries: Branch 109, Twin Cities, MN

35 Entries: Branch 1, Sheboygan, WI
 34 Entries: Branch 89, Oglesby, IL
 32 Entries: Branch 35, Aurora, MN
 32 Entries: Branch 99, Lemont, IL
 28 Entries: Branch 24, LaSalle, IL
 24 Entries: Branch 3, Pueblo, CO

A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER SLOVENIA 2017

by Mary Risner Glaize, SUA Facebook Editor

OUR SLOVENIAN COUSINS INVITED US TO SLOVENIA. SO MY U.S. COUSIN, EVELYN, AND I JOINED THEM FOR THE WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS IN SLOVENIA.

We arrived on a beautiful day in Škofja Loka. The weather was sunny and a warm 1C (34F). To be fashionable in winter, girls and women wore black coats, hats with sparkles, matching scarves, and high, tied boots. Many of the houses had candles in the windows - Luč miru iz Betlehema - peace light from Bethlehem. Families - parents and children's family - live in the same house with separate living areas. At the entry of each household, there are many pairs of slippers to change into.



The next few days were easy. We had coffee and some snacks in the morning. The weather was brisk, sunny, and dry - good days for walks in the Skofja Loka area. We also did some shopping in the local supermarket - wines, snacks, and what we might have forgotten.

Part of the Christmas season is the presentation of the ballet *The Nutcracker - A Christmas Carol* at the Slovenian National Opera and Ballet Theatre of Ljubljana (SNG Opera in Balet Ljubljana). It was a wonderful performance to a full house and an attentive audience. This ballet had a different twist. Scrooge falls asleep and has many dreams of *The Nutcracker* traditional characters, including the Sugar Plum Fairy, Clara, the Nutcracker Prince, the Spanish danc-

ers, the Arabian dancers, the Chinese dancers, the Russian dancers, the Flowers, and the Sugar Plum Fairy's Cavalier. The streets were lively, and after the performance it was very interesting walking the city streets and seeing all the lights in town center of Ljubljana where we saw lots of people and many, many outdoor stands with large pots of hot wine - both red and white. After sampling a few, the hot wines (Kuhano vino) were all very good.

During the day were several visits. In the morning, I visited with my cousin Sašo, his wife Katja, and their two daughters, Brina and Dora. The girls are learning English, and



with their parents speaking with them at home, they spoke English very well. They gave me a Slovenian spelling test! The word was “Tovornjak” meaning “truck.” I passed! In the afternoon, I met and had lunch with Uciteljica (teacher) Anja, my Slovenian summer school teacher for the course in Slovenian language that I took two years ago. The day was topped off with a concert by Sašo Avsenik Anseml with the renowned Slovenian Octet in Škofja Loka at the Športna Dvorana Trata. The *Zimska pravljica* (*Winter Fairy Tale*) was an amazing two-hour concert. The auditorium for the thrilling event was full, with many standing, well



before the performance which started exactly at 8:00 pm. We arrived early and were lucky to have seats. The performance included both Slovenian songs and English holiday songs. The Anseml with the octet performed one of my favorites “Zvezde na nebu žare” (“Stars Glow in the Sky”). Listening to this song on YouTube gives me the chills. Performers received a standing ovation. Frost was falling as we left the concert. It was a very good day.

The next day was Christmas Eve, a special and significant day in Slovenia. As a tradition on Christmas Eve morning, branches and twigs are gathered from the local woods to complete the nativity scene. The evening meal was carefully prepared. Our local cousin Andreja, an architect, greeted us at her home with wines, various appetizers, dinner, dessert, and a beautifully set table. Her apartment home is on Mestni Trg in Skofja Loka and is in a 17th



century building with the castle visible from her balcony. Apartments in these old building are gutted and redone to what the owner wants.

After Christmas Eve dinner, we went to Midnight Mass at St. George - Sv Jurij in Stara Loka. The choir started at 11:00 p.m. They sang many Slovenian Christmas hymns that I remembered when growing up and singing as a choir member at St. Joseph’s Church in Forest City, Pennsylvania. The nativity was set up at a side altar of the church. It included the manger with sheep and cattle grazing, a fisherman at a pond, activities that would be happening at the time. You must dress warmly since the church is minimally or not heated.



On a beautiful Christmas morning, with Triglav in view, we went to Mass at Brežje. The nativity scene was in the front of the church. The nativity was very elaborate, and



the setting would change from day to night and even to a thunderstorm. There is a Nativity Museum at Brežje, ten rooms with over 400 nativity scenes from all over the world, organized thematically and geographically. We visited the museum on Christmas morning after Mass and walked through these rooms. Here we learned about the history of nativity making and admired the numerous nativity crafting techniques and materials. Some were very old and of various styles from simple to very elaborate.



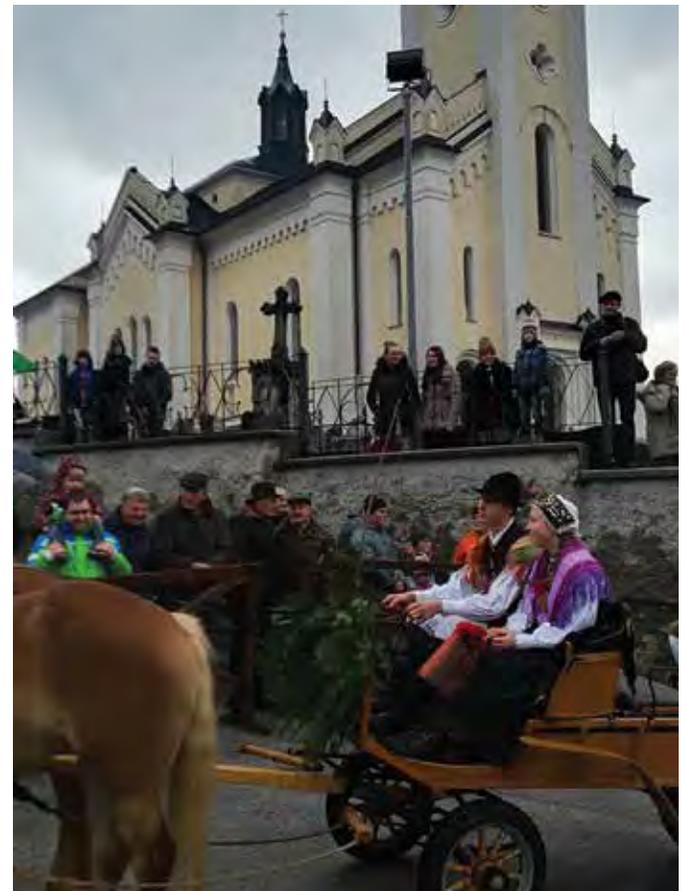
The Slovenian word for a nativity scene is “jaslica.” (Note: Church jaslicas have entire scenes showing the stable and ordinary life going on around the blessed event.) Of course, there was a stop at both the gift shop and the café for hot chocolate or coffee. The hot chocolate is very thick, almost like warm chocolate pudding. When we got back to Stara Loka (Škofja Loka), our local Iztok, a trained chef, had dinner ready - traditional beef soup with farina dumplings, salad, osso bucco with potato struklje, and a torte for dessert. Dinner was excellent!



On Christmas evening, the Škofja Loka orchestra traditionally has a concert - very nice and many people. Orchestra members, both young and old, all dressed in their grey suits. It was fun to watch how attentive the young members were. At intermission time, the auditorium dividers opened and various drinks were served - water, juices, and red and white wines. The break gave the orchestra members time to visit with the audience. I was amazed at the extensive grasp of the English language that the younger people had.



December 26 is St Stephen’s Day and also a national holiday. It’s the day for the blessing of the horses at the Sv. Jurij church in Stara Loka. The locals, some dressed in traditional folk costumes, rode their horses, drove in carriages, or led their donkeys to the church area. The priest blessed the animals. Each animal was given a piece of dried bread and salt. Parish ladies served hot wine, various drinks, and



desserts, including cakes, cookies, and poticas. This is the first time I had *ocverkova potica* - served warm, right out of the oven, and very good! It was a quieter day, and there was a light drizzle. During Christmas week, families and friends visit. The local parish priests stop and bless each house. The priest marks a date indicator above the front door of the blessed house. At Turizem Loka, the sons of the owners had a Three Kings party.



Also during Christmas week, Sašo, his mother Slavka, and I went to visit Alojz's family in Preska pri Dobrničju. Slavka and her brother Alojz are my father's first cousins. Alojz's family lives in her family home. We all had a delicious "traditional Sunday" dinner with *goveja juha*, fried chicken, beef soup meat, potatoes, and salad. *Potica* and bread were baked that morning, and they were really good. We visited families there and were given cookies, *potica*, freshly baked bread, chicken, and homemade wine to take home.

During Christmas week, we took a trip to Postojnska jama, in the Karst area. We visited the caves and saw the living nativity. This is presented every Christmas season. A small train takes visitors into the cave. The rest is walking up and down and over various bridges within the cave. Sixteen live biblical scenes of the Christmas story, staged along the five kilometers in the underground world of the massive



Winter 2018

cave, are created by 150 performers. The biblical scenes combined with the musical performances by Oto Pestner, Irene Yebuah Tiran, and Teja Saksida with the cave's backdrop make a unique experience for visitors.



As a side visit, we went to nearby Unec/ Slivice area. This was the home of my grandmother's family, named Puntar. Walking through the cemetery in Unec, we found many with the same name. Were these relatives? Maybe, maybe not. The only snow during the entire stay was in the Postojna area on the return trip. Local cousin Andreja is an excellent driver. Temperatures hovered at freezing. I had been wearing boots for warmth, but that day, with the wet snow, my boots actually leaked so much that I could wring water out of my socks. I left my boots with the proprietor at our inn in Stara Loka in a warm drying area. It was a nice day, a good lunch, and ending with an evening snack and wine.

Neighborhoods in the Škofja Loka had many Christmas week activities for young and old at Mestni Trg (City Square). During the day, children enjoyed sleigh riding on a snowy hill. During the evening, there was music (including a Beatles band) and hot wines, hot fruit teas, and other liqueurs that warm. All activities had the castle (Škofja Loka Grad) as the backdrop. The Stara Loka neighbor-

hood had an evening gathering in the village square. The neighborhood square has a chapel, and during Christmas season, a nativity is set up. Bonfires in the square, a harpist, and again hot wines and hot teas and some liqueurs kept us warm, and there were also snacks. This neighborhood event was sponsored by the president of cultural history, and it was by invitation. The weather was nice and clear, but it was cold in running shoes.



Later in the week, we were invited to spend a day with our Grosuplje cousins. We drove to Sevnica through the Savinja region along the Sava River. The geography in this

area was different from other areas of Slovenia that I'd visited. The drive was through a narrow valley beside the river in a coal mining region. When we got to Sevnica, we



took the short walk uphill to the castle, visited the courtyard areas, stopping for photo opportunities of the picturesque town below, and enjoyed a slice of both Melanija cake and Melanija pie. Both were very good. When we arrived at Grosuplje, we had a traditional dinner of fresh and smoked klobase, rice sausage with and without blood, kislo zelje, and žgance. Our local cousin, Tone, is a beekeeper, and we were given honey to take home.



The New Year's Eve Mass was celebrated at the Church of the Annunciation in Črngrob. Mass is celebrated there only on religious holidays. Some parishioners come by car but many walk with torches. When there is snow, it is a beautiful sight. We left our car at the base of the church hill and walked a few minutes along the asphalt and gravel road. Črngrob, a very old pilgrimage church, is a subsidiary church of Sv. Jurij in Stara Loka. There is no heat. Many people from all over Škofja Loka attend New Year's Eve Midnight Mass. Three priests celebrated the beautiful Mass. The singing is always beautiful. After Mass, people gathered in front of church and celebrated the New Year together with some food and drinks brought by the parishioners. Since the church is on a small hill and

the weather was clear, we could see far in the distance and were lucky enough to view many fireworks displays, even as far as Ljubljana.



You could also read my blog ADELE IN ŠKOFJA LOKA AREA /The Path to Crngrob and the Pri Marku Tourist Farm <https://adeleinslovenia.com/tag/path-to-crngrob/>

New Year 's Day dinner was a family event. We went to a local restaurant, Gostilna pri Bostjan. The special meal for the day was delicious, oven-roasted veal.

Our last night in Slovenia! Memories! Lots of good food, really good food. I never tasted so many different poticas. We visited many places and family. We met new friends. All were so gracious and welcoming. Being with relatives, I got to participate in local activities: concerts, neighborhood events, eating foods that my mother made. My language skills need a lot of help. Slovenians speak too fast for me - prehitro. I tried and I can pick up words, but it was not possible to follow conversations. Many thanks to my family who helped.

I expected cold weather and was prepared for it, but it was not nearly as cold as I thought it would be. It could be very cold at this time of year, so be prepared if you go. Churches, though, are unheated, so dress warmly if you go. Homes were very warm. That was surprising.

As this trip neared its conclusion, I watched the USA east coast weather. Winter storm warnings! I hoped to make it home and kept my fingers crossed for an uneventful flight home. Due to the snowstorm, our flight was diverted from Newark to Chicago, and we spent the night there. It was very, very cold and windy in Chicago. Luckily, I made it home the next day. Great trip! Great experience! Many good memories!





FAMILY DNA

Predicted Relationship: 2nd Cousin Confidence Very High

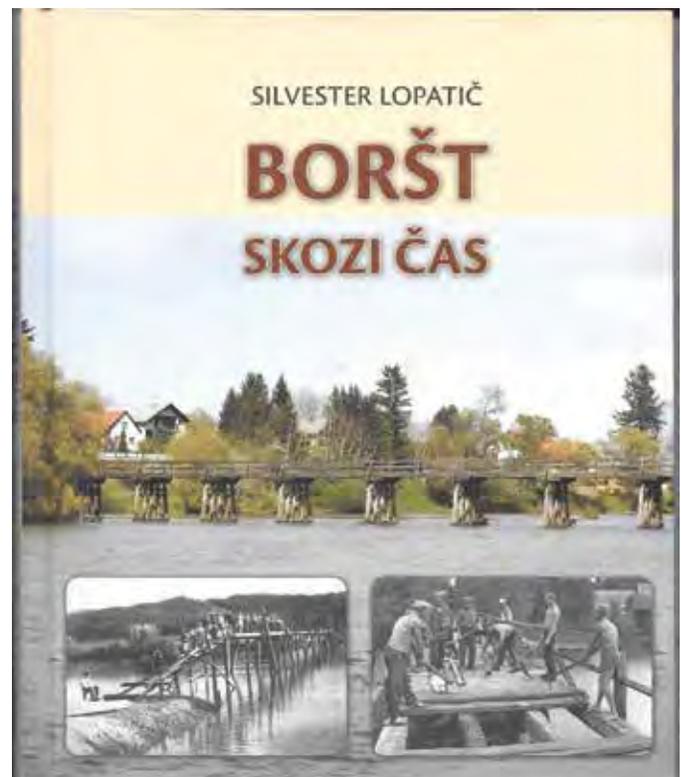
DNA Match Becomes a Story to Tell

By Staff Writer David Sodac, Branch 89 Oglesby, Illinois bdsodac@gmail.com

Up until just two months ago, I had been disappointed that my tube of saliva, carefully sealed in a foil packet and mailed to AncestryDNA, hadn't resulted in any DNA matches with the paternal Sodac side of my family. Finally, a couple of years later, an e-mail arrived from ancestrydna.com notifying me of a predictable relationship with a Paulette Pangrcic. Thrilled, we communicated through the program's online message center. Paulette had assured me that we most definitely were related. We explored each other's family knowledge and history, searching for the connecting link between our two families. Her father was Rudolph John Pangrcic. At the end of WWII, her father and two of his brothers, Frank and Joe, were seeking to return to the United States. All three brothers came back to LaSalle, Illinois under the sponsorship of their Uncle Matt Sodac (original Slovene spelling is Sodec). Matt Sodac just happened to be my grandfather! The three brothers and their two sisters, Mary and Theresa, were American citizens by birth. They had left Illinois with their parents during the Great Depression to take care of their aging grandparents living in Boršt, Slovenia. They were all living in Slovenia when the Nazis forcibly displaced the family into the German Reich as slave laborers. Since that initial contact with Paulette, I've communicated and heard stories that shaped this article from Joe's daughter Elaine, Frank's son Dan, Dan's son Matt, and their Aunt Mary Pangrcic Kosir and her two daughters, Bernadette and Mary Ann. No doubt there's a story to tell here!

Janez Pangeršič (the original Slovenian spelling) became known in America as John Pangrcic and was Paulette's paternal grandfather. She shared that he was from a small village near Brežice, called Boršt.

She attached some old family photos in an e-mail; a couple of the photos looked vaguely familiar. On a visit to Slovenia, Fr. Janez Žakelj of St. Mark's Catholic Church in Cerklj ob Krki had given me a book entitled *Boršt Skozi Čas*. The book told the history of the village of Boršt and included a listing of its residents and their homes. Thumbing through the pages, I saw the same photos that Paulette had attached with her e-mails! Using Google Translate, the narratives under the photos and of the section listing the Pangrcic household were translated into English. Paulette verified the names and dates with her Aunt Mary who resides in Michigan. Comparing my collection of Sodec family church records from



the parish church in Slovenia with the names in the book on Boršt, I discovered that my grandfather's oldest sister, Neža Sodec of the village Sobenja vas, had married the newly widowed Andrej Pangrcic of the neighboring village of Boršt in 1888. When they married, she moved into the Pangrcic house n. 24 in Boršt. There, in black and white, was the blood connection verified! My grandfather was indeed the "Uncle Matt" as the American Pangrcic family had referred to him. Neža Sodec and Andrej Pangrcic had given birth to Paulette's grandfather in April of 1889. Our common relative would then be our Great Grandfather Mihael Sodec (b.1840).

The journey of the Pangrcic family in America took some interesting turns. Paulette shared what facts as she had always heard from her



Pangrcic Family at home in Boršt about 1940.

Back Row: L-R Rudy, Frank, and Joe. Middle Row: L-R, Father John, Ana, Mary, and Teresa. Front Row: L-R Mother Mary, Rosie, Stanley, and Martin.

father, Rudolph John, the first born son of Janez Pangrcic. Janez and a buddy from Boršt had decided to come to America searching for work in March of 1914. They booked passage on the infamous RMS *Titanic*, but fortunately for the young men, they had late connections and missed the boarding. They eventually were rebooked and boarded a different ship. They later heard of the tragic news of the sinking of the *Titanic* with obvious great relief! The two young men arrived in Pennsylvania and worked the forested land in a remote area of the state. The working conditions were deplorable, and they earned substandard wages, so they left. Janez chose to find employment in Illinois working in a Zinc Processing Factory. Janez met Marija Žonta, who was living with relatives in LaSalle, Illinois. She had immigrated to America in 1917 at the age of seventeen. Marija was from the neighboring village of Dolenje Skopice. Janez and Marija wed in 1918 at St. Roch's Slovenian Catholic Church in LaSalle. My grandfather had been the witness to their marriage. My grandparents hosted the small wedding reception for their nephew and his bride at their home in LaSalle.

Janez (John) and Marija (Mary) settled into the outlying rural town of DePue in Bureau County, Illinois. Over the next ten years, they gave birth to Rudolph John, Joseph, Theresa, Frank, and Mary. Two other children had died in childbirth. John worked various steel manufacturing jobs in the area to provide for his growing family; however, life changed drastically for all Americans when the Wall Street Market crashed on October 24, 1929. The economic downturn ushered in The Great Depression and caused wide-

spread unemployment and steep declines in industrial output. The young Pangrcic family made the difficult decision to pack up and return to Boršt to run the family farm and support John's aging parents. Life wasn't easy upon their return to Slovenia; they faced many economic challenges as most of the world was experiencing the aftereffects of the Great Depression. Mary gave birth to four additional children: Frances Ann, Martin, Stanley, and Rosie while living in Boršt. Just as the global economy was improving, World War II would strike the Federation of Yugoslavian States, of which Slovenia was a member.

The "American" Pangrcic family of eleven was a part of the forced removal of the village members in the fall of 1941. In a phone interview with Mary Pangrcic Kosir, one of only two siblings now left of the nine children born to John and Mary, she related her vivid memories of those frightening years. On November 7, 1941, when Mary was 13 years old, the Nazis arrived to their village home in Boršt and forcibly removed them. Her older brother, Frank, attempted to escape during their eviction but was caught and returned to the group by gunpoint. The soldiers hung numbered cards around their necks and herded them away like cattle. Two days later, they were loaded into train livestock cars and taken into Germany. They travelled all the way north near the French and German border to a hotel named *Schöne Aussicht*, overlooking Frankfurt, Germany.

Schöne Aussicht: At one time, this was a fancy resort with rooms and a restaurant, high on a hill overlooking Frankfurt, but now the hotel was damaged by the war. Frankfurt had developed into a significant industrial city, and became a prime target for Allied bombing during the war. The city suffered extraordinary damage during a raid that saw 27,000 tons of bombs dropped on Germany in a single month.

Forty-nine other Boršt residents slept together under the same roof in crowded conditions. At times, they slept on bunk beds in large areas that her mother had draped with blankets hanging from the top bunks to give them some privacy. Her father and two oldest brothers would take the train with the other men into the woods where they were forced to work in a building that produced bombs and that also housed Serbian and Albanian prisoners-of-war.

After two months, they were transported north of Frankfurt to Fauerbach village. A farmer from Friedberg gave them a small house in which to live while they worked his farm, essentially as slaves. The family remained there for two years. Mary's brothers worked up in the fields, her father took care of fourteen milking cows, and her mother helped him with the daily milking. They were given two liters of milk a day, some rye flour to make bread, along with a few potatoes and coal to cook with. They used a German ration book and would walk to a corner store and purchase 1 pound of butter, 1 pound of sugar, and beet jelly. That's all they usually had to eat. Two days a week, Mary walked to a cooking school to learn how to take care of a household with some other girls. Then, every evening, they would carry buckets up to a large hillside where a cave was being dug into the side of the hill. They would carry out the dirt in buckets. Mary recalled that you could hardly sleep there as you would hear sirens going off almost every hour. There were many bombings over Friedberg in the two years that they lived there.

Mary also remembered a time her mother attempted to seek shelter with the younger children when the warning sirens went off, but there was no room for them all, so she hurriedly sought a different bunker. Tragically, the original bunker was bombed and all those huddled inside were killed. Their family was



safe from harm. Then there was the day the siren was going off. Mary and a German friend ran from their farm home to seek shelter but repeatedly kept racing back into the kitchen in an attempt to retrieve the potatoes cooking on the stove. But each time they tried, the warning sirens would go off again, and they would race back for shelter with the bullets flying over their heads! The Germans were not surrendering and

continued to be under attack. One day when the Allied Forces were bombing, the family watched American soldiers and military tanks moving past them. Mary's father went to talk to them as he spoke English. The soldiers told him to keep everybody hidden so they wouldn't get killed. Finally, calm came over the land. It was quiet and peaceful.

The family walked back to where they were living on the farm and saw that the house was still standing, but there was no electricity. Bombs had landed near the house, but it still stood. Mary said it was like a miracle. The farmer's house, barn, and out-buildings were all destroyed. They were able to stay there for another two to three months until the Americans came and finally transported them to a camp area with barracks near Giessen. They were in the Giessen camp for another three months. She remembered that there were other nationalities also living there, all waiting to be transported back to their home countries. The American soldiers were very nice to the children. They gave

them candy bars, and sometimes the soldiers shared their rations, like stew in a can, which their mother extended with potatoes and a few other vegetables, greatly improving the taste of the stew. The soldiers played games with the children and taught them American songs, like "Old MacDonald." While in the camp, her brothers Rudy, Frank, and Joe hung around with the soldiers and asked for jobs. They were given American military uniforms to wear. Rudy and Joe both worked as translators since they already knew German, English, and Slovene. Frank had picked up training as a shoemaker and worked on making boots while in camp. When the time came for the family to begin their long journey home, the three older brothers chose to stay behind and continued to help the American forces.

In August 1945, Mary, Anna, Martin, Stanley, and Rosie and their parents began their return home. It took a long time to get anywhere as most of the roads and train tracks were destroyed by the years'

Pangrcic Family leaving Germany in 1945. Back Row L-R: Mary, Frank, Father John, Joe, Mother Mary, Teresa, Ana, and Rudy. Front Row L-R: Martin, Rosie, and Stanley.



of bombings. They would often have to wait until they were repaired. Mary remembers one time when they had to get off the train and wait for the tracks to be repaired, and Russian soldiers were making a big kettle of barley soup with scraps of fat in it. They were all invited to help themselves to all they could eat. She shared that the soup was so wonderful and tasty that she'll never forget it. When they reached the border between Austria and Slovenia, they had to be examined for any sickness or disease before entering into their country.

Finally, they reached their home village of Boršt. The house was still there and abandoned, except for pigs that were living in the emptied rooms. There were piles of straw strewn everywhere inside the house, and wheat was growing around the outside. All the furniture and belongings were gone. They had to start their lives all over again from scratch. Mary permanently returned to America and joined her brothers in 1952. Anna, Martin, Stanley, Rosie, and their parents remained in Slovenia where they were born.



*“Uncle Matt” Sodac,
my grandfather.*

WWII ended when Japan surrendered on August 14, 1945. Rudy, Joe, and Frank were no longer needed. Joe and Frank returned to LaSalle, Illinois on February 11, 1947 under the sponsorship of their Uncle Matt Sodac and the three boys' godmother, Jenny Herokovic, also of LaSalle. Rudy had

to remain until his U.S. birth certificate was located by his brothers and sent to the American Embassy. He resisted pressure from his parents and the tradition of the oldest son to stay and take over the family farm. He would finally arrive on American soil September 21, 1947. Joe had married, but his wife, Anda Konters, remained behind to give birth to their son, George, who was born in Germany in July 1946. His wife and son weren't able to leave for America until February 1948. Rose would eventually take over the family home in Boršt, marry, and raise her own family.

If there were any reservations of a family blood connection between the Sodacs and the Pangrcics, they all ended following my introduction to Mary Pangrcic Kosir of Michigan. We warmly and excitedly conversed over the phone for over 90 minutes as I listened to stories of her evacuation from Boršt, the family's harrowing experiences following their expulsion from Slovenia, and her decision to return to America. We laughed at her delightful tales of meeting a total stranger in Lemont, Illinois who insisted that he would marry her, which he didn't. Instead, later Mary would meet her future husband, Mike, through a twist of fate and had a marriage that lasted fifty-two years. She recalled visiting my grandparents while they sat on their front porch of their white, wood-framed home and inviting them to come and be a part of her wedding, just as they had done in the same church with her parents so many years before.

Yes, members of the Sodac and Pangrcic families are indeed related by blood. Their experiences offer a remarkable story that is now a part of our two families' genealogy chronicles.



Aunt Mary Pangrcic Kosir today.



Slovenian Union of America

Across America - Branch Reports

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Contact information: Mary Ann Schellinger
920.457.7946/rhmas@yahoo.com

In getting ready for the Wisconsin Regional meeting, Mary Sandwick, Betty Repenshek, and Marilyn Hen-



dricks met at my house on September 4 to work on a card project. Many hands make light work, and, of course a couple glasses of wine and a few chocolates even made it more fun.

games of Slovenian bingo were played, and names were picked for door prizes. As a side point of interest, the attendees were asked how many of them were 100% Slovenian; surprisingly, there were 16 at the meeting. What a wonderful tribute to their families as they are members of SUA and “keeping their Slovenian heritage alive.”

MARY ANN SCHELLINGER



The Wisconsin Regional was hosted by our branch on October 14. The event was held at Riverdale Country Club in Sheboygan. The day started with a brunch followed by a meeting which was led by Jackie Smith, our Wisconsin Regional President. Reports were read from the three Wisconsin branches, and some information was shared regarding the 2019 National SUA Convention. A few

BRANCH 2 - Chicago, Illinois

Contact Information: 708.479.2864 Judy Stoll

Hi everyone. Hard to believe that 2018 is almost over, isn't it? We had our last meeting at Portellos on Septem-



100% Slovenian - Front Row: Frank Markelc, Rogene Grabner, Pat Fields, Joanne Rugar, and Charlene Grube. 2nd Row: Ed Tesovnik, Tom Gruenke, Tom Repenshek, Linda Abstetar, David Abstetar, Mary Jo Grabner, Peggy Wojcek, and Mary Bockin. Back Row: John Vertacic, Mary Sandwick, and Fr. Richard Cerpic.

ber 20. We really enjoy going there because it's centrally located to those of us who attend and the menu offers a lot of choices. Also, we have this tiny restaurant attendant who loves to see our group. She cheerfully scurries about bringing us water, little containers of ketchup, and napkins, and she keeps our table from becoming too messy. She's a gem! We discussed the fact that we're not going to sponsor our summer picnic anymore and also how we're going to distribute our annual donations which we send out just before Christmas.

Speaking of that holiday, we're hoping that we get to see many of you at our Christmas party. We know that it will take place on Thursday, December 6 at 1:00 p.m., but unfortunately we're not sure where the event will be held. So anyone who wants to party with us will have to contact either me (phone number and e-mail info below) or call Judy Ovnik at 708.246.6062 for information.

I hope that you have a bountiful Thanksgiving, a blessed Christmas, and a healthy and interesting New Year. Remember to keep our first responders and our military in your good thoughts, and always pray for our ailing fellow Branch 2 members.

JUDY STOLL

BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information:

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On October 2, Branch 3 held its first meeting since the spring at St. Mary's Hall. Barb Karlinger was the hostess and served delicious fall-themed cupcakes and tasty snacks. Mitzi Drobnick brought the mystery gift which was won by M.T. Karlinger. Frank and Jan Pekol, KSKJ Lodge 136 members from Willard, Wisconsin, crashed our SUA meeting. The surprise visitors added excitement to the gathering and were welcomed by all.

Branch 3's annual fall bus trip to the casinos in Cripple Creek was a huge success on October 7 with a full bus of 55 travelers. Participants enjoyed viewing the golden aspens which were at their peak, the bright blue skies, and the Rocky Mountains with beautiful vistas of Pikes Peak on the way home. Branch 3 member Norma Becco organized



Making new friends at the October Branch 3 meeting. From left: Jan and Frank Pekol from Willard, Wisconsin, Marie Mutz, and Bernice Krasovec.

the bus trip and donated snacks and bottled water for all the participants. Due to a special promotion at one of the casinos, the majority of the gamblers returned home with pasta cooking pots which loaded up the luggage area of the bus.

November was a busy month with the branch meeting on November 6 preceded by the annual Slovenian Heritage Dinner at St. Mary's on November 3. Many Branch 3 members volunteered to make the annual dinner a success. Photos of the event will be included in the next issue of *Zarja*.

The December meeting will feature the annual branch Christmas luncheon on Tuesday, December 4 at 12:30 p.m. at Park East Restaurant. All are welcome - please contact us for reservations.

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON
& BARBARA KARLINGER

BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana

Winter Greetings to all SUA Branch 5 Members! Even with all the very hot weather we had this year, which overnight turned into very cold weather, we had great turnouts for the Indianapolis Slovenian community events! The annual summer picnic had many families attending, several reunions, wonderful music and, as always, delicious food. Thanks to all who spent the day with us!

The annual *Taste of Slovenia* was a success, with a cheese štruklji and roasted chicken



Betsy Walker made her delicious cheese štruklji.

dinner on the menu prepared by members Betsy Walker and Katie Poole with proceeds going toward the construction of the new Bell Tower at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg. Paul Barbarich gave a presentation on the Bell Tower, a look at the proposed plans, and a history of the Holy Trinity Slovenian Catholic Church bells, which will be housed in the new Bell Tower. Donations made to St. Malachy Catholic Church, memo line Holy Trinity Bell Tower, will be greatly appreciated!

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A quick trip was made to Lemont, Illinois by members Steve and Larry Fon, with sister Linda Fon Rusie, to visit with longtime SWUA/SUA member Corinne Leskovar in her new retirement apartment. Friend and family member Fr. Christian Gostecnik joined in on the fun visit. Fr. Christian was here from his parish in Ljubljana, Slovenia helping out at the Slovenian Monastery in Lemont for several weeks. Fr. Christian was at St. Stephen's in Chicago for many years before returning to Slovenia.



Visiting Corinne Leskovar are Fr. Christian Gostecnik, Linda Rusie, Steve and Larry Fon.

Friday evenings at the Nash are always a good time to catch up with friends and family and to have a lot of fun as each Friday has a theme... for example, karaoke night, monthly birthdays, and live music. Each Friday, a different Slovenian group or person donates time to prepare food to be sold, with proceeds going to the Nash. One of our members, Loretta Albin, has brought back a longtime favorite to be enjoyed by all... the original "Spanish hamburgers!" Loretta makes these burgers from the recipes of Luddy Albin and Sylvie Stanfield, two cooks famous for great food! With just the right amount of sweet tomato and spicy peppers, these burgers are sure to trigger your memories of picnics at the Nash picnic grounds! Check the Nash FaceBook page for Friday night menus and join us for a real treat! Thanks, Loretta!



Four generations of Barbarich women visiting in Indianapolis. Great Grandmother Mary Barbarich, Grandmother Rosalie Barbarich Hetzner, Granddaughter Collette Hetzner Bishop, and Great Granddaughter Stella Bishop.

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SUA Branch 5 and SNPJ joined forces and hosted Joe Valencic from Cleveland for a screening of his movie, *Polka! The Movie*. Thanks to all who came for a very enjoyable and informative movie on the history of American Slovenian music, the birth of the Polka Mass, and wonderful polka music that evoked memories of many a Haughville party! Hvala Lepa to Jerry Watson who organized the event, to Joe Lambert and Steve Fon who made sausage, and to Mary Dragan, Karen Zarich, and Phyllis Fon, the cooks!

Mark your Calendars! The 21st Annual SAUSAGE FEAST will be Saturday, January 26, 2019! Fresh, smoked and blood sausage dinners will be available, along with plenty of music and fun! Get your reservations in early; you won't want to miss out on this yummy event! Check at www.facebook.com/KSKJ52 for more info.

During these cold winter months, keep our military, our police, our firefighters, and all who respond to help others in your prayers. Keeping all of you in our thoughts and prayers!

MARY, KAREN, & PHYLLIS

BRANCH 13 - San Francisco, California

Contact Information: Michele Twers

michele.twers@comcast.net

Hello to all from San Francisco. Fall is in the air, and soon the hustle and bustle will begin and the holidays will be upon us. I would like to mention that the 94th Annual Grape Festival was held at our Slovenian Hall on September 30 and was another big success for Club Slovenia. On October 27, Branch 13 celebrated 91 years with SUA (SWUA). On a personal note, I would like to pay tribute to the countless women who came before us that founded our branch and kept it alive and vibrant for so many years. These are the same women who courageously travelled to San Francisco to seek a new and better life for themselves and their families. We owe them a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. The past few years have been a financial struggle to keep our branch going. Due to dwindling participation, we discontinued our annual luncheon, which was our only source of income. This year at our meetings we have had serious discussions on closing Branch 13 or merging with the Southern California branch. Travel time to this location is 7 to 8 hours, which is out of the question. With this being said, in our October meeting, once again with only the officers in attendance, we took a vote to close our branch, and unfortunately the vote was unanimous. Effective January 1, 2019, Branch 13 will be closing. By the time of publication of this article all members of Branch 13 will have been notified by US Mail of the closure and that they will then be transferred to Branch 30 Home Office. We the following, President Doreen Sustarich, Vice President Beverly Jackson, and Secretary/Treasurer Michele Twers want to say thank you to all the members who kept us going for so many years. This is a very sad and difficult day for all.

On a happier note, we would like to send birthday wishes to our charter member and longtime auditor, Virginia Sustarich, who turned 94 years young on November 1 and also birthday wishes to all our members who celebrated in October, November, and December. Also, get well wishes to our members who are under the weather. Wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, a very Blessed Christmas, and a Wonderful 2019 New Year.

MICHELE TWERS

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Contact Information: Georgene Agnich
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Branch 20 celebrated its 90th anniversary on October 21 with an open house at the Slovenian Heritage Museum, a 1:00 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church in Joliet, and a banquet



Joe Valencia presented Diane Hohenwater with a Cleveland Polka Hall of Fame cookbook and CD of Slovenian music at the September meeting.

at 2:30 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish Hall. A report and photos of the day's events will appear in the Spring issue of *Zarja*.

Members enjoyed their September meeting when Cleveland historian, writer, and radio personality Joe Valencic



Branch 20 welcomed new members Mary Ann Governale (left) and Sue Hrpcha at its September meeting.

presented a video program, *Slovenian Foods in America*. Joe's sister, the renowned singer Cecilia Dolgan, also attended. Joe offered plenty of free recipes and brochures, as well as the Slovenian-American Polka Cookbook and music CDs for sale. Joe will be featured at the 2019 SUA National Convention in Cleveland. Branch 20 welcomed new members Mary Ann Governale and Sue Hrpcha at the meeting.

Mike Vidmar, Diane Hohenwater, Georgene Agnich, Angela Zaida, and St. Joseph parishioner Stanley Markum hosted Slovenian professor Dejan Valentincic and special education teacher Lara Niklave in Joliet on July 26 as they toured St. Joseph Church and its museum, the Ancel Center, as well as the Heritage Museum, St. Joseph Cemetery and Park, and the KSKJ offices. Professor Valentincic studies Slovenians outside of Slovenia and minorities living in Slovenia. He is active in the American Slovenian Education Foundation. He received *The Slovenian-American Table* cookbook and some back issues of *Zarja* from the museum, and Angela Zaida of the Ancel Center gave him a copy of St. Joseph Church's 125th Anniversary book and a 1916 book published on the parish's 25th anniversary.



Mike Vidmar, Stanley Markum, Diane Hohenwater, Dejan Valentincic, and Lara Niklave at the SUA Museum.

Georgene Agnich, along with Branch 99's Bill Zerial and five members from the Slovenian Catholic Center in Lemont, attended a Slovenian Independence Day event on June 22 at the office of Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas, who demonstrated how to access property tax bills online



(Left -right) Bill Zerial, Ann Marie Saver, Tina Ruda, Ljuba Novak, Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas, Georgene Agnich, Tina Rigler, Slavica Sovan, and Pat Michalski (seated) at the June 22 Slovenian Independence Day event in the Treasurer's office, downtown Chicago.

in Slovenian. The Treasurer gave attendees Certificates of Excellence for their dedication to the Slovenian-American community.

Branch 20 offers sincere sympathy to the family of member Rose Kezele, who passed away on May 30, 2018, and to the family of former member Louis Derlinga, who passed away on July 24, 2018. Members voted to buy 12 Christmas wreaths for veterans' graves in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Illinois, as part of the Wreaths Across America program. Branch 20's Christmas Party will be at Merichka's Restaurant in Joliet on December 16.

GEORGENE AGNICH

BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Contact Information: Diane Data
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Zivijo! HAPPY 90th ANNIVERSARY TO BRANCH 24! We held our meeting on the third Thursday of September after taking the hot summer months off. We had nice attendance at this meeting to discuss our annual All Soul's Day Cemetery Walk, Christmas Party, and election of officers for next year. Debbie Pohar gave us an update on our chapel. All of the granite has been received, the names of donors have been engraved, and the foundation has been poured and is curing for the late October final construction.



Our tentative plan is to have a dedication on the day of our Cemetery Walk which is Sunday, October 28 at 3:00 p.m. The next report will have pictures of the finished chapel, but for now you can view the foundation in the attached photo. After the cemetery walk, we will meet at the Paramount Club for a

buffet dinner and entertainment by Eddie Korosa Jr. and his Boys from Illinois.

I attended the Branch 89 picnic at the lovely home of Barbara and Ken Bruch in Granville, Illinois. It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon with warm hospitality and good food. Thanks for the invitation.

My compliments to Mary Risner Glaize, the editor of the Slovenian Union of America Facebook page. Daily she posts interesting articles about the branches' upcoming events, places and events in Slovenia, or pictures of places to visit. She has visited Slovenia numerous times and attended language school also. I have set the SUA page to come up first on my home page as I don't want to miss anything that Mary posts. I was lucky to have met her and her sister on one of the ZarjaFest trips.

Did you know that Slovenia is a country with the largest

number of religious buildings per capita in Europe? There are more than 3,000 churches, chapels, and religious monuments.

Dober Dan!

DIANE DATA

BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Jan Gehm
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After a hiatus of a couple of months, our meetings resumed in September. Our meeting was well attended and was preceded by a delicious lunch prepared by our members.

Our heartfelt thanks to the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Slovenian Arts Program for the generous cultural grant we received for hosting the traditional *Martinovanje* on November 10. We are now in the final stages of planning this event. Results of this celebration will appear in the next issue of the *Zarja*. Many thanks to BettyAnn Kolesari and Helen Frohna who are working so hard to assure all of a great time.

Congratulations to first time moms, branch members, Dr. Katie Kaye Berlin and Meagan Strmsek DeLongchamp, on the births of their sons. Joseph Arthur Berlin was born on September 14, and Logan James was born on September 19. God's blessings to all!

News of the Regional Convention that was held on October 14, in Sheboygan will be in the next issue as well. Our Christmas party will be held on December 1, at Alioto's on HWY 100, just south of Burleigh.

The branches in Cleveland are working very hard to guarantee all a pleasant stay in their city during the National Convention to be held in 2019. We wish them all success.

Our branch will be celebrating our 90th Anniversary in 2020, and we will soon start planning something special. Branch 43 was organized on June 4, 1930.

I hope everyone had a great summer and from the members of our branch, best wishes for a great holiday season.

MARY "MICI" BREGANT

BRANCH 47 - Garfield Heights, Ohio

Contact Information: Debbie Duris
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Our dear branch member, Dorothy Cabot, celebrated her 100th birthday on October 21 with family. We have been blessed to have Dorothy as a friend through her many years of being an active branch member. Up until this year, Dorothy always was in attendance at our meetings. We wish you all the best, Dorothy!

As you can tell from previous *Zarja* magazines, convention planning is coming together for an awesome event next year. We look forward to welcoming you in June.

Our Christmas branch luncheon is Saturday, December 1 at 1:00 p.m. at LockKeepers in Valley View. Please call Debbie Duris to be included in our reservation.

Our first meeting of 2019 will be Saturday, May 4 at 1:00

p.m. at Rose Italian Kitchen in Solon.

I will gladly share any of our members' activities. It only takes a call to me on my cell 330.730.8951 or e-mail at kjferrante@gmail.com.

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy 2019!

KATHLEEN FERRANTE

BRANCH 50 - Euclid, Ohio

Contact Information: Rick Tomsick

ricktomsick@gmail.com

Greetings from the "5-0" on America's North Coast!

Our holiday luncheon will be held at Dubrovnik Gardens on Tuesday December 4, at 1:00 p.m. Please call Pat Gruden at 440.701.8138 before November 24 to reserve a spot. The cost for the lunch is \$20.

The SUA 2019 National Convention will take place from Thursday, June 13 to Sunday, June 16, 2019, right here in Cleveland, Ohio – the Slovenian Capital outside of Slovenia! The 2019 convention will highlight the musical history of Slovenians under the theme *Let's Sing & Dance!* The weekend will offer social gatherings, educational sessions, Cleveland tours, and, most importantly, opportunities to connect with SUA sisters and brothers. The convention weekend will include a Slovenian Mass (10:30) at St. Vitus Church, the first documented Slovenian immigrant church (1893).

Good to hear from members of Branch 50 now and then. I was pleased to become acquainted with Germaine "Geri" (Grdina) Amato of Healdsburg, California recently by e-mail. Geri is a granddaughter of Anton Grdina, who was one of the pillars of our Slovenian community in the United States and a beloved patron of many immigrants coming to America (including those fleeing Communism as late as the 1950s). I'm reviewing some very interesting background information about this great man thanks to news clippings and articles that Geri has provided. Anyone out there with an interest in historical research, please let me know if you would like to collaborate in possibly reviewing some Cleveland-area Slovenian history, like that of Mr. Grdina, in connection with the upcoming national convention next June.

Please keep one another and all members of Branch 50 and all of the SUA in your prayers, especially the sick and the suffering. 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). I always like to hear from members near and far.

RICK TOMSICK

BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

Contact Information: Barbara Bruch

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We had pogaca at our latest meeting; it is the traditional welcome bread of Bela Krajina, and the recipe is in our

newest cookbook. It was topped with caraway seeds and salt from Piran and served with wine, Borovnica, a blueberry liqueur, and Medeni Liker. We always have a good time when there is a food demonstration.



We are proud of our junior member, Natalie Landgraf; she has been awarded a SWUA scholarship and is attending Western Illinois University to study Supply Chain Management, which is the science of how different things get from one place to another.

Branch 89 has been troubled by declining attendance at meetings and is adjusting its schedule accordingly. There will be more meetings at restaurants and in conjunction with other events. We have traditionally attended Mass as a group on a summer weekday; now we will attend Mass on Saturday and go for dinner afterwards. We hope more family members will attend. What are other branches doing about this dilemma?

Our Christmas dinner will be Sunday, December 2 at Canal Port in Utica at noon. Here is hoping to see you there!

BARBARA BRUCH

BRANCH 93 - New York, New York

Contact Information: Kathleen Simmonds

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Branch 93's young professionals' evenings continue to be incredibly well attended, and everyone looks forward to our monthly catchups. Our extraordinary Honorary Consul of

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the Republic of Slovenia for New York and New Jersey, Mr. Erik Horvat and his family, hosted our September Social at his home. We were treated to incredible views of the NYC skyline and great laughter and conversation.

The development of our Slovene Conversation Online program is also in full swing thanks to the generous grant that we receive from the Office of Slovenians Abroad. The curriculum for this web-based Slovene conversation class covers pronunciation, vocabulary, and basic grammar principles and is available for live interaction with students at all levels.



Please reach out to us if you are a native Slovene speaker wishing to join our team. If you are interested in sharing your gift of the Slovene language with others, we would love to have you!

Slovenian actor, Miha Rodman, performed in a one-man show in NYC at the United Solo festival on November 3. “The Jewish Dog” is a touching and inspiring story about the darkest period in European history between 1935 and 1945. Miha graduated in 2011 with honors from the Slovenian National Academy for Theater, Radio, Film and TV, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia with an MA in acting and has toured all over Europe with theater shows, winning multiple awards.

Also on the arts front, Transforma Theater, a Non-Profit Organization founded by Slovenian Actress Tjasa Ferme,



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Dr. Natalie Kacinik a Canadian-Slovenian Psychology Professor at Brooklyn College, CUNY, and NY attorney Jacob Sebag, has their first production showing at the 3LD Theater from November 7 to December 2. “The Female Role Model Project” is an interactive scientifically-enhanced

theatrical experience designed to explore issues involving gender. The show includes live brain activity recordings with Emotiv EEG headsets on some actors and audience volunteers. It is a unique and informative theatrical experience that differs from anything seen before.

Our amazing parishioners

celebrated Martinovanje at the St. Cyril church hall following Mass on Sunday, November 11. Everyone enjoyed the festivities and celebration!

KATHLEEN SIMMONDS

BRANCH 100 - Southern California

Contact Information: Jean Koci
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Branch 100 from Southern California sends best wishes for the upcoming holiday season to SUA members near and far. We are happy to say that our branch members continue to enjoy the beautiful *Zarja* magazine and hope that we will have many more editions to receive and share. I recently passed on some issues to a friend from church whose parents came from Slovenia. Also some older issues were shared from one of our active members to an elderly couple who immigrated shortly after the war to California. They both still enjoy reading, especially articles that remind them of their childhood homes.

Branch 100 will celebrate with their usual Christmas luncheon on Saturday December 8 at 11:30 a.m. at Napoli’s Italian Restaurant in Loma Linda. We look forward to another nice turnout of members and friends along with families. Please bring an unwrapped toy for a Toys for Tots collection to make a needy child smile!

This will also be Election Day for new officers, so if you would like to take part in the workings of our branch, please volunteer to help out as an officer for the coming year.

Several of our college students were awarded scholarships

from SWUASF. I'm sure they deserve the award, and I hope that the funds will help with some of the very high costs of university living and education. Jacob Fajnor and Ellen Koci are two of the undergrads that I have in mind. James Koci graduated and is now working in Chicago for an insurance company and recently announced his engagement to be married. Sara Lundgren is finishing up her PhD at Dartmouth. Garret Jancich is living in New York and working in the field of music production as well as an engineer in solar energy.

We wish the best to any members who are housebound because of age or illness and hope that we can keep in touch with them in the months to come. A Blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas to all!

JEAN KOCI

BRANCH 102 - Willard, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Candy Johnson
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Branch 102 met on September 8 and was happy to welcome Wisconsin President Jackie Smith and two members from her branch. She brought Slovenian bingo for our after-meeting entertainment. That was a lot of "zabavno"(fun)! Jackie also brought a book with past state convention minutes and pictures. Junior member, Sandy Brierton, found a photo of a Branch 102 member wearing a Slovenian costume at a convention.

It looked just like the one Sandy wore at our meeting in March! (You can see a photo of her in it on the back cover of the last issue of *Zarja*!) Anyway, the caption identified the woman in the photo as Josephine Artac - longtime president of Branch 102. It's also the exact same costume that Sandy was wearing in her photo, as that costume was donated



*Sandy Brierton and Mandi Genord,
Miss Wisconsin Outstanding Teen 2018.*

by Josephine's family. Sandy thought that was "cool to find." Another "cool" coincidence was that our three visitors went on the *Zarja*Fest tour to Slovenia and they were in the picture on the front cover of the last *Zarja*, so everyone had a good laugh that the front and back cover of the *Zarja* were represented well by people who were in Willard, Wisconsin that day.

Our junior members are busy as always. Sandy Brierton participated in the Miss Wisconsin Princess Camp, which was held in conjunction with Miss Wisconsin's Outstanding Teen Pageant and the Miss Wisconsin Pageant in June. This is not a competition but a camp for girls 5-12 that is a fun experience and a unique mentoring opportunity for personal growth and confidence building. Pictured is Sandy along with her teen mentor, Mandi Genord of Montello, Wisconsin. Sandy was excited that her mentor, Mandi, was crowned that weekend as Miss Wisconsin Outstanding Teen 2018. Mike Brierton continues to be active in Boy Scouts. This summer he spent a week at the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base in Key West, Florida. There he experienced swimming in seawater for the first time (and was amazed at how buoyant you are), deep sea fishing, snorkeling at a coral reef, paddle boarding, and sailing.

Please keep Jack Trunkel in your prayers as he continues cancer treatments.

Najboljše želje za srečno, zdravo novo leto. (Best wishes for a happy, healthy new year.)

CANDY JOHNSON

BRANCH 103 - Washington D.C.

Contact Information: Richard Terselic

The branch does not hold income-producing events. To assure that branch expenses can be met, once each year members are invited to make "free will" donations. Each donation is acknowledged in writing as tax deductible since SUA and its branches are 501c3 not-for-profit entities.

Maria and Harry Pauline, who have been longtime branch members, moved to the mountains of western North Carolina several years ago. However, their daughters remained in the Washington, DC suburban area. Maria and Harry update fellow branch members on their mountain life during visits north to spend time with their daughters and grandchildren.

The usual place of contact for members to meet and share news has been the monthly first Sunday Mass held at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. Unfortunately, the priest who says the Mass, Fr. Ray Wadas, had back surgery in July and has been recovering at a rehabilitation facility. The local community has been unable to locate a Slovenian-speaking substitute. Our prayers go out to Fr. Ray for a speedy recovery.

The branch 2018 Member of the Year, Susan Terselic Eckert, has had a busy summer. She attended a robotics class held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,

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has been organizing a new library at the school at which she teaches, and attended the “white coat” ceremony at the Florida medical school her daughter, Tabitha, is attending. Branch President Mary Lou Terselic accompanied Susan on the trip to the ceremony. On the negative side, Susan and her family had basement flooding at their home in Palmyra, Pennsylvania as a byproduct of a series of unusually heavy rain storms in their area.

Finally, the *Zarja* article that reported on Susan’s selection as branch Member of the Year led to an invitation for her to attend a meeting of an unaffiliated Slovenian heritage group in the York, Pennsylvania area. This group (of about a dozen) meets regularly to share Slovenian food and fellowship. The meeting that Susan (and her father, Rich Terselic) attended included a meal featuring a pork dish, the recipe for which came from the SUA cookbook.

RICH TERSELIC

BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

Contact Information: Bernadette Fitzsimmons
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Happy Birthday to Charlie Koiner, who celebrated his 98th birthday this past November and holds the honor of being the oldest member of Branch 108 – Olney, Maryland. He is the first urban farmer in Silver Spring and in Montgomery County, Maryland to get official agricultural tax



Charlie Koiner watering vegetables on the farm. Photo credit to Rosanne Skirble

status for owning an urban farm. Koiner Farm is a one-acre piece of land with five large field beds, just a short walk from the Silver Spring metro station and nearby high-rise buildings. Thanks to Lynn Koiner, Vice President of Branch 108, she signed up her dad for SUA membership in November 2003 when the first Maryland branch was established. Through the years a few *Zarja* articles have included the variety of vegetables and fruits Charlie grows on Koiner Farm, as well as his decades-long best-of-show vegetables he has won ribbons for at the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair, and selling his goods for the FRESHFARM Downtown Silver Spring Market. Best wishes to Charlie in preparing his garden for the winter

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and to Lynn in managing the herb garden and fruit trees as the season closes, when nature and the Koiners take a rest.

At the American Slovenian Education Foundation (ASEF) July 4th celebration in Slovenia, member Matthew Fitzsimmons, an ASEF 2018 summer fellow, met Dejan Valentinčič, PhD, a researcher with a special interest in Slovenian migration and how second and third generations maintain their “Slovenian identity.” Following the meeting, Dejan’s interest was sparked to make an impromptu visit to the DC area along with other US cities where a dinner gathering was arranged just two weeks later, on July 18, by Bernadette Fitzsimmons for him to meet members of the Washington, DC area Slovenian community. The evening was filled with thought-provoking conversations and questions about the diaspora of Slovenian immigration to the United States and throughout the world, including Slovenia’s relationship with its compatriots living abroad. Dejan’s research focuses on Slovenians outside of Slovenia and minorities living in Slovenia. Despite the wet summer, the night was dry and cool, perfect for dining on the deck, coupled with an assortment of Slovenian wines brought by Borut Žunič of the Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, DC.



A few people gathered for a farewell photo; from left to right Lara, Dejan, Chris, Tim, Bernadette, Nika and Borut.

Branch 108 members will be celebrating their 15th Anniversary at the end of this year and into the new year 2019. Many thanks (lepa hvala) to all our wonderful, dedicated members and friends who have enriched one another and the community by our shared Slovenian heritage through activities and friendships developed through the first Maryland branch of the Slovenian Union of America.

Understanding Slovenian Sayings by Bernadette:

*Z upanjem in ljubeznijo v srcu vidimo tudi tisto,
 česar še ni – lahko pa bo!*

*With hope and love in our hearts we also see that
 which is not – but perhaps will be!*

Blagoslovljene božične praznike in srečno novo leto 2019.

BERNADETTE FITZSIMMONS

BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities (TC) of Minnesota

Contact Information: Elaine Barthelemy
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Twin Cities Slovenians demonstrated our Minnesota Hospitality twice this summer as we welcomed visitors from Slovenia. The first visit involved forty-five parishioners from Birth of the Virgin Mary Church in the quaint village of Polhov Gradec thirty minutes west of Ljubljana. This year for their annual pilgrimage, they traveled to Minnesota and Wisconsin to honor Jacob Trobec, a former member of their parish, who had immigrated to the United States in 1864, eventually serving as Bishop of the Saint Cloud Diocese. The pilgrims followed the route of Slovenian missionary Bishop Frederic Baraga on the 150th anniversary of his death. (In my research I was impressed to learn that Bishop Baraga was fluent in eight languages, including the Native American Ojibwe language.) While in Minnesota, visitors attended Mass at St. Paul's Cathedral, and some of the travelers performed at a Polka Mass in St. Stephen's Church. A highlight was Slovenian food and lots of great music and hospitality at the home of Miro and Karen Medved. Miro is the Honorary Consul for the Republic of Slovenia in Minnesota.



Pilgrims from Polhov Gradec at the Baraga Cross at Lake Superior.

The second visitor was Mateja Vrhar from Ljubljana who became Skype friends with TC Slovenians member John Perhay when they communicated as part of a language learning website. Mateja had seen Andrew Zimmer's program about the Minnesota State Fair and wanted to visit for herself. During 10 days with John and his wife Denise, Mateja sampled fried cheese curds and deep fried pickles at the fair and canoed with John Zakelj at a local lake. The



John Perhay, Mateja Vrhar, and Denise Perhay.

Perhaps also hosted an open house brunch at their home allowing Mateja to meet some Branch 109 members.

Our September member meeting featured the mother-daughter ancestral preservation team of Sophia "Trix" Stalzer Wyant and Maria Stalzer Wyant Cuzzo. Sophia grew up on the original lands of Gottschee, a German-Austrian linguistic island located in what is now the Kočevje region in south central Slovenia. Maria's 57-minute video *Single Vision, Full View* chronicles Sophia's life in Gottschee and her post-immigration years in America. Their moving presentation received a long standing ovation. Both ladies are active in preserving the language, culture, and personal stories of Gottschee.



Sophia "Trix" Stalzer Wyant and Maria Stalzer Wyant Cuzzo.

Master Chef Katrina Kozar was our presenter in October, while in November we celebrated

the new wine on *Martinovanje* at the home of Miro and Karen Medved. In December, Joshua Cardinal shared about his trip to Slovenia.

On a personal note, I just returned from a long-awaited trip across Slovenia with my two adult sons, Mark and Matthew. We visited the cottage (now abandoned) in Vrhnika where my mother was born, spent time with distant cousins, marveled at key attractions such as Lake Bled, the Julian Alps and the Škocjan Caves, sampled fresh water flowing from the Soča River high in the mountains, and danced the polka at the Restaurant Avsenik. We left with memories to last a lifetime, a stronger appreciation of our Slovenian heritage and culture, and a firm commitment to return.

ELAINE BARTHELEMY

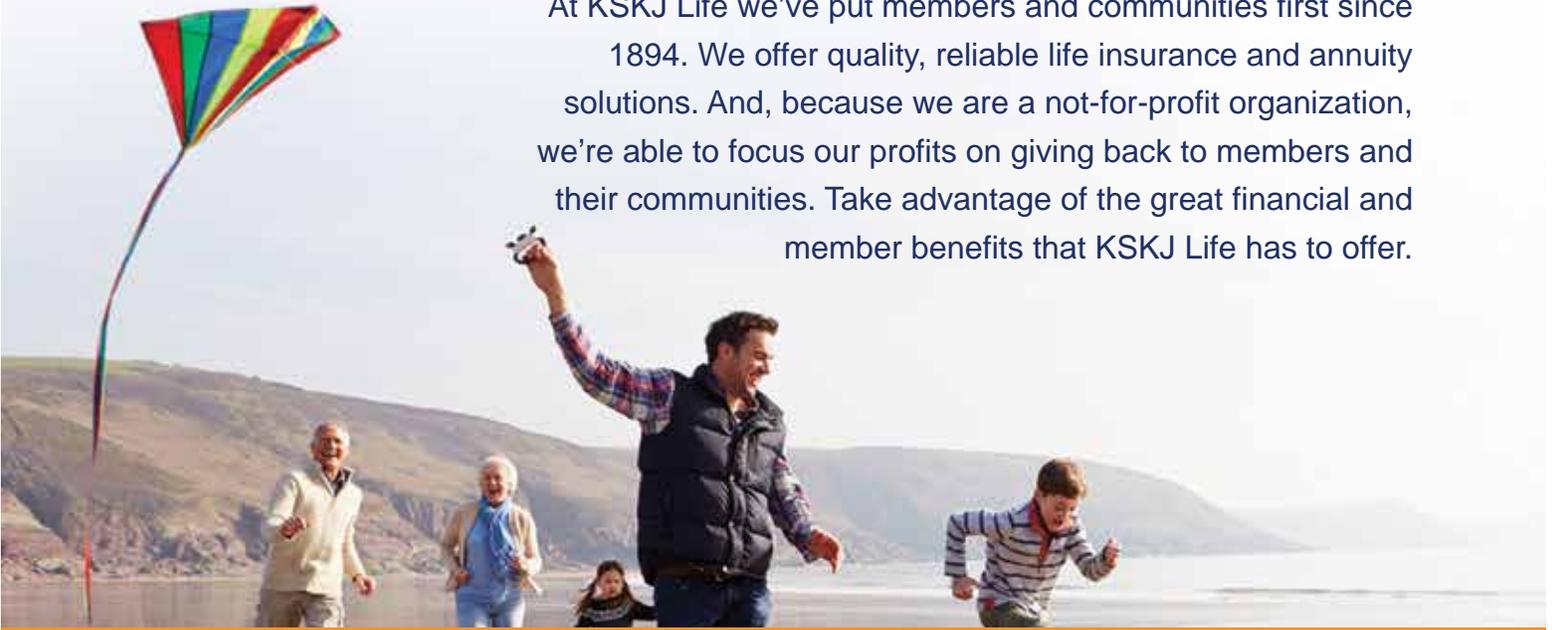


Matt, Elaine, and Mark Barthelemy overlooking the city of Ljubljana.



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S.U.A. National Convention Cleveland, Ohio

DNA Presentation and Testing

Presentation by Vlasta Knapic on the use of DNA testing to uncover more about your family tree.

Welcome Reception

Kick off the whole weekend of events as we reunite and reconnect. Shop from an assortment of on-site vendors, and sing and dance along to our strolling musicians, Anthony Culkar and Hank Guzel.

Business Sessions

SUA members are invited to join the member representatives and National Board for the business portion of the day.

Faith, Song, and Dance Bus Tour

Travel to the Museum of Divine Statues, where we will get an exclusive arranged tour, and past iconic landmarks in Cleveland before touring the Polka Hall of Fame in Euclid, Ohio.

90th Anniversary Celebration of the Zarja - The Dawn

Travel Slovenia presented by Kollander World Travel, Slovenian Trivia, and Fred Ziwich and his International Sound Machine will join us for a night to remember - the celebration of the 90th birthday of Zarja - The Dawn. This event will be hosted by Kollander World Travel, Bonnie Prokup, and Debbie Pohar! Come gather to sing and dance along to the band and enjoy an endless variety of sweets and treats on the dessert bar.

Educational Sessions

A unique opportunity to learn from two experts on the topic of Slovenian music - Charles "Chuck" Debevec and Joe Valencic.

SUA National Convention Banquet

The crowning event of the weekend - Master of Ceremonies Joe Valencic will guide us through an evening of awards, acknowledgements, dinner, and dancing to Cleveland-style polka and other party hits from the Frank Moravcik Band. This will be your chance to sample the entries from the potica contest as well as meet your new National Board!

Slovenian Mass at St. Vitus Church

St. Vitus Church has been an integral part of the Slovenian community in Cleveland since it was founded in 1893 by the first documented Slovenian immigrants to the city.
