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The Dawn



28th National Convention

2019 Cleveland, Ohio

Slovenian Union of America

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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 Winter issue must be received by October 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.



Living the Legacy of our Slovenian Heritage

Slovenian Union of America, Inc (SUA)

THE STATE OF THE UNION

For several years I had languished over how to begin a startup DNA project between the SUA and the country of Slovenia. The impetus came on Christmas 2018. Our son, John, had given Gene and me Ancestry DNA kits for Christmas. When Gene's DNA came back with a big surprise, I decided it was time to contact the Slovenian Genealogy Society International in Cleveland. Vlasta Knapič and Peter Hawlina of the Slovenian Genealogy Society Ljubljana were recommended. Vlasta and Peter had important words for me: "It is a crucial time in history; five to six generations have passed since the mass immigration in the early 1900s."

With the upcoming convention in June 2019, it was an opportune time to invite Vlasta Knapič and Peter Hawlina to America. SUA members want to know about their ancestry!

28th SUA National Convention

The 28th National Convention of the Slovenian Union of America was held on June 13-16, 2019 at the Marriott Hotel in the Cleveland suburb of Warrensville Heights. After two years of planning and preparing, the convention day had arrived. Thank you to Chairman Kathy Ferrante, her assistant Debbie Duris, and their entire committee, volunteers, presenters, entertainers, the SUA National Board, and, YES, the attendees. It was... ***Cleveland extraordinaire.***

Our guests from Slovenia said it. Vlasta Knapič commended, "You Americans are so well organized," and Peter Hawlina said, "Congratulations to you and your team! I admire you."

Thursday, June 13 - Our Slovenian guests Vlasta Knapič and Peter Hawlina opened the convention with a DNA/ Genealogy program before an audience of 110 people. I had been several steps ahead of the convention and had submitted my Ancestry DNA and Family Tree DNA prior to the convention. SHOCK and SURPRISE! Vlasta announced to the audience that she and I are linked via Neža Prijatelj (DOB 1802) the maiden name of my grandmother Angela Prijatelj Deyak. Once complete strangers and now we are cousins! Now to find the parents and siblings of Neža Prijatelj? Vlasta and Peter spent the convention days circulating among and consulting with members.

The Thursday evening Welcome Reception was a time to reunite and reconnect. Attendees had a chance to shop at on-site vendors, and there were door prizes to be won. What fun to dance to the strolling musicians, Anthony Caulker and Hank Guzel.

Fall 2019



The doors opened on the art exhibit of painter and sculptor Joze Vodlan. Among the collection was Mr. Vodlan's gift to the Slovenian Union of America, a portrait of the famous Marija Pomagaj. The Slovenian Union of America is honored to have in its collection, the figure painted by the renowned Mr. Vodlan. The portrait is now being exhibited at the home museum and home office in Joliet.



Mary Lou Deyak Voelk, Vlasta Knapič, and Mary Lou's cousin, Judy Ostrander.

During the entire convention, Minnesota Banners were on display for convention goers and for guests in the hotel. The SUA Gift Shop and Hospitality Room were open throughout the convention. There were many comments on this beautiful display.



Friday June 14 - Business meetings on Friday and Saturday morning were open to the public. Twenty Member Representatives were present. Friday's meeting opened with a "focus" message followed by a report of the former and present national board investigations on possible alternatives for the SUA facility: renting office space, purchasing a smaller building, or donating the library and museum and existing with only a virtual office. All costs were figured, and, in each case, the conclusion was it would be best to remain at 431 N. Chicago St.

At the March 2019 national board meeting, Georgene Ag-

nich Branch 20 delivered a historical research study on the Joliet area. The national board decided that member representatives should hear the research study at the June 2019 convention. Georgene's report will be included at the end of the State of the Union report.

A virtual tour of the Stonich Building was shown, and the 62 PowerPoint slides included the outside perimeter, basement, main floor, apartment, and attic. The apartment allows Board members the freedom to arrive early and stay later; hotel costs are at a minimum as are meals. Areas of need were discussed. The plumbing is original, and the pipes are clogged, leaving 3/8 inch for water flow according to the plumber. The bath/shower and sink need to run a good 10 minutes to clear up the rusty water. The basement plumbing needs constant checking. The brick work in the basement, back stairway, and attic needs attention. After discussion, a motion by a member rep was made to increase the yearly membership fee to \$30; the added \$5 per member during the next few years would be targeted for needed building repairs and updates. By a unanimous vote, the motion was accepted. Yearly membership will be \$30 (\$2.50 per month).

Each board member delivered results of their experiences and projects during the past four years. The election for four positions on the National Board was held. Elected were Mary Glaize - Corresponding/Recording Secretary; George Plautz - VP Marketing and Fund Raising, Richard Grill - VP of Home Office, and Mary Lou Deyak Voelk - President.

Accolades to the 20 Member Representatives for their professionalism throughout the 7 hours of meeting time; Member Reps were focused, engrossed, intent listen-



New National Board members elected were Mary Lou Deyak Voelk - President, Richard Grill - VP of Home Office, George Plautz - VP Marketing and Fund Raising, and Mary Glaize - Corresponding/Recording Secretary.

ers, and the meeting was a model for the Robert's Rules of Order. It was a proud scene for the Slovenian Union of America. Minutes of the meetings will follow this article.

The Marriott provided comfortable rooms and spacious meeting and dining rooms. Food was served graciously, and the staff was accommodating. The convention day schedule agendas featuring both work and play were well balanced. It took time and effort to stage this convention. The following people are recognized and thanked: Kathy Ferrante, Debbie Duris, Diane Fornaro, Ginger Kemmerling, Lynn McKittrick, Katherine Wallace, Cookie Maxin, Rose Mary Toth, Linda Ford, Mary Ann Greiner, Allison Hrovat, Sandy Green, and Cindy Jeric. Again, it was... *Cleveland Extraordinaire*.

Friday's afternoon Faith, Song, and Dance Bus Tour was educational, most interesting, most awesome. The in-depth presentation by Joe Valencic at the Polka Hall of Fame was noteworthy.



The next stop was the Museum of Divine Statues, an old church holding restored Catholic statues, chalices, monstrances, stained glass, and relics. The resulting handiwork is a labor of love for restoration artist, craftsman, and make-up artist, Lou McClung. He convinced the local diocese to set aside Saint



Hedwig Church for the museum during the period when the diocese was shutting down churches. McClung gutted and repurposed the church to display all the salvaged artifacts. His talents keep alive the memories of closed churches by allowing visitors to use tablets or smart phones to scan QR Codes and read about the history of each church. He treats his statues as representatives of the immigrants who came to Cleveland and built communities and churches.

On Friday evening, convention attendees gathered to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of our treasured magazine *Zarja – The Dawn*. This lovely event was hosted by Bonnie Prokup, Editor and Debbie Pohar, Director of Design. There was an endless variety of sweets, treats at the dessert bar, and the evening included a trivia game, door prizes, and raffles. The spacious room made conversation easy. Wonderful melodies by Fred Ziwich and his International Sound Machine filled the room, and people were dancing!! A very enjoyable time was had by all.



Saturday, June 15 - The luncheon was a family-style meal of Slovenian favorites including local Slovenian sausage, sauerkraut, fried potatoes, and oil and vinegar salad. Satisfied after a wonderful lunch, our eyes were now feasted on the open doorway where *Folkorna Skupina Kres* were lined up and ready to perform authentic Slovenian dances. The giving of the dance group's talent, energy, and time in recognition of their heritage is to be commended. Congratulations to the dancers and their director!



Following the dance group Charles "Chuck" Debevec and Joe Valencic lectured on the history of Slovenians and their music in America. From the advent of the phonograph that had the ability to record, play back, and reproduce to today's digital recording possibilities, Chuck and Joe covered and have preserved the history of talented Slovenian Americans in the music industry.

Saturday evening a crowd of 165 people gathered for the crowning event, the SUA National Convention Banquet. The bountiful dinner included meat selections, baked potatoes, and salad. Dessert provided the chance to also sample the entries from the Potica Contest.



Special Guests

The Master of Ceremony, Joe Valencic, guided the convention through an evening of introductions, awards, and acknowledgements. Special guests of the SUA were Slovenian Ambassador Stanislav Vidovič and his wife,

Liljana, of Washington D.C., Honorary Consul Andrej Rode and his wife, Monika, Vlasta Knapič, Peter Hawlina, and lawyer Dr. Dejan Valentincic from the Office for Slovenes Living Abroad.



Peter Hawlina



Honorary Consul Andrej Rode and his wife, Monika, Kathy Ferrante, Debbie Durris, Slovenian Ambassador Stanislav Vidovič and his wife, Liljana.

Potica Contest - The SUA received 13 potica entries. Placing first in the Potica Contest was Helen Frohna - Branch 43. Placing second was Linda Holle - Branch 50, and placing third place was Anne Hocever. Congratulations to all!



Zarja - The Dawn

Literary Award

Congratulations to Blair Kilpatrick, the winner of the 1st SUA Literary Award as announced by Bernadette Fitzsimmons at the SUA National Convention. Blair had entered the 31 pages of the opening chapter from *Potica Tales*, a roots-and-food memoir which is a work in progress.



I am a psychologist, a folk musician, and a writer. I grew up in Cleveland with a Scottish father and a Slovenian-American mother who considered potica the only part of her heritage worth preserving. Thanks to my midlife passion for the Cajun accordion, I found my way back to my maternal roots – and to European travel, to writing, and to the local community in Northern California, where I have lived since 1997 when my family and I moved here from Chicago.

For almost a decade, I have been a member of Club Slovenia at San Francisco's Slovenian Hall, where I had the great fortune to meet my mentor and dear friend, Mia Rode, this year's ASEF honoree, and to attend her language classes for five years.

I live in Berkeley, California, with my husband, Steve Tabak, a retired educator. Our adult sons, both journalists, live in New York City and Toronto. I have an independent practice in psychology. I also perform locally with Sauce Piquante, the Cajun-Creole band I founded two decades ago with Steve, who plays the fiddle.

*My Slovenian-related writing includes a chapter called "In the Blood" in my Cajun music memoir *Accordion Dreams* (U. Press Mississippi, 2009); my food-oriented blog *Slovenian Roots Quest*; and an essay in *Kosovo 2.0*, a trilingual European magazine. I am currently working on my next book, a food-and-roots memoir tentatively called *Potica Tales*, about my journey into my family's past and my reconnection with my Slovenian heritage.*

- Blair Kilpatrick

Author website: www.blairkilpatrick.com Slovenian Roots Quest Blog: www.slovenianroots.blogspot.com

Recipient of the SUA Collegiate Scholarship

Congratulations to Noelle Konchar, recent recipient of the SUA Collegiate Scholarship. Noelle is studying nursing at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania. "What a fun time we had at the National Convention in Cleveland, the festivities, the tours, the food, the music, the friendliness of everyone. We all arrived home safely. Waiting for the next convention!" What a family time they had!



Noelle Konchar's Family.

SUA National Convention City in 2023

SUA Member Representatives and convention attendees will be heading West in 2023! Annette Charron - VP of Outreach announced Pueblo, Colorado as the site of the 2023 SUA National Convention. The mayor, Nick Gradisar, is of Slovenian ancestry!

Postscript

While at the convention, I received an email from a complete stranger. Brane Kovačič, of Slovenia, who found that my grandmother Mary Marolt Perovshek (Sodrazica/ Ely, Minnesota) and his great-grandmother were cousins. Brane emailed our family history going back six generations! He found my name on the Internet!

As I was writing this State of the Union, an email came in from Vlasta Knapič. She was in Ljubljana and met up with her friend, Stane Lunder, "a person who usually passes to her bioenergy when needed." He mentioned his FTDNA profile and needed an explanation. "Guess, what I have discovered. He is your match! You can compare the DNA."

Haven't done a DNA test? Please do... you may be pleasantly surprised!

to je to
Mary Lou Deyak Voelk
SUA National President

Linda Ford of Linda's Lenses photographed scenes from the SUA 28th National Convention. All photos were uploaded to the SUA Facebook page. For those attending the convention, enjoy reminiscing about your time in Cleveland. For those who did not attend, this is your chance to have a virtual experience! Thank you, Linda, for sharing your talents with the Slovenian Union of America. Your presence was an added highlight with your winning smile and your way of always mingling with the crowds. To see the talents of Linda's camera, do a google search: Slovenian Union of America/ Facebook.

~ Two Proposed Amendments to SUA's Bylaws ~
~ Member Representatives to Vote ~

At the June 15, 2019, business meeting in Cleveland during the National Convention, SUA Treasurer, Robert J. Kuhel, proposed two (2) bylaw amendments to more properly describe job duties. The National Board officers were unanimous in supporting the changes to the National Treasurer and the Vice President of Home Office positions. Below are the current descriptions, and the proposed changes follow in **bold and underlined**. Only the Branches' Member Representatives are authorized to vote on these changes after at least six (6) months have passed according to SUA's Corporate Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS, SECTION 4.4 National Vice President of Home Office

Current -

The National Vice President of Home Office shall be the custodian of the official documents and records of the Corporation. The National Vice President of Home Office shall maintain a strict account of the transactions of the Corporation, and subject to the direction of the National Board of Directors, shall allocate all accumulated interest to the Corporation's funds. In addition, the National Vice President of Home Office shall give all notices as are required by law or by these Bylaws and, generally, shall perform all duties incident to the office of National Vice President of Home Office and such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the National President and the National Board of Directors. The National Vice President of Home Office, on behalf of the National Board of Directors, shall accept new members and Branches into the Corporation, accept petitions for admissions and Bylaws, issue yearly membership dues invoices to all members, record all membership transactions and maintain a list of individual Branches according to number and date of organization.

Proposed: (Change in Bold Print and Underlined)

Note: This proposed change eliminates the 2nd sentence above and eliminates the phrase "accept petitions for admissions and Bylaws" (3rd sentence from the bottom).

The National Vice President of Home Office shall be the custodian of the official documents and records of the Corporation. In addition, the National Vice President of Home Office shall give all notices as are required by law or by these Bylaws and, generally, shall perform all duties incident to the office of National Vice President of Home Office and such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the National President and the National Board of Directors. The National Vice President of Home Office on behalf of the National Board of Directors, **shall oversee the acceptance of** new members and Branches into the Corporation, issue yearly membership dues invoices to all members, record all membership transactions, and maintain a list of individual Branches according to number and date of organization.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS, SECTION 4.8 National Treasurer

Current -

The National Treasurer shall be an authorized signer to all bank accounts and prepare or supervise the recording of all receipts and disbursements, monthly Balance Sheet, and Profit & Loss Statement in an automated accounting system following generally accepted accounting principles. The National Treasurer shall prepare or supervise the preparation of the annual IRS Form 990EZ and state of Illinois form AG990-IL for review by a CPA firm as determined or chosen by the National Board.

Proposed: (Change in Bold Print and Underlined)

The National Treasurer shall be an authorized signer to all bank accounts and **shall** prepare or supervise the recording of all receipts and disbursements, monthly Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss Statement in an automated accounting system following generally accepted accounting principles. The National Treasurer shall prepare or supervise the preparation of the Annual IRS **Form 990 and State of Illinois Form AG990-IL** for review by a CPA firm as determined or chosen by the National Board.

Note from Peter Hawlina on DNA/Genealogy

There were several cases that we could not solve, and I promised them that I will try later. I just made short notes which are now not sufficient to fulfill the promise. Is it possible for you to notify all participants and tell them that those that expect something from my side should remind me by e-mail.

Thanks,
Peter Hawlina
peter@hawlina.com

ANCESTRY

Pedigree chart

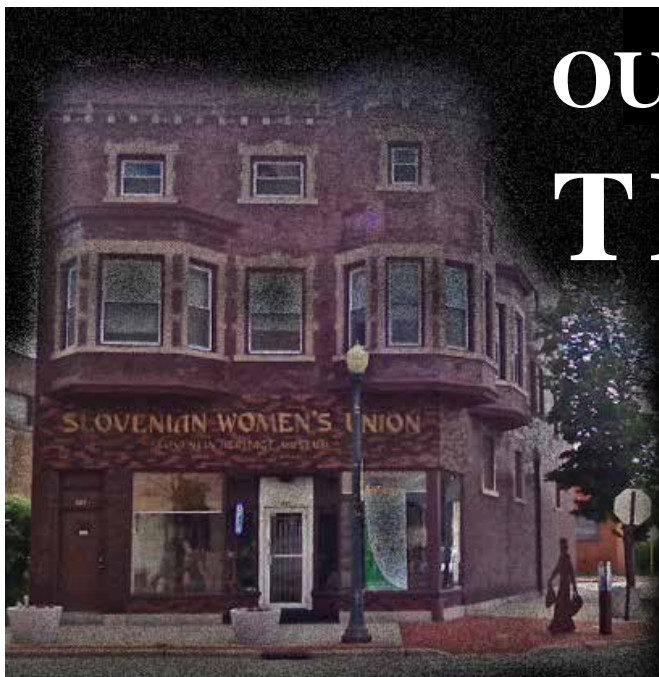
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OUR BUILDING IS A TREASURE

by Georgene Agnich, Branch 20

SUA Building
431 North Chicago St.
Joliet, Illinois

The Slovenian Women's Union of America building at 431 North Chicago Street in downtown Joliet, Illinois is an important Slovenian historical and cultural treasure. It is valuable at the national, state, and local levels and internationally.

Slovenian immigrant George Stonich, who built and owned our building for decades, was operating a men's furnishings store in the 1890s. Stonich, who died in 1947, was an elder of St. Joseph Church. He was also a founding member of the KSKJ, the first Slovenian fraternal order in America, founded in Joliet in 1894 and 125 years old this year. The first and second KSKJ buildings are in "Slovenian Row" within easy walking distance of our building, as are several homes once occupied by Slovenian immigrants.

Our building is located in "Slovenian Row" on Joliet's main street, directly across from St. Joseph Church, which was founded by Slovenian immigrants in 1891. From the start, the church was called "the Slovenian Rome" because of its deep spiritual roots. The current church, built in 1905, is the second church built by them on the site at a time when Slovenians represented ten percent of Joliet's population. Along with the church, its adjacent Ferdinand Hall (the first school), the Ancel Center (the church's museum within its second school), the ten large outdoor *From Slovenia to America* murals nearby, and our building are part of a Slovenian heritage center of "living buildings" that is a destination for Slovenian dignitaries and scholars, SUA members, and visitors.

The SWUA purchased the building in 1976, the 50th year of SUA. It became the new home office and soon after the Slovenian Heritage Museum as well. Monsignor Butala of St. Joseph Church blessed our building during the March 6, 1977 dedication ceremony.

Today the building is the repository of who we are now and of who we have been for nearly a century. It has a library of over 1,500 books in Slovenian and English, all catalogued using the Dewey Decimal System. The museum is also home to a special 256-book personal library donated in 2011 by the late Slovenian artist, Bogdan Grom, in memory of his famous stepmother, Masa Grom. It also features many cherished artifacts brought from Slovenia to America, as well as items from later generations of Slovenian-Americans.

The building is a convenient and economical "home away from home" for our SUA National Board members when they travel to Joliet for meetings or just to work at the home office. Donated furniture and kitchen supplies make for an adequate apartment.

The Board has made improvements such as a new furnace and the upstairs replacement windows funded by a grant from the City of Joliet. A stained glass panel was framed and hung in its original space. In 1994, through the efforts of longtime SUA office manager, Jonita Ruth, and a committee of St. Joseph's parishioners, the City of Joliet made infrastructure improvements such as new sidewalks, gutters, street lamps, and concrete planters all along North Chicago Street.

go Street in recognition of the Slovenian-American community's stabilization of that area for over a century. Therefore, our building's current costs are chiefly the annual maintenance and property taxes, for which funding could be obtained from sources outside of SUA.

The federal government recognized the historic and cultural importance of our building when they included it in the original 1987 Interpretive Plan for the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, which is part of the National Park Service under the U. S. Department of the Interior. This Heritage Corridor, which created a new kind of national park, was signed into law by President Reagan in 1984 to "retain, enhance, and interpret the cultural, historical, natural, recreational, and economic resources" within a 405-square mile area along the 96-mile Illinois and Michigan Canal that connects Lake Michigan in Chicago with the Illinois River in LaSalle-Peru. This canal, built between 1836 and 1848, made Chicago into a great inland port in the richest economic zone the world had ever seen. The Illinois and Michigan Canal through Joliet was originally across the Des Plaines River, which is a half-block from our building's back door, but it disappeared in the 1930s when the Army Corps of Engineers widened and deepened the Des Plaines for barge traffic.

The mighty Joliet Iron Works within the Heritage Corridor was once the second-largest iron and steel mill in America, in operation from the 1869 to 1936, and employed thousands of immigrants, including many Slovenians and their descendants over the years. It is now a 51-acre tourist attraction managed by the Forest Preserve District of Will County and is within walking distance of our building. Indeed, Slovenians were, and are, an important part of the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, with six current SUA branches and one former SUA branch within its boundaries: Chicago (2 branches), Lemont, Joliet, LaSalle, and Oglesby, and Ottawa (former).

The Kor-Ten steel cutout of a Slovenian woman outside our building at the corner of Chicago and Clay Streets is one of many such markers that the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor Commission placed at prominent sites within the corridor. This marker depicts Slovenian immigrant Mary Setina, who operated a candy and sundries

store decades ago in "Slovenian Row." She was the grandmother of Branch 20 member Jonita Ruth. Mary Setina's immigrant story is one of many told by Joliet native Irene Odorizzi, Branch 103 member and foundress of our Heritage Museum, in her book, *Footsteps through Time*.

Work is currently underway in Joliet to reopen the south end of Chicago Street and connect it with nearby Interstate 80. Developers have promised to bring a major restaurant and other businesses to revitalize Joliet's historic downtown. Increased traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian, will generate renewed interest in our building. Also, romantic and historic U.S. Route 66 passes our building's back door and brings many tourists into downtown Joliet each year.

Our building is located within a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district created by the City of Joliet in recent years to encourage for-profit businesses to upgrade their buildings with public funds. There is the very real danger that our historic building would be torn down if acquired by a for-profit new owner. Our building means a lot to the Slovenian-Americans of Joliet and vicinity, to the members of SUA throughout America, and to our friends in Slovenia. It should not be sold without first making every effort to find outside revenues to help the building pay for itself, nor without making a sincere effort to keep ownership of the building in Slovenian-American hands. We own a building that is important to Slovenian history and culture locally, nationally, and internationally. We, whose by-laws, Illinois Articles of Incorporation, and 501(c) (3) nonprofit mission all emphasize preservation and promotion of our Slovenian heritage, must do all we can to honor our Slovenian ancestors and our past and present SUA members by treasuring our building as a living legacy to all they have entrusted to us.

The office and museum in our building cannot run themselves. We must get ready to receive visitors by organizing a volunteer office and museum staff, creating a standard tour and a new informational brochure, partnering with organizations such as the Joliet Area Historical Museum, and developing ongoing publicity. We must consider charging admission to our museum and hosting special events there as well.

A First-Time Delegate's Report on the 2019 SUA National Convention...

We Sang and Danced in Cleveland, Ohio!

Allison Hrovat - Branch 50, 2019 National Convention Reporter

What a time we had in Cleveland, Ohio! The 2019 SUA National Convention was a triumphant success, measured not only by the size of the groups gathered at the various events but also by the enthusiastic energy and community spirit that filled the rooms of the Marriott Cleveland East, the chartered busses, the Museum of Divine Statues, the Polka Hall of Fame, and St. Vitus Church. As a first-time delegate, I have honestly had a hard time putting the experience into words. This *Zarja* recap of the event will be my best attempt to do so.

I first want to acknowledge and express my gratitude for the love and hard work that went into executing this event. I am sure that I speak for many others in saying that the attention to detail and the thoughtfulness of the planning - from the business session materials, to the delegate welcome baskets and the bountiful favors and gifts that adorned the tables each night - were truly touching. It showed, from the first moment of arrival, the incredible effort that went into this event. A standing ovation for Kathleen Ferrante, 2019 National Convention Chairperson, and for her incredible convention planning team: Debbie Duris, Linda Ford, Diane Fornaro, Mary Ann Greiner, Cindy Jeric, Ginger Kemmerling, Cathy Maxin, Lynn McKittrick, Rose Mary Toth, Kathy Wallace, and Beth Wallace. Additional appreciation to the hosts and MCs of the evening events, including Bonnie Prokup, Debbie Pohar, and Joe Valencic. Thanks to all of the volunteers who assisted throughout the convention, including in the gift shop, to all of the esteemed guests from Slovenia, to Marge Pryately for the incredible historical display, and to all of the talented presenters and performers. A final note of gratitude to President Mary Lou Voelk for planning the business sessions and to Denise Bartlett for serving as parliamentarian. I am sure that there are so many other people whose work contributed to such an incredibly special and successful event - my sincere appreciation to all of you. On a personal note, I would like to thank all of the members and officers who spoke with me throughout the weekend, expressing their appreciation for my attendance as a delegate and encouraging me to become more involved. (I will!)

As guests arrived to the ballroom area of the Marriott, we were greeted at the sign-in table and, once registered, entered the convention reception area. Vibrant vendor booths encircled the space, and a series of beautiful and informative banners that described the immigration of Slovenians to Minnesota, created by Marge Pryately, stood along one wall. Just off of the reception space was the gift shop, where a variety of Slovenian wares and memorabilia were sold, as well as the raffle prizes, thoughtfully wrapped and displayed so that attendees could purchase their raffle tickets and try their luck on something special.

Also on display throughout the weekend was the creative art gallery by artist Joseph Vodlan.

Thursday afternoon's DNA presentation and testing was well-attended, with 108 participants registered for the event. Attendees were able to learn and ask questions about genealogy from Peter Hawlina and Vlasta Knapič, who traveled from Slovenia for the convention, and many attendees uncovered new information about their familial roots. Following the presentation, 136 registered guests attended the Welcome Reception, with delicious hors d'oeuvres, drinks, music, and dancing. As a new attendee, it was wonderful to see the bright smiles and long-lasting hugs between members united for perhaps the first time in four years. The conversations were lively and the laughter contagious as the excitement grew for the weekend ahead.

SUA delegates and other members in attendance started Saturday's business meeting bright and early at 8:30. President Mary Lou Voelk started the session with an opening address tracing her involvement in the SUA and the history of the home office building. She reported on the upkeep needs of the building and her hope that delegates would vote to approve a dues increase that would go, in part, to the investments needed to preserve the building. Her remarks were both informative and inspiring. "I'm telling you, I believe in the Slovenian Union of America," Voelk said. "We come from a very extraordinary people, and our entire history tells us that the Slovenian people are mighty."

The order of business proceeded with reports from the various officers that served to highlight both the current state of SUA and the needs and concerns moving forward. Across the various officer presentation, the theme that seemed to emerge was this: We, as an organization, are saddened and concerned by the decrease in membership, and we are ready to adapt and change to bring in new membership and energize this organization for generations to come.

As the business meeting concluded, 81 participants boarded two buses, boxed lunches in hand, for the *Faith, Song, and Dance* bus tour. As a born-and-bred Cleveland, it was such a fun experience to be a tourist in my own hometown and to discover amazing places that I'd never visited. The Museum of Divine Statues was incredible - not just for the beautiful statues that stood before me, but for Lou McClung's inspiring story of passion and restoration. The tour then took us past many iconic Cleveland sights, including the Christmas Story house, the West Side Market, and the Cleveland skyline. Our last stop was at the Polka Hall of Fame, where we were treated to a tour by Joe Valencic. I learned a great deal from that experience, including that there is something called PolkAerobics!

Friday night, 134 attendees celebrated the 90th anniversary of the *Zarja* to the music of Fred Ziwich and his International Sound Machine. Bonnie Prokup and Debbie Pohar hosted a fun-filled night with a challenging trivia game, lots of raffle prizes, and a delicious variety of cakes to sample.

At Saturday's business meeting, the delegates reviewed and voted on proposed bylaw amendments and learned about the history and future of the *Zarja*. The delegates then broke into small groups to brainstorm and share ideas about retaining and attracting members. Reports about SUA social media and the member survey preceded nominations for the 2019-2023 National Board. This, for me, was one of the more impactful moments of the convention, as current and former officers spoke to the room about what their involvement in SUA had meant to them, and what their hopes were for the future of the organization. Delegates and attendees to the meeting were asked several times by those who spoke to remember that all of the officers will need the help, support, and involvement of the membership in order to be successful in their roles. We were all, as members and delegates, charged to "step up" and play a role in making sure that our organization survives and thrives. Shortly thereafter, nominations for officers were voted on, and the new officers were installed.

With these inspirational words echoing in the hearts and minds of those at the meeting, we reconvened just an hour later for the luncheon, which was an absolute feast for the senses. Delicious traditional Slovenian foods - sausages, sauerkraut, fried potatoes, oil and vinegar salad - and an incredible performance by dance group Folklorna Skupina Kres transported 141 attendees far from the Marriott Cleveland East straight to Slovenia. Attendees were then treated to two informative educational sessions on the history of Slovenian Music from experts Charles "Chuck" Debevec and Joe Valencic. Manja Lilek, who also traveled from Slovenia to attend the convention, gave a travel talk on Saturday afternoon that was interesting and engaging, and not just because slivovitz was served!

Later that evening, 161 attendees and guests gathered for the crowning event of the weekend - the SUA National Convention Banquet. Buffets of meats, potatoes, delicious salads, and vegetables lined both sides of the room as guests gathered with friends and family. The evening was MC'd by Joe Valencic and included a number of recognitions, short speeches, and awards. The prize for Best Potica was awarded to Helen Frohna from Branch 43 in Milwaukee, and attendees were able to sample a number of the delicious contest entries. After dinner, it was back to the dancefloor to the beats of the Frank Moravcik Band. Attendees left with a perfect Cleveland souvenir - a stemless "CLE" embossed wineglass - and memories to last a lifetime.

In my role of convention reporter, I had heard from others that their first convention changed their life, and as someone who often travels to conventions for my professional life, it was hard for me to imagine what they meant. But now that I have been to my first convention, I think I really understand their words. The convention was so much fun. I loved meeting and talking with people, dancing the polka, and trying my luck on the raffle basket with those beautiful wooden plates from Slovenia (alas, I have never been lucky at raffles, and the magic of the convention didn't change that!). But it was more than just fun - it really impacted me deeply. My interactions with perfect strangers who were interested in meeting me and knowing how I connected to SUA were all filled with warmth and kindness. As one of the younger delegates, I was constantly thanked for my attendance, and supported and encouraged to do more (again... I will!). I'll also say that being told countless times over the course of the weekend how young I am was a great self-image boost... and a ringing endorsement for my skincare regimen!

Perhaps the thing that impacted me the most, though, was that theme that I mentioned earlier. There seemed to be a shared sense of sadness, loss, and worry at the decline of membership, the dwindling attendance at social and cultural events, and the lack of connectedness to the younger generations. But there was also such optimism, such hope, such love and passion for the Slovenian culture, and such willingness to try new and brave things. There was creative out-of-the-box thinking and inspiring ideas. I couldn't help but think that *this* - this creativity, optimism, hope, openness, and bravery - is part of what ties all SUA members to our Slovenian roots. *This* is what it must have taken for our ancestors to create a new life in America. Surely they felt a tremendous sense of sadness, worry, and loss as they wondered what aspects of their life in Slovenia could continue on in a new and unfamiliar place, and yet their optimism carried them forward. As President Mary Lou Voelk said, we come from a very extraordinary people. And while it's amazing that, due to NBA players and White House residents, more people are becoming aware of the tiny eastern European country of Slovenia, I believe it is actually *this* - this spirit that is inside of all of us - that will make SUA and our Slovenian heritage mean something very important to generations to come.

I plan to be in Pueblo, Colorado in 2023, and I will be bringing my sisters, Jennifer and Ashley Hrovat. Now that I have published their names in a national magazine, they have to come! I can't wait to see you all again, and I hope we'll all be bringing a new friend or family member with us to make the next convention the biggest one yet. Hvala lepa, prijatelji! Until we meet again.

Allison Hrovat

Donations

Thank you! - Hvala lepa!

\$250 Donation

Frank Markelc, 43, Educational Grant

\$50 Donation

Mary Ann Teitelbaum, 40, +Mary Mlach Ferlic

\$35 Donation

Helene Kolosov, 99, SUA

\$30 Donation

Patricia Ann Schwer, 16, SUA

\$25 Donation

Anthony Bombich, 109,
+Anthony C., Sophie A. & Francis R. Bombich

Dannielle K. Burns, 26, Educational Grant

James Lah, 23, +Theresa (Laboda) Lah

Karl Dovnik, Jr., 43, +Rosalie Dovnik

Metza Jaksa Whiteley, 93, SUA

Susan Sachen, 30, +Anne Dercher Sachen

\$15 Donation

Catherine A. Kramer, 20, +Charles Kramer, husband

\$10 Donation

Karen Medved, 109, SUA

\$5 Donation

L. Maria Breszach, 99, SUA

New Members

Welcome - Dobrodošli

001, Grasse, Sue J.
001, Jumes, Patricia A.
001, Simon, Rebecca
003, Finn, Jeanne
020, Cranley, Susan
023, Homer, Apolonia
023, Logar, Jon
023, Mattila, Eric
023, Mattila, Tyler
023, Omerza, Elizabeth
026, Maitski, Andrew
026, Maitski, Tracey
030, Lovelace, Susan
030, Cecile Ebacher Ferkul
030, Obed, John
047, Filipovic, Ana Maria
047, Knopick, Mike
047, Mihevic, John A.
047, Mrowka, Jane
050, Dolinar, Matthew
050, Dolinar, Nathaniel
050, Holle, Linda
050, Krevh, Mia
093, Messina, Molly Yakshaw
109, Senk, Alexander
109, Shelendich, John

SLOVENIAN UNION OF AMERICA, INC Combined Home Office And Branches Financial Activities Year Ending December 31

REVENUES:	2018	2017
Contributions	15,613	17,001
Branch Program Events, Contributions	46,214	68,636
Membership Dues for Support	51,605	54,580
Cookbooks, Gift Shop Sales (net of cost)	1,864	5,753
Investment Income	16,411	19,312
Fund Raiser-April Showers (net of awards)	3,622	4,040
Ad Sales-Zarja & Other Misc. Income	3,050	586
TOTAL REVENUES	\$138,379	\$169,908
LESS OPERATING EXPENSES:		
Grants-Education and Heritage	500	2,000
Building-Utilities, Real Estate Tax, Maintenance, Security	9,157	9,112
Office Supplies, Salaries & Taxes	12,007	11,663
Zarja-Printing, Proofreading, Salaries, Taxes, Postage	30,081	34,822
Branch Programs & Expenses	39,124	67,584
Depreciation-Building, Equipment, Furniture	2,556	2,427
Insurance-Property, General Liability, Workers Comp, D&O	4,884	4,537
Investment Fees-First Midwest Bank	4,306	3,961
Telephone, Internet, Website, System Backup	1,631	1,272
Board Meetings, Conferences & Expenses	3,693	2,132
Membership-Printing Notices, Postage	1,383	2,227
Storage Expense	1,080	1,080
Audit Fee	0	480
Other Expenses	355	71
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$110,757	\$143,368
Excess Revenues Over Expenses	27,622	26,540
Net Assets At Beginning Of Year	422,760	415,689
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$450,382	\$442,229

Congratulations & Thank You For Your Support!

SUA's 2019 fund-raiser April's Showers of Dollars was a huge success. Your 878 entries were very much appreciated! The profit enhanced all aspects of the activities planned for Member Representatives and all attendees at SUA's 28th National Convention held in Cleveland, Ohio, June 13-16, 2019.

Top Seller Winner's List

1st Place (50 Sold) - Germaine Amato	Branch 50 - Euclid, OH	\$150
2nd Place (48 Sold) - Lori Bond	Branch 20 - Joliet, IL	\$100
3rd Place (36 Sold) - Bill Zerial	Branch 99 - Lemont, IL	\$50

Daily Entry Winners

<i>Entrant</i>	<i>Amount Won/Seller/Branch # - Location</i>
Apr 1 Ralph Shanyfelt - Pinehurst, NC \$210	Same - Br 30 - Home Office, IL
Apr 2 Gloria Brust - LaSalle, IL \$75	Same - Br 24 - LaSalle, IL
Apr 3 Genevieve Buol - Cicero, IL \$75	Same - Br 2 - Chicago, IL
Apr 4 Anne M. Antich - Darien, IL \$75	Same - Br 99 - Lemont, IL
Apr 5 Holly Buol - Chicago, IL, \$65	Genevieve Buol - Br 2- Chicago, IL
Apr 6 Jo Lustik - Joliet, IL \$75	Same - Br 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr 7 Judy Dionesse - Pueblo, CO \$75	Same - Br 3 - Pueblo, CO
Apr 8 Bill Zerial - Chicago, IL \$75	Same - Br 99 - Lemont, IL
Apr 9 Katherine Wallace - Akron, OH \$75	Same - Br 47 - Garfield Heights, OH
Apr 10 Gail Ulager - Moon Township, PA \$75	Same - Br 71 - Strabane, PA
Apr 11 Jo Ann Dryden - Winter Haven, FL \$75	Same - Br 102 - Willard, WI
Apr 12 Dakota Less - Mahtomedi, MN \$65	Mary Ann Setnicker - Br 109 - Twin Cities, MN
Apr 13 Arlette Mikulich - Aurora, MN \$75	Same - Br 35 - Aurora, MN
Apr 14 Germaine Amato - Healdsburg, CA \$75	Same - Br 50 - Euclid, OH
Apr 15 Diane Data - Peru, IL \$210	Same - Br 24 - LaSalle, IL
Apr 16 Patricia Hakala - Biwabik, MN \$75	Same - Br 35 - Aurora, MN
Apr 17 Germaine Amato - Healdsburg, CA \$75	Same - Br 50 - Euclid, OH
Apr 18 Joanna Johnston - Hawthorn Woods, IL \$65.	Dorothy Mahan - Br 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr 19 Kenneth Llewellyn - Pueblo, CO \$65	Carol Llewellyn - Br 3 - Pueblo, CO
Apr 20 Marc Lanari - N. Vancouver, BC \$65	Vida Lanari - Br 35 - Aurora, MN
Apr 21 Sam Setnicker - Mahtomedi, MN \$65	Mary Ann Setnicker - Br 109 - Twin Cities, MN
Apr 22 Barbara Pyszka - LaSalle, IL \$75	Same - Br 24 - LaSalle, IL
Apr 23 Audrey Churnovic - Crest Hill, IL \$65	Lori Bond - Br 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr 24 Vince Perez - Pueblo, CO \$65	Eileen Krasovec-Perez - Br 3 - Pueblo, CO
Apr 25 Anna Welsh - Clarendon Hills, IL \$65	Cindy Welsh - Br 20 - Joliet, IL
Apr 26 Mary Frances Mohr - Brownsburg, IN \$75	Same - Br 5 - Indianapolis, IN
Apr 27 Lou Ferrante - Munroe Falls, OH \$65	Kathleen Ferrante - Br 47 - Garfield Hts, OH
Apr 28 John C. Zore - Wausaukee, WI \$75	Same - Br 1 - Sheboygan, WI
Apr 29 Barbara Friesenhahn - Austin, TX \$75	Same - Br 5 - Indianapolis, IN
Apr 30 Lisa Platten - N. Olmsted, OH \$200	Bill Zerial - Br 99 - Lemont, IL

Top Branch Support - Sellers

80 Sellers: Branch 20, Joliet, IL
31 Sellers: Branch 43, Milwaukee, WI
25 Sellers: Branch 50, Euclid, OH
23 Sellers: Branch 3, Pueblo, CO
21 Sellers: Branch 24, LaSalle, IL

LUKA

the

SLOVENE MAVERICK

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

It's always enlightening to meet new Slovene-rooted friends at our SUA ethnic events. Judy Novak was one recent happenstance. She drives in from the Chicago suburbs to attend the festivities offered annually at the Oglesby Branch 89's Spring Slovenian Heritage Days. She was joined by her brother Ken Novak of DePue, Illinois. Judy approached me, seemingly with a purpose, and introduced herself. She began trying to persuade me to write a sports article on a young professional basketball player from the capital city of Slovenia, 20-year-old Luka Dončić. Apparently, Luka can do just about anything on the basketball floor. She and her brother predicted that Luka was so good, in fact, that he would be selected as the 2019 National Basketball Association's Rookie of the Year. They explained that Luka had been playing professional basketball in the European League for Real Madrid up until entering the 2018 NBA draft in the United States. He was selected as the third overall pick by the Atlanta Falcons. Then Atlanta promptly traded him to Dallas for point guard Trae Young and a 2019 first round pick. That proved to be Atlanta's loss and Dallas' gain, as the 6'8" combination guard/small forward did indeed draw much media attention for his skills on the court throughout his first NBA season!

What peaked my interest the most was the ensuing story Judy shared on how she and her brother were first introduced to Luka's talent. In August 2017, she and Ken were visiting Slovenia and being entertained by relatives. The two were having dinner with a party of ten relatives at the Gostilna Na Gradu restaurant. The rustic stone-walled restaurant is located within the Archer's Tower of the 15th century Ljubljana medieval castle. To get



to the castle grounds and restaurant, you ride a glass funicular railway vertically up the castle hillside that escorts you to the stunning panoramic views overlooking the capital city of Ljubljana. As Judy and Ken were finishing supper and preparing to leave, they were asked if they had ever heard of the Slovenian professional basketball player, Luka Dončić. Luka was playing in an exhibition game later that evening in the ultra-modern sports venue, Arena Stožice, north of city center in Ljubljana. Ken and Judy were offered



tickets to attend. Both Ken and Judy being avid Chicago Bulls fans, were eager to accept the tickets. The national teams of Slovenia and of Croatia were scheduled to play in a big rivalry game between the two countries on that evening of August 24, 2017. The arena was packed that night. Each team featured stars on loan from either the NBA or FIBA Euro on their squads. Slovenia's showcase included Luka

Dončić (third overall 2018 NBA Draft selection), Goran Dragić (current Miami Heat), and Anthony Randolph (former Golden State Warrior). Croatia featured Dario Šarić (Minnesota Timberwolves) and Bojan Bogdanović (former Indiana Pacer, now Utah Jazz) amongst many other talented EuroBasket League players. A record 12,000 fans showed up to witness Slovenia ultimately defeating Croatia 74-73 in this thrilling Balkan rivalry.

Judy Novak was pretty impressed with young Luka's play. After learning from her brother that Luka was entering the USA's National Basketball Association draft, and being a Chicago Bulls fan, Judy felt compelled to write to John Paxson, the Chicago Bull's Executive Vice President of Basketball Operations. In her letter, she extolled Luka's talent and encouraged the team to draft Dončić. She even addressed Luka's basketball sense and strengths that he had to offer the Bulls, explaining that she had seen him play first-hand in Slovenia. As an added enticement, Judy included a tempter statement in her letter, writing in a postscript, *"P.S. And if you do pick him, Melania will whisk over some homemade Slovenian potica for your first victory celebration!"* Well, Luka was drafted, but not to the Bulls. No White House potica for the Bulls! They should have heeded her advice! Judy and her brother Ken did have an opportunity to see Luka play again when the Dallas Mavericks played against the Chicago Bulls this past season. On Monday, November 12, 2018 the Bulls lost to the Mavericks 103 - 98. Luka scored 11 points and had 3 assists.

Luka Dončić is just 20 years old. He was born in Ljubljana on February 28, 1999 to Mirjam Poterbin, a former athlete and now a business owner of several beauty salons, and Saša Dončić, a current Euro basketball coach and former professional basketball player. His parents reported that his love of basketball was evident even when he was a toddler. At age seven, he began playing organized basketball at his primary school in Ljubljana. His opponents at the time were up to ten years old. Dončić once reflected to a reporter, *"I was always training and playing with older kids who had much more experience than me. Many of them were bigger and faster than me too, so I had to beat them with my brain."* He grew up going to games in Ljubljana where his father played pro basketball for the top club. He became the ball boy and mopped the floor during his father's games. His parents split up when Dončić was just eight years old, and his mother became his primary caretaker. Luka drew much attention as a youth player for Union Olimpija, an amateur club program in Ljubljana. At the age of 13, he was recruited to join a developmental youth academy sponsored by the professional basketball franchise, Real Madrid, in Madrid, Spain. Real Madrid is a member of Europe's top tier professional basketball league. His parents had to make

the difficult decision for him to sign a five-year contract. It meant leaving Slovenia, leaving his friends, and learning to speak a new language. His mother had parental custody and moved with him to Madrid. Three years later he debuted on the senior side of the club team at age 16, the youngest player in club history. Two years later, he led Madrid to the 2018 Euro League title, winning the Euro League MVP and Final Four MVP awards. He was also named the ACB Most Valuable Player and won back-to-back Euro League Rising Star and ACB Best Young Player awards. When he entered the NBA draft in 2018, he was widely seen as one of the best and most accomplished European prospects of his generation. *Slam* magazine considered him as the "best international prospect ever," and sports website *SB Nation* called him the "most accomplished NBA prospect in decades." After the Mavericks traded for Dončić on draft day, his mother moved to Dallas to be close and supportive. She now lives in a separate apartment building but within walking distance to Luka's apartment. She helps with things outside of basketball, offering advice to him on decisions with his agent and lending support. Luka currently shares a Dallas high-rise apartment with his girlfriend, Slovenian model Anamaria Goltes, and their two Pomeranians, Hugo and Rey. Mirjam Poterbin, too, has been made to feel welcome in North Texas and has become a celebrity of her own.

It seems fitting that Luka was traded to the Dallas Mavericks. In a way, he is a "maverick" of sorts, given his young age in the pros and his amazing accomplishments and awards. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "maverick" as an unbranded range animal. The word "mavericks" is an old western reference first given to the stubborn longhorns on the Texas prairies, but the word also applied to the lone cowboys who wrangled those beasts. That nickname aptly fits the NBA Dallas Maverick versatile small forward, Luka Dončić. He was able to wrestle the 2019 NBA Rookie of the Year Award out of the hands of the other talented basketball beasts roaming the NBA range. **Dončić averaged 21.2 points, 7.8 rebounds, and 6.0 assists this past rookie season.**



Luka with Anamaria.



Luka with NBA Rookie of the Year Award 2019.

Luka's former teammate on the Slovenian National Team, Goran Dragić, has been a stand-out guard for NBA's Miami Heat for five seasons. Dragić, too, came out of the Euro League and was drafted in the second round by the San Antonio Spurs. He has been playing in the NBA since 2008. Dončić's first NBA clash against his fellow Slovenian friend obviously became a classic Slovene showdown. Luka and

Goran are the only two current NBA players from Slovenia. The March 28, 2019 game enticed over 2,000 Slovenian fans to journey by plane to American Airlines Arena in Miami, Florida and watch their country's two homegrown basketball stars. To many of these fans, it was their first time coming to America. The pre-game revelry quickly took on a life of its own along Miami's Biscayne Bay. Hundreds of Slovenian fans gathered at Segafredo Bayside draped in Slovenian flags and attire and belted out Slovenian songs before



Slovene fans at Miami vs Dallas pre-game. the Dončić-Dragić face off. The Slovenian fans were easily identifiable in the stands as many wore green scarves and T-shirts that read "I Feel sLOVEnia" with images depicting countrymen Dončić and Dragić. Hundreds of faces in the crowd had temporary tattoos of the Slovenian flag on their cheeks. The National press printed that the arena took on a European soccer match atmosphere with the crowd constantly roaring and chanting equally for both homegrown players. Miami Heat coach, Erik Spoelstra, told reporters after the game, "It felt like we were in Ljubljana". It didn't seem to matter which team won to the visiting Slovenia fans; only the play of their two stars was important. The game stayed close, but the Heat won 105-99. The Heat's ten-year veteran, Goran Dragić, recorded 23 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists. The Maverick's rookie, Luka Dončić, scored a team-high 19 points.

Dončić and Dragić exchange NBA jerseys after Miami-Dallas game 2019.





Internet sensation Hugo S. Meker.

in of Judy and Ken Novak. On the occasion of Anamaria's birthday, Luka presented her with a male Pomeranian puppy. Luka knew he'd be on the road frequently, and a puppy could keep her company. They named the golden fluff ball, Hugo S. Meker. Hugo, who travels all over the world with his "mommy and daddy," has opened his own profile on the social Internet and has become an international Instagram sensation! At the time of this *Zarja* deadline, Hugo had over 10,000 followers. Hugo also has a brother, an adopted Pomeranian named Rey Radončić. You can follow both dogs' escapades and travels on Instagram by their profile names of "hugosmeker" and "reyradoncic".

Luka isn't the only star in his family. His girlfriend is Anamaria Goltes, a Slovenian model who just happens to be the 4th cousin-

from Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle before taking the stage to accept the trophy. Ken must have had a smile a mile wide after watching the NBA Awards and seeing Luka accepting the coveted rookie award. Both Judy and Ken Novak tried to make me a believer that Dončić is a once in a lifetime athlete. Barring any injuries, he should shine as an NBA star for many years and make all of us with Slovenian genes proud!



Luka's mother Mirjam Poterbin, grandmother Milena Poterbin, and girlfriend Anamaria Goltes.

Back to Ken Novak's prediction about Luka winning the Rookie of the Year Award. Well, Ken, you were absolutely correct! The 2019 NBA Awards were revealed at the 2019 NBA Awards on Monday, June 24, 2019 at Barker Hangar in Los Angeles. Luka Dončić did indeed beat out the other two candidates, receiving 98 of the 100 first-place ballots among media balloting. Atlanta's Trae Young, the player who was traded for Dončić on draft night last June, earned the other two first-place votes. After Luka's name was announced, he hugged his mother, then his grandmother, kissed his girlfriend, and received congratulations



***Novak Family in Ljubljana [left to right]:
Ela & Joze Filipcic, Tjasa & Klemen Kolenc, Judy Novak &
Ken Novak (sister & brother), Marusa Feges, and Tevz & Luka Kolenc.***



The State of Gastronomy

Hiša Franko

My wife and I watch way too many cooking shows, and by default we have become self-proclaimed foodies. When planning our most recent trip to Europe, we made sure that we secured reservations for the internationally famous Hiša Franko in Slovenia. Ana Roš, the world's number one female chef in 2017 according to the World's Best 50 Restaurants guide, creates experiences with food at her restaurant.

Everything about the Hiša Franko is an experience. To get there one has to drive through some of the most beautiful mountains and valleys of Slovenia following the Soča River. We arrived about thirty minutes before seating. We were greeted by the receptionist and offered chilled glasses of the local prosecco. While we were sitting in the courtyard, Ana Roš herself came out and greeted us. She asked us if we were ready for a roller-coaster of experiences. This evening dinner was unique because Joris Bijdendijk, a one star Michelin chef from the Netherlands, was joining Chef Roš in the kitchen. Together they prepared for us a "Trip to Heaven" and took us from earth to heaven and back again with a meal divided into three tiers and twenty-four tastings.

During the first tier, we started with langoustine and trout egg, curry emulsion, wrapped with a radish garnish. This superb creation was Joris's, but Ana's wild herb taco made from deep fried sunflower could have been served to the gods. Joris brought us down to earth with a cabbage broth that your favorite tata could have made. Chef Roš matched the earthiness with a lamb brain and a cranberry beignet.

These bites were separated from the bites by the nataša durič - spelt sour bread with molasses served with cultured butter and bee pollen - a heavenly way to reach nirvana. We continued the trip from the zenith of the scallops to the valley of the Čompe s skuto. Each chef guided us



in every direction to touch all of our taste buds. Even the smoked ice cubes in the whiskey cocktail tantalized our tongues. The final tier brought us to the sweet bites, and again Ana spun her magic and made us believe in the impossible.



Part of the “Trip to Heaven” included a wine pairing. “Wine not?” they asked. So I said, “Sure.” It was a trip around the vineyards of Slovenia. Valter Kramar is Ana’s husband and the wine expert at Hiša Franko. The restaurant is named after his father. Valter runs the wine and cheese cellar.

Chef Ana Ros is a strong woman. She came to the kitchen late in life. It wasn’t until she met Valter Kramar that she started to cook. Until that time, she worked in the diplomatic corps. In her travels she absorbed the tastes and techniques of many regions. Because she was not formally trained, she is not beholden to any particular traditions. Her philosophy of food is elemental - environmentally so. Ana says, “As I see it, the kitchen is a symbiosis of three elements: the territory, the season, and the personality of the chef.”

I love people who think outside the box. One must think in a world that is dominated by men, Ana has had to be iconoclastic. Her gender in some circles of the profession



would preclude her from reaching the heights she has climbed. She is this strong woman. She leads the way - her own way. In my unorthodoxy, I asked her what she makes only for herself as a treat and eats in the sanctuary of her own solitude. In her true elemental fashion, she says she loves fruits and vegetables. When she treats herself, she makes a salad. I also asked her, “In your giftedness, do people invite you to dinner?” She replied, “I think that honestly people are often scared to cook for me... I’m probably one of the simplest diners who likes in her time off very direct and very honest food.”



Ana Roš and her husband, Valter, own and operate one of the top fifty restaurants in the world. *The Slovenia* declared it the 2018 Overall National Winner. Chef Ana Roš gave us this “Trip to Heaven” as she called it. It was a once in a lifetime meal. I included a map of this trip just in case you find your way to Hiša Franko.

- James Lah, Branch 23

Four hand diners are always an amazing journey. Two chefs, four hands. Ah, far away from 4 hands only: two different philosophies, two different back grounds, different approaches to the same ingredients, different techniques. From Amsterdam to Staro selo, welcome to today's rollovermaster.

Joris Bijlrooy is a one Michelin star chef and since 2014 executive chef of Rijks, the restaurant of Rijksmuseum.

And guys, you know all about me!

Feel welcome
Ana

150 €

FINGER BITES

- Langoustine and trout eggs, curry emulsion (joris)
- Trout skin (ana)
- Trout liver with pumpkin chips, pumpkin flower (ana)
- Wild herb taco, hazelnut miso (ana)
- Cabbage hush, farmers brown, egg yolk (joris)
- Lamb brain and preserved cranberry beigne (ana)

TABLE BITES

Natalia Durić: spelt sour bread with molasses, cultured butter with bee pollen

Scallops /
Codrum dressing, red skin radish (joris)

Cuttlefish lard /
Fried bread soaked in white asparagus milk, pine nut, ramoson sprouts (ana)

Gaspacho /
Green gaspacho, avocado (joris)

Croque à la mode /
Potato cooked in August hay, fermented cottage cheese, smoked chocolate (ana)

Conquette /
White bean, ají Amarillo, mango (joris)

Lamb and crab /
Pulled Dordogne lamb and crab wrap, lamb broth, egg yolk filled with anchovies milk (ana)

Tartelette sweetbread /
Ginger, green peas (joris)

Trout /
Whey, poppy seeds, beetroot, ground ivy and watercress (ana)

Millefeuille of beetroot /
Tomato 24 months beurre blanc, parsley oil (joris)

Tripe /
Pin cheese fondue, salad of white asparagus, fried nettles and fava beans (ana)

Holy Trinity /
Leide cheese, buttermilk sorbet, miso buttercake, dried grapes (joris)

Beerwax /
Peaches and elder blossom (ana)

(Re)volution of Kobariški Srulcelj /
Parsnip, apple, walnut and pork crackling dumpling glazed with pork fat
Smoked pork crine brûlée, was dried plums, honey-dish (ana)

SWEET BITES (ana)

- Whey and hazelnut
- Whey and cardamom
- Rosehip bombon
- Compressed apricot, Kompanička goat cheese

WINE NOT ? 85 €



Slovenian

Union of America

Across America - Branch Reports

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Contact information: Mary Ann Schellinger

920.457.7946/rhmas@yahoo.com

With the sun shining on a beautiful Holy Saturday, many Slovenians gathered at Ss Cyril & Methodius for the traditional blessing of the Easter baskets/food done by Fr. Paul Fliss. It was great to see so many people attend, especially a lot of younger families. I think there were over 30 baskets full of goodies and even a blessing for the jelly beans.



On May 14th, we gathered at Rupp's Riverdale in Sheboygan to honor Mary Sandwick, President of our branch, as Member of the Year. She was presented with a Slovenian calendar, slippers, and a set of Union beer glasses from Slovenia. It was nice to see that many members of her family were able to attend the event. After the dinner we played "Wheel of Fortune" (minus the wheel) using American and Slo-





venian words in the puzzles. The game is always a fun way to learn some of the traditional language. Mary truly is the sparkplug that ignites the enthusiasm of the members of our branch.

MARY ANN SCHELLINGER



BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information:

719.569.7125/amtcharron@gmail.com

Branch 3 honored our Member of the Year, Mary Frances Kelley, during the annual Mother's Day luncheon held on May 6 at Park East Restaurant.

Slovenian activities in the summer months in the Pueblo area included two Slovenian tennis players participating



Branch 3 members, Kay Perko (left) and Halcyon Mathis (right) with Gaspar Okroznik and Kaja Rajh, tennis players from the Maribor area of Slovenia.

in the annual Candy Cup Tennis Tournament held over the Memorial Day weekend and the Preseren picnics in Rye, Colorado in June and August. The Slovenian community hosted a dinner and auction in support of the tennis players on May 22 at St. Joseph's Hall in the Grove neighborhood of Pueblo. The tennis players, Gasper Okroznik and Kaja Rajh, are from the Maribor area of Slovenia; Maribor is one of Pueblo's sister cities.

Branch 3 will sponsor buses to the Cripple Creek casinos in September and October. Please send an email to amtcharron@gmail.com for the exact dates, if interested. The annual Slovenian Heritage Dinner at St. Mary's is scheduled for Saturday, November 2, 2019.

After the summer break, monthly branch meetings will resume on Tuesday, October 1 at 12:30 p.m. in St. Mary's church hall.

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON &
BARBARA KARLINGER

BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana

Greetings to all Branch 5 Members! Hope you kept cool during our long, hot summer and are now enjoying the beautiful Indiana autumn with its cool nights and gorgeous colors on the trees!

Thank you to all the members who came to the Nash for our SUA sponsored lasagna dinner! It was a big success! The Nash has become the "hub" for most of our local Slovenian organizations, and the upkeep on an aging building is neverending. Please consider making a donation to the Slovenian National Home building fund!

Thank you to the 2019 SUA Convention Committee! Our representative at the Cleveland convention, Karen Zarich, said it was so organized and everyone was so welcoming! Thanks for all your hard work!

Mark your calendars! Sunday October 13 will be the annual "TASTE OF SLOVENIA" dinner. Each year an authentic Slovenian dinner is prepared and served at the Nash, cooked by members of KSKJ and SUA. These dinners bring back memories of Grandma's green bowl that she would send home with Dad after a visit... you never knew what would be in it, but it would always be good! Check KSKJ or Nash websites for reservation information.

Mark your calendars! On Sunday December 8, at 1:00, the SUA Annual Holiday Dinner at the Iron Skillet is scheduled! Get your holidays started right with a feast of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, salads, biscuits, and desserts! Always a fun event, and always a great way to visit with SUA families and friends! RSVP to Mary and Karen, or Phyllis by phone or text. Phyllis 317.373.6655. Hope you can join us!

Did You Know? Each year, Indianapolis hosts the INDY 500 Mini Marathon Race at the beginning of May, and the race route goes right past the Slovenian National Home on 10th Street! As the runners race past on their way to the



Nora Fon and Ava Cline, SUA Junior Members at INDY 500 MINI MARATHON cheering on Aunt Betsy Walker and Mom Sara Cline.

finish line, they are greeted by Slovenian polka music! This year, two SUA members (and sisters) Betsy Walker and Sara Cline, ran the Mini in pouring down rain, alongside 35,000 other runners! They said they never would have finished the race if it wasn't for the polka music urging them on and the Long's donuts that Jennifer Velikan gave them at the Nash! JV, you saved the day! Congratulations to all who ran the Mini!

Hope you can join us this fall for some events! Check the Nash Facebook page for additional events, including the Halloween Party and Grape Arbor Dance.

Have a Blessed Holiday season! Happy Thanksgiving! Merry Christmas! Safe Travels! Peace and Love.

MARY, KAREN, &
PHYLLIS



SUA members Sara Cline and Betsy Walker running in the INDY 500 MINI MARATHON.

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Contact Information: Georgene Agnich
773.205.1326/jamesschaible1469@att.net

We extend our sympathy to member Jeanne Just and her family in the loss of her husband John, who passed away on June 18, 2019.

Members Charlene Kobe, Jeanne Warsaw, Diane Hohenwater, and Sandy Rodeghero had a great time at the June 13-16 SUA National Convention in Cleveland. We congratulate the four national board members who were elected, and we wish them luck in their respective offices.

Several members volunteered to work at the annual St. Joseph Church Homecoming Fair on June 23 at St. Joseph Park. Among them were Mary Fran Smaron (dinner tickets), Jo Lustik and Marla Lustik (liquor booth), Barb Guardia (bake sale), and Pat Butterbach and Pat Figuirowski (bingo). Others seen enjoying the food, music, raffles, games of chance, and the company of family and friends included Eileen Plese, Rosemary Rogel, Mike Vidmar, Diane Hohenwater, Scott Hohenwater, Georgene Agnich, Bernice Ramsak, Sylvia Churnovic, Joyce Vicich, Dennis Cohil, and Ron Erjavec. Ray Koncar and his wife, Annette, hosted the St. Joseph Grade School reunion classes in their roles as co-curators of the Ancel Center.

Several members attended the special 6:30 p.m. celebrated Mass in honor of Maria Pomagaj on May 23 at St. Joseph Church in Joliet. The Mass and reception later in Ferdinand Hall were again sponsored by the KSKJ. This year marks the 125th anniversary of the KSKJ, which was founded in Joliet in April, 1894. We salute and congratulate our fellow Slovenian-Americans of the KSKJ on this historic occasion that will be commemorated at the 4 p.m. Mass on Saturday, August 17, 2019 at St. Joseph Church.

Our May 21 Member of the Year banquet at St. Joseph Parish Hall was a happy occasion, with 47 members enjoying a delicious dinner and cake prepared by Branch 99 member Lillian Cepen, followed by Slovenian favorites played on the button box by Ray Koncar.

We celebrated St. Joseph Day and St. Patrick's Day



The Marija Pomagaj altar at St. Joseph Church, Joliet.

at our annual St. Joseph Table on March 19 at St. Joseph Parish Hall. Members brought a dish to pass; the meal also included catered fried chicken. We held a brief meeting after dinner in preparation for our April bake sale.

GEORGENE AGNICH

BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Zivijo! Our May luncheon was held at The Maples in Peru on Thursday, May 23 with around 20 members attending. Hostesses for the afternoon were Barb Krogulski, Paula Iman, and Sandy Ernat. Spring flowers were door prizes.

Barbara Pohar and daughters have again volunteered to host our summer picnic at their lovely home on Thursday, August 15. It is a beautiful setting for good Slovenian food, music, and lively conversation.

I was the Member Representative to the SUA National Convention in Cleveland in June. The Ohio branches did an outstanding job hosting our membership. Business meetings were held on Friday and Saturday mornings with a full agenda each day. My overall takeaway from the meetings are: 1 - We have 2,367 total members of which only 162 are junior members, and membership is down 35%. A membership initiative is needed to bring up those numbers. 2 - We are in good financial shape as an organization partly due to the success of the last cookbook. 3 - The Home Office/ Museum in Joliet, despite being a treasure, is in dire need of repairs, especially plumbing and brick encapsulation. An increase of \$5 per year in dues (earmarked mainly for Home Office repairs) is in order. 4 - The world trend is toward becoming paperless; therefore, please pay your dues when you see the notice in the Fall or Winter issue of *Zarja*, saving postage and paper for mailing reminders. 5 - Social media (SUA Facebook page) and e-mailing are necessary tools in communication with our membership. If you haven't tried it, don't be afraid; it is very simple

to get started. 6 - Pueblo, Colorado is the location for the 2023 convention. New National officers were elected. I'm looking forward to exciting new ideas and programs from them. I picked up a few ideas from our group meetings and conversations with other branches as to what keeps members interested in attending meetings. Have you ever played Slovenian Bingo? It may be happening at a future Branch 24 meeting!!

The highlight for me of the non-business portion of the convention was the bus tour with a stop at the Museum



Diane Data with "Slovenian gentlemen."



Restored statue of the Virgin Mary at Museum of Statues.



Showcase at the Polka Hall of Fame.

of Divine Statues in Lakewood, Ohio. Lou McClung, a restoration artist, purchased St. Hedwig's Church after it was decommissioned by the Cleveland Catholic Diocese. His mission is to rescue and restore religious statues to preserve their history. It was an awesome experience walking through his museum and viewing his work. Dober Dan!

DIANE DATA

BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Contact Person: Jan Gehm

414.321.1413/twogames@wi.rr.com

Much of our June meeting was spent discussing the SUA Convention held in Cleveland, Ohio in June. Several of our members attended the convention as guests along with our branch representative, Helen Frohna, Regional President Jackie Smith, and National Corresponding/Recording Secretary, Denise Bartlett. All agreed that the event was an outstanding one. In the absence of our branch represen-

tative a written report was given of the convention meeting proceedings. Denise and Jackie reported on other happenings during this convention. For the second time, Helen Frohna won the pot-

ica baking contest. Helen thanks her mom for her skill





at making this delicacy. Congratulations, Helen!

The tentative date for Martinovance is set for November 9, 2019. More plans will be discussed at our next meeting in September. Mark your calendars for

Best wishes and congratulations to Becky and Nick Wainio who were married on June 22, 2019. May you both enjoy a life of happiness and good health. Becky is the daughter of Jim and Kathy Kaye.

Please join us for our next meeting on Wednesday, September 23, 2019, at noon at the West Allis Library.

MICI BREGANT

BRANCH 47 - Garfield Heights, Ohio

Our branch members along with members of Branch 50 would like to thank those who attended the 28th SUA National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio this past June. It was a labor of love for all of us. We also had a lot of fun in the process. We met our goal of working hard to "keep our legacy alive!"

Please note that our September 14th meeting has changed to Panera Bread in Solon at 11:00 a.m. See you there! Have a beautiful autumn!

KATHLEEN FERRANTE



December 7, 2019. The date of our annual Christmas Party.

Sincere condolences are extended to the family of Tillie Kvedar who recently passed away. Tillie was a long-time member of our branch.



ATTENTION

All Ohio SUA Members Let's Unite!

I realize change can be difficult, but as we all know it's constant. It's time for all our struggling Ohio branches to come together as one strong active branch.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend a meeting on Saturday, September 14th at 11:00 a.m. at Panera Bread at 6130 Kruse Drive in Solon. At this time, we will work out the details for a smooth transition.

We have a room reserved for our meeting, and afterwards we can order lunch and chat. To ensure we have adequate room, please RSVP to Kathy Ferrante – call at home 330.688.4949, text or call 330.730.8951, or email me at kjferrante@gmail.com.

Even if you are unable to attend, I'd appreciate a call or email with your thoughts on uniting. I look forward to seeing you there as we all work for the success of the Slovenian Union of America.

*Kathleen Ferrante
Ohio Regional President*

BRANCH 89 - Oglesby, Illinois

Contact Information: Barbara Bruch
815.228.0765/barbarabruch@yahoo.com

Branch 89 had another successful Slovenian Heritage Day; next year's date will be Saturday, April 4. National Board officer Diane Hohenwater came with her husband and was the winner of our red carnations bouquet. Thank you to everyone who worked to make it such a nice day.

We had three junior members graduate from high school this year. We are proud of our graduates: Annaliesse Sabotta, Josie Walter, and Jordan Duffin.

Jordan has graduated from Pekin High School and will be studying Graphic Arts at Illinois Central College. She achieved high honors in a statewide art competition for a pin she designed commemorating the 100th anniversary of the invention of the pinball machine, which is part of Illinois history and was first manufactured in Chicago. The pin is now being made and will compete with pins from the other 49 states on a national level. Pinball machines were the predecessor of today's video games and are still found.



Jordan has visited Slovenia twice and enjoys the history, beauty, and culture. She has several cousins her age that she keeps in touch with. She has been a SUA member since she was four years old and her great grandmother, Aloiza Kernz, was a charter member and first treasurer of Branch 89. Jordan is a fifth-generation member of Branch 89. She has attended SUA conventions and enjoys her Slovenian heritage by helping prepare the Žegen meal with her family and making butara, potica, and strudel. Good Luck Jordan!

BARBARA BRUCH

BRANCH 100 - Southern California

Contact Information: Jean Koci
949.495.0097/ajkoci@cox.net

Save the date for our annual Christmas luncheon to be held at Fratello's Italian Restaurant in San Clemente at noon or before on Saturday, December 14th. More details will be announced via email or otherwise.

JEAN KOCI

BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

Contact Information: Bernadette Fitzsimmons
bettekfitz@verizon.net

Branch 108 was well represented at the wonderful, festive SUA National Convention in Cleveland. Bernadette Fitzsimmons was the branch representative and was delighted to be warmly welcomed completely by surprise by the entire Konchar family, five of whom are members of 108. Bonnie Pausic and her husband Mike, a native from Cleveland, also attended but made it known beforehand that they would be present, not expecting all this company. We had



Branch 108 members: (left to right) standing is Dejan Valentincic, Grandpa Frank Konchar, Bernadette Fitzsimmons, Bonnie and Mike Pausic. Sitting (left to right) Natalie and Noelle Konchar, Sonja and her husband.



Branch 108 members, Bernadette with the Konchar family.

the best time together, sharing our family stories, meeting one another, connecting with new people and enjoying the

presentations, music, dancing, and Slovenian-style food. We were like an extended family from one of the smallest branches in the SUA.

The Konchar family made this convention a family reunion: grandpa Frank Konchar from Asheville, North Carolina, his son Frank, wife Natalie and daughter Noelle from Etters, Pennsylvania, Grandpa Frank's daughter Katie from Tallahassee, Florida, her husband and one-year-old son, and Grandpa Frank's daughter Sonja and her husband came from the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area. There was laughter, lots of toasts in Slovenian "na zdravje," sharing our heritage, and our desire to learn about our Slovenian roots. The Konchar family also made time to visit the Slovenian Genealogy Society International, Inc. (SGSI) in downtown Cleveland to learn about their Slovenian History. Congratulations and best of luck is extended to member Noelle Konchar, the recipient of the SUA Collegiate Scholarship award to assist her in completing a degree in nursing.



Bonnie and Mike Pavsic, 108 members dancing to the band.

All our branch members attended the DNA presentation and testing seminar and other activities throughout the weekend. There was much to learn and imagining meeting our ancestors in the future. The celebration of family, culture, and Slovenian history will shine bright in our memories forever to bind us together in continuing our quest to carry on with our varied Slovenian interests.



Joseph Vodlan and Bernadette Fitzsimmons.



Genevieve Buol of Branch 2 and Bernadette Fitzsimmons with her first book translation "The Hill Beyond Grandpa's House," which Genevieve won at the raffle.



Dejan Valentincic and Bernadette Fitzsimmons at the SUA Convention.

Also in June, Branch 108 members met at The Embassy of Slovenia for the Armed Forces Day celebration and had the opportunity to meet in person Congressman Paul Gosar of Arizona. It was great to gather once again with members near and far, like Karl Ocepek who drove out with his cousin from Downingtown, Pennsylvania to attend the event.

Stay tuned for information about our branch picnic and member appreciation meeting.

Understanding Slovenian Sayings by Bernadette:

Dež lije kakor iz škafa.

It's pouring rain as if it's from a pail.

Dober prijatelj je boljši kot denar.

A good friend is better than money.

BERNADETTE FITZSIMMONS

BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities (TC) of Minnesota

Contact Information: Elaine Barthelemy

elaineab@yahoo.com

Twin Cities Slovenians Branch 109 brought an incredible mix of Slovenian music and culture to Minnesota during



Elaine Barthelemy, Louise Morgan, Vonny Rohloff, Patrice Pakiz, Sue Rademacher in Branch 109 Slovenian booth at the Festival of Nations.



Mike Cardina helps a young man find Slovenia on the map.



Embassy of Slovenia Armed Forces Day: (left to right) Karl Ocepek and his cousin Renee, Nika Kovacic, Lynn Koiner, Juliana Fitzsimmons, Congressman Paul Gosar, Bernadette Fitzsimmons. and Ambassador to Slovenia Stane Vudovic.

the month of May starting with the Festival of Nations in St. Paul. Following this year's theme of *World Festivals and Celebration*, co-chairs Sue Rademacher and Mike Koski, supported by Marian Brezovec, organized another entertaining exhibit that featured our own statue of poet France Prešeren along with Sue's painting of the Church of the Annunciation. Thousands of fairgoers, including many students, attended

from around the Midwest and many stopped at our booth to get a brochure and learn more about Slovenia. Thanks to the over thirty volunteers who worked in the booth or helped in other ways.



Lizette Miller helps students get "Slovenia" stamps in their festival passport booklet.

Sundin Music Hall at Hamline University in St. Paul provided amazing acoustics for Krila, a group of eleven singers who traveled from Slovenia to entertain us in beautiful a cappella harmony. Just three notes in, tears came as I thought about how much my mother would have loved hearing their music. Krila's repertoire included Slovenian folk songs and as well as music about Slovenia that prompted us to clap along. A slide show of the gorgeous countryside and the enthusiasm of the singers added to the experience. Thanks to Slovenian Consulate Miro Medved and his bride of 50 years, Karen Medved, for organizing this show and for housing the 13 Slovenian travelers, to Silvester Vičič for facilitating the venue, and to Twin Cities Slovenians for co-presenting this concert. Afterward we enjoyed potica served by Denise Perhay, Ruth Pechauer, and



Krila a cappella group from Slovenia.

Cindy Gauthier and were able to meet the singers, many who had been singing together for twenty-seven years.



Karen and Miro Medved with part of the Krila group after their performance.

Our final general meeting of the year was another musical event held at the Roseville American Legion. The Singing Slovenes (Minnesota Ambassadors of Traditional Slovenian Music) from Duluth performed many Slovenian favorites while attendees danced to lively polkas and romantic waltzes. Thanks to organizers Jean and Chuck Podominick, Mary Ann Setnick, and Cindy Gauthier, we had delicious food, tempting raffle prizes, and a great time with members and guests.



The Singing Slovenes played wonderful music.

Our branch had a strong showing at the SUA National Convention in Cleveland including delegates Norm and MaryAnn Setnick as well as many other attendees. Chuck Debevec made us proud with his presentation *Slovenian Music History to 1940*.

ELAINE BARTHELEMY

WE CHALLENGE YOU!

From Ely, Minnesota - Branch 23

After receiving an informative write-up of the National Convention by our Member Representative Judy Ostrander, our branch agreed to donate \$100 to fund needed upgrades, specifically the plumbing at the home office and the museum/library in Joliet.

****This plumbing needs to be fixed!****

- Members of Branch 23 now challenge all branches and individual SUA members to match our \$100.
- Donating is tax deductible! It will take 100 matches to come forward to reach \$10,000.
- I have talked with President Voelk, and she personally is matching our donation. Thank you Mary Lou!

Sincerely,

Pat Koski, President Branch 23

By Check:

Payable to SUA/Plumbing 431 N Chicago St., Joliet, IL 60431

By Credit Card:

SUA website: slovenianunion.org

Click on DONATE and Designate: Plumbing

What a great idea Branch 23!

Only 97 matches to go!

And of course the *Zarja* editing team of Bonnie and Debbie will be matching too.

Video for ZarjaFest 2018 Travelers

John Mihevic has video clips of the 2018 ZarjaFest trip. The video consists of MP4 video files on a flash drive that can be viewed on a computer. Each MP4 file is one day of the 2018 ZarjaFest trip. There is a pdf file with a detailed timeline index of the 9-day tour. You can view any part of the trip that interests you. Using the timeline index, you can “jump to” a point of interest. Some topics include the following: Tour of Bled, Lake Bohinj, Urban’s solo at Sevnica Castle, Slovenia History, Folklore Traditions, Zalec’s (on the square) Beer Fountain, and much more!



If you are interested in a flash drive of the trip, send an e-mail to John at jamihevic@msn.com with your mailing address, and he will send you the flash drive and timeline index (no charge).

Join the Slovenian Union of America

May 27 - June 6, 2020

SLOVENIA 2020

Tour Highlights:

- Accommodation at hotels, taxes, & luggage handling
- Professional English-speaking tour guide
- Deluxe motor coach
- Breakfast daily
- Welcome to Slovenia dinner party
- Cooking class with dinner and drinks
- Two wine tasting experiences with traditional snacks
- Travel back in time on an old steam train through the Julian Alps
- Driving tour of the Goriška Brda area with famous WWII sites
- Goriška Brda regional gostilna dinner party
- Visit WWII Franja Partisan Hospital
- Walking tour of Piran
- Lunch on the Adriatic Sea
- Sunset boat cruise on the Adriatic Sea
- Gewerkenegg Castle
- Žlikrofi presentation and lunch at Kendov Dvorec Manor
- Walking tour of Ljubljana
- Meeting with genealogy expert Peter Hawlina and visit to the Archives
- Honey tasting & visit with a beekeeper
- Pogača demonstration and tasting
- Lamb roast picnic-style dinner in Zuzemberk
- Cable car to Velika Planina
- Lunch in a mountain hut
- Farewell to Slovenia dinner party with music & dancing

Secure your spot now as we are limiting the number of participants.

Cost: \$2,580 per person (*Land Only*) based on two (2) in a room. Single Supplement - \$499

Call Olivera Baumgartner at Kollander Travel: 800.800.5981/216.692.1000 x 7007

or olivera@kollander.com for further information or to book this tour.

SLOVENIA 2020

DAY 1, Wednesday, May 27

Let the celebration begin as we depart for lovely Slovenia.

DAY 2, Thursday, May 28: BLEĐ

Upon arrival at the Ljubljana airport, we meet our Tour Director and Bus Driver and transfer to Hotel Park in Bled. The evening festivities begin during cocktail hour while we begin creating long-lasting friendships. The night continues with a delicious meal and of course live music. HOTEL PARK, BLEĐ (D)

DAY 3, Friday, May 29: BLEĐ

After breakfast our Tour Director will host an informational meeting for all those who need help on how to spend their free time in charming Bled. You have many choices including a visit to the fairytale Bled Castle, a pletna boat ride to the island, a walk around the lake, shopping, or a spa treatment at our hotel. In the early afternoon, we travel to Gostilna *Skaručna* for a highly entertaining **cooking class**. The chef will roll out the red carpet as we are greeted with welcome drinks and his staff is ready to show us an amazing time. Get ready to prepare traditional Slovenian dishes with entertainment during the whole process. Our evening gets better when we enjoy the efforts from our labor which are paired up with delicious wines. HOTEL PARK, BLEĐ (B & D)

DAY 4, Saturday, May 30: BLEĐ - GORIŠKA BRDA

After breakfast we travel back in time on an **old steam train** that takes us towards Goriška Brda along the Bohinj railway. With an accordion musician onboard, this will be an experience from another era. Later we will rejoin our bus as we make our way to Goriška Brda. On our trip around the Brda region you will encounter a series of monuments and memorial plaques from WWII. We continue to Šmartno, situated in the geographical center of Brda. Gradnik, the local poet, compares the village with the eagle's nest resting on a place, where the view stretches from the Nanos hill in the east to the Carnija Alps in the northwest, and from the Furlanija to the Adriatic Sea. We stop at **Hiša Marica (Marica's House)** for a special wine tasting from this region along with tasty snacks followed by a walking tour. This evening we have a special feast at a local gostilna before driving to the hotel in Goriška Brda. HOTEL VENKO, GORIŠKA BRDA (B, S, WT & D)

DAY 5, Sunday, May 31: GORIŠKA BRDA - PORTOROŽ

Waking up in Goriška Brda will give you special energy for our next destination as we depart for Portorož where everyone will have free time on the Adriatic Sea. In the evening get ready to set sail on our **sunset cruise**. This incredible journey takes you up and down the Slovenian coast with snacks, music, and drinks. HOTEL GH, PORTOROŽ (B & S)

DAY 6, Monday, June 1: PORTOROŽ - PIRAN

After breakfast, we have a short drive to nearby Piran. Our Tour Director will lead a walking tour of Piran (this beautiful city on the sea). Enjoy spectacular views from our seaside restaurant for lunch. The remainder of the day is yours to

choose, whether it's more time exploring Piran or returning with the bus to Portorož to enjoy the hotel, its spa, or the city itself. HOTEL GH, PORTOROŽ (B & L)

DAY 7, Tuesday, June 2: IDRIJA - LJUBLJANA

After breakfast, we drive towards Idrija. First we visit **Franja Partisan Hospital**. After World War II, the hospital became a symbol of the partisan movement and its extensive and extremely well-organized medical activities. At Kendov Dvorec Manor we will enjoy a **Žlikrofi preparation demonstration** and enjoy them after they are done for lunch. After that we visit **Gewerkenegg Castle** built in the first half of the 16th century. Later we continue to Ljubljana. Tonight, we suggest a walk through the Old Town with dinner at one of the many restaurants along the beautiful Ljubljanica River. CITY HOTEL, LJUBLJANA (B & L)

DAY 8, Wednesday, June 3: LJUBLJANA

This morning we meet genealogy expert Peter Hawlina. He will get us started on our family search with a tour of the archives. Enjoy lunch in a gostilna followed by a walking tour of the city. Visit the most significant sights of the old city center: the picturesque Central Open-air Market and The Three Bridges (both designed by the famous architect Jože Plečnik), the Baroque Town Hall, and Robba's Fountain. Evening at leisure to explore Ljubljana on your own. CITY HOTEL, LJUBLJANA (B & L)

DAY 9, Thursday, June 4: LJUBLJANA - BELA KRAJINA

Today we head to Dolenjska and Bela Krajina region. Drive to Semič to visit **Sever Beekeeping** where we will learn about beekeeping and taste their honey. Stop in **Rosalnice** where Mojca, a charismatic lady of the house, will welcome you in the front yard of the family home. We will be able to enjoy a homemade feast in a cozy atmosphere while she entertains us with a story of bread, life, and humor. Her house of good bread is not merely about food but adventure as well. Mojca will demonstrate the making of pogača, and we will be able to try it while still hot. We finish Bela Krajina with wine tasting at a local producer then continue to Zuzemberk for a late picnic-style dinner with roasted lamb. Drive back to Ljubljana. CITY HOTEL, LJUBLJANA (B, S, HT, WT & D)

DAY 10, Friday, June 5: LJUBLJANA - VELIKA PLANINA

In the morning, free time to visit the local market and do last minute shopping. Later we depart to Kamnik for our **cable car to Velika Planina**, which takes us amongst the green pastures of the mountain plateau in the heart of the Kamnik Alps. We will admire the unique architecture of the cottages which define Velika Planina and enjoy lunch in one of the huts. Drive back to Ljubljana for a free afternoon and in the evening, enjoy a Farewell to Slovenia Dinner Party held in Ljubljana with music, dancing, and lots of tears of joy. CITY HOTEL, LJUBLJANA (B, L & D)

DAY 11, Saturday, June 6

After breakfast, we say goodbye to Slovenia. (B)



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