

Zarja

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The Dawn

Velika noč



Colorful decorated eggs, in Slovenia, for Easter
called *pirhi*, *pisanice*, *pisanke*, or *remenice*.

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Zarja - The Dawn

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Communications for the next issue of publication

Do you have something you would like to share with readers? We would love to hear from you! Please e-mail the editor at wprokup@aol.com. We reserve the right to edit any article submitted. Articles must be related to Slovenia, SUA events, or members. The deadline for articles is the 10th day of the month, two (2) months preceding the issue. For example, articles for the May/June issue must be received by March 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.

To the Editor...

Thank you once again for your many efforts in researching and producing the "Unlikely Titanic Heroine" article for *Zarja*. The Titanic subject seems to remain of high general interest even though the disastrous event occurred over one hundred years ago.

There are a few corrections on the article that I'd like to bring to your attention. The article stated that Manca Karun visited Urban in Cleveland; actually, it was her brother, Frank. Her brother Urban lived in the Detroit area along with his wife and their two daughters, Dorothy and Angeline. Manca also visited Fran Koshir Adamic's sister Helen Grasser, and her husband John, who lived nearby in the Detroit area. There was another brother in Cleveland, Frank, whose wife was also Anne, along with their three daughters, Marilyn, Betty, and Sharon. Also, please note that the surname of Karun was misspelled as "Karum" on page 9 of the article and also in the fourth line on page 11.

Eddie Adamic, who was the inspiration for the article, recently received confirmation from a family member in Slovenia that Manca had died of a heart attack, not as the result of a car accident as was stated in the article. I along with all of the local relatives are very appreciative of your efforts.

Edward Adamic

Just thought you hardworking women would like to know that you are appreciated. Last week, I ran into Donald Purkat of McKinley, MN, and he mentioned that he had just mailed in the *Zarja* dues for his wife, Jane. Every time I meet him, he tells me what a good job those 'girls' do in producing the magazine, which he reads cover to cover. Long time SUA member, Jane Purkat, Branch 35 Aurora, MN, and her husband, Donald, are celebrating sixty-five years of marriage today!

*Frances
Kovatovich*





THE STATE OF THE UNION

In August 2015 at the first meeting, the newly elected National Board voted; an operating budget would be drawn, and the year 2016 must end with a balanced budget. The funds from the Legacy Fund that remained after the burial insurance had been paid out, would remain in reserve. Only the yearly-accrued interest would be transferred to the budget for the following year. This commitment meant nothing less than a break-even SUA budget for 2016. Fortunately, revenue from the sale of cookbooks made this commitment attainable.

**Length of Time a Fund Will Last - This description is taken from the First Midwest Bank, their yearly accounting report using the current Legacy Fund, of \$289,557. With this current sum of \$289,557 in reserve and assuming an annual interest rate of 3.00% and with monthly withdrawals of \$2,000, as was needed to pay expenses, the account would be exhausted in 14 years and 11 months.*

The National Board and Zarja staff believe the SUA membership needs to have full knowledge of the financial status of the SUA. The year 2017 does not appear to be as bright. Ads placed by businesses, organizations, branches, families, and members are greatly appreciated. However, the cookbooks are almost gone, and membership has been dropping since the burial insurance was dissolved.

Cutting Costs

The costliest expense is our magazine, *Zarja – The Dawn*. In 2016, the cost of 6 issues was over \$47,000, or approximately \$8,000 per issue. Writers who submit articles for publication receive no compensation. This line item in our budget speaks for itself.

The National Board conducted a lengthy discussion; we will be proposing that *Zarja* be published quarterly, resulting in approximate savings of \$16,000 in costs.

Next in order of cost is the 104-year-old Stonich building, built by a Slovenian mason. It is the home of the SUA main office and museum. Old buildings take maintenance that can be costly. The \$5,500 yearly property tax takes a

big bite out of the budget, around \$450 monthly. The foot traffic to the museum is nil; it appears no one notices the Donation Box.

In the past there have been rumors of selling the building; however, it takes much planning to go forward with such a decision. About four years ago, the SUA National Board requested a Comparative Market Analysis, a current market study of the property (CMA). In July 2015, the newly elected board of the SUA requested an updated CMA of the property. The following current market prices were cited: \$235,000 on the low side, \$295,000 on the high side. Downtown revitalization has been a plus for our market value. However, purchasing another location would only mean changing the SUA mailing address. Maintenance, taxes, and utilities would not disappear.

Diane Hohenwater, Vice President of Home Office, and Robert Kuhel, Treasurer, just recently spent time researching renting space or a building in the area. When renting, one pays by the square footage. The result: Renting would be more expensive than the current situation we are in.

The SUA National Board will continue looking at our options. You will be kept updated as we progress.

Service Mark

SUA Logos and the vision statement have been registered and approved by the State of Illinois as the owner of protected intellectual property. These logos (oval branches with year 1926 ribbon and oval branches with SZZ ribbon) and the vision statement (Living the Legacy of our

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Living the Legacy of our Slovenian Heritage



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Slovenian Heritage) distinguish our goods and services to indicate their source or origin throughout Illinois. Service Mark rights are established from the earliest date as first used in commerce, in our case starting

for the amazing cookbook. Slovenians rock! We've cooked several recipes with very satisfying results." The motto: Seize the moment, whenever, and announce yourself as a Slovenian-American.

The Power of Social Media, Facebook

Christmas was coming and Slovenian-Americans were baking potica. Photos of potica were posted on the SUA Facebook site. The discussion centered on the food processor or a hand grinder for grinding the walnuts. I have always used a Universal #2 hand grinder just as my mother did. I had tried the food processor when they first were advertised as the hottest kitchen appliance to own. However, I was not pleased with the consistency of the walnuts; they came out paste-like. In other words, it turned out to be nut butter. The discussion turned to using raisins, dates, honey or sugar, or both. I mentioned my mother's recipe, the process of 'toasting the nuts' and folding beaten egg whites into the filling. To my disbelief, no one had ever heard of either.

with the publication of the *Zarja* and now in use on our Website, Facebook page, and other communication forms. SUA Service Marks are unique, unusual, and distinctive, and the organization over the years had the foresight to use them continuously. Service marks are renewed every 5 years. Thank you to our Treasurer Bob Kuhel for recognizing the importance.

SUA Ambassadors

Congratulations to Richard Terselic and Frances Kovatovich for extending their heritage to strangers. Our newest member, from Portland, Oregon, saw our SUA site on the Internet. In his e-mail, he requested an application blank and information on starting a new branch. His request was answered. The pages from our Policy and Procedure Handbook were sent out as was a friendly e-mail from Richard containing some history of the SUA, plus useful information. Thank you Richard!

November 2016, while flying from Minneapolis to New York, Frances and Mary Kovatovich found themselves 'sandwiched' between a young fellow from Oklahoma, the owner of a landscaping business. He proceeded to show photos of his creativity. Frances mentioned that Albina Medved has a patio with a bear design that was meaningful, as Medved means 'bear' in Slovenian. The fellow's eyes popped. "Slovenian? I am Slovenian; my name is Zupan" Of course the topic turned to food; he had learned to make potica from his grandmother and continues the tradition to this day. Frances seized the opportunity to keep a culture alive and told him of our cookbook, *The Slovenian-American Table*. He was to look for it in the mail. Yes, Frances gave up her cookbook. Thank you Frances! Here is his reply! "Frances, thank you so much

Curiosity got the best of me. I searched in Google "grinding walnuts, toasting walnuts." Below I list some interesting facts found on-line, including from Williams Sonoma and LEAftv. I added this information to the Facebook discussion, along with a photo of my freshly made potica and Universal #2 grinder. To this list I have also added my experiences.

1. Storing nuts at room temperature causes nut oils to go rancid more quickly. Rancid nuts are not unsafe but do have an unpleasant, sharp taste.
2. Raw walnuts have a bitter taste. Toasted walnuts take on a rich, deep taste as the heat mobilizes the oils! Roast walnuts whole as different sized pieces will not toast evenly.

**In recent magazine recipes, toasted (roasted) walnuts are called for. Toasted, chopped walnuts are suggested for a more intense flavor in cookies, bars, and other baked goods.*

**Years ago, I was making my first potica. I had placed the excess walnuts in the cupboard. About a week later I had worms crawling all over. Upon my mother's advice, I tossed out all of the adjacent items like the flour and the Bisquick that might be contaminated. From then on, I have vacuum-sealed all walnuts in recipe amounts of 1½ pounds, storing them in the freezer. Walnuts used in baking are stored in the freezer in mason jars.*

3. One must be vigilant when using a food processor; over processing releases too much of the oils, leaving a paste-like mass similar to a nut butter. It is best to use a grinder with a holder for the nuts and a manual turning arm. (I grind the frozen walnuts right from the freezer as less oil will be released.)

Zarja - The Dawn

**Williams Sonoma suggests tossing the toasted nuts with a bit of flour or sugar before grinding. The groundnuts come out drier. Drier nuts make spreading over the dough easier.*

My mother did not toast the walnuts prior to grinding, but she did call her process “toasting the nuts.” The ground walnuts, sugar, honey, Carnation Milk, and egg yolks were combined in a heavy pot on the stovetop and “toast-ed” over medium-high heat. She stirred and stirred for a good 10 minutes. Yes, the filling will turn a slight shade darker. Extra Carnation Milk could be added to make for a spreadable filling. The final act was whipping the egg whites to be folded into the warm filling. The result was a fluffy, easy-to-spread filling.

Potica commands attention! This photo captured 4,800+ hits on the SUA Facebook page. Imagine if all 4,800+ were members of the SUA!

**Robert Kuhel recalls his mother coming home with a bag of walnuts in the shell. She would place them on a cookie sheet and bake them in the oven. This was done to kill any bacteria or worms from the nuts as most nuts were picked up from the ground and sold to the stores. Robert was given the honor of chopping the nuts with a hammer and leaving no shells in the batch.*

**I remember a year when walnuts were scarce and pecans were used. My mother and her sisters were at the end of their tether.*

In closing, many people say they cannot make a potica. Never say “never.” Check out the SUA Facebook recipe, “Poor Man’s Potica,” a grandfather passing on his mother’s potica recipe. For those who say “never,” how about using frozen bread dough from the supermarket for your first attempt at making the “Poor Man’s Potica” recipe? Every Slovenian-American should have the joy of biting into a piece of potica during the holidays.

***Interested in being part of the
management team of SUA Facebook?
Your talent is needed. Call me!
I Want To Hear From You!!***

Slovenian Union of America Website

Please check out your Branch Information on the SUA website. If you have submitted an update of your branch board, a date has been inserted on the top line. If you see no date, it is time to examine the information and substantiate that the information is up-to-date.

Many thanks to MaryAlice Schwanke for sharing her role with the website. She has also created a Recipe Page complete with the conversion chart of those Slovenian measurements; how about dag? Check it out. Some day you might find a potica recipe that calls for toasting the walnuts!

***Mary Lou Deyak Voelk, President
Slovenian Union of America***



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Thank you! - Hvala lepa!

\$100 Donation

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Lydia Kamnikar, 89, +Grandpa Steve

New Members *Welcome - Dobrodošli*

20, Guardia, Barbara
20, Molaschi, Leona
23, Merhar, David
23, Merhar, Janet
23, Zaverl, Toni
30, Bolf, Mark
30, Mills, Theresa Kay
30, Skully, Charles
30, Zupic, John
43, St. John, Mary Lee
89, Lukach, Jackson
102, Rinholen, Mary Jo
108, Krulc, Angela
108, Krulc, Michael
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109, Gauthier, Cindy
109, Gerzin, Anne
109, Olson, John

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SLOVENIAN “LJUBLJANSKE BUTARICE”

The Slovenian tradition of making “butare” for Palm Sunday weekend dates back hundreds of years due to the lack of availability of real palms. The shape of the butare is similar throughout Slovenia, but the materials used vary from region to region.

Villagers would gather together to make butare for each family member, varying the sizes for adults to children. Using branches as a base, they would add greenery and fruit or product synonymous with their growing or farming region. On Palm Sunday, dressed in their regional Slovenian costumes or Sunday best, parishioners would process through the village to church where the butare were blessed before the start of Mass. After the Palm Sunday activities, the butare were taken home. The smaller ones were used as décor in the “holy” corner of the kitchen or living space where the family had a crucifix, statues, or a picture of Jesus, Mary, or both. The remaining blessed butare were burned in the freshly plowed fields with prayers for a productive growing season.

In the cities, where greenery was not as readily available, butare were made with wood shavings dyed in various colors. Some had a touch of greenery, usually cedar; again, this would vary from region to region. The “Ljubljanska Butarica” have become the better-known style of the traditional Palm Sunday butare that has remained a very important part of the Slovenian culture to this day. They are displayed for blessings in the home, and smaller ones are hung or set in the car for safe travel.



The butare are made here in the States in the traditional Slovenian method. Artisans use the perfect wood boards to shave, dye the shaving with European dyes (American dyes fade), and assemble each one by hand. They are available in three sizes: small, medium, and large. Butare are also available in a jumbo 30”+ size for use by celebrants or for décor in the church.

The colors are either bright multi-colored or white, blue, and red; the color pattern is either in rounds or on an angle down the butare. They can have fresh cedar added or not. The cedar will dry and turn a golden color and can be left intact or pinched back after it dries.

The butare are a nice display item for the home, which will keep well as long as they are not in direct sunlight. For use in the car, we recommend replacing annually. When using blessed butare for Palm Sunday, as with anything blessed, dispose of the butare by burying or burning. Butare are available even after the Easter Holidays as they make wonderful gifts for family and friends. Butare are a significant Slovenian tradition that can be shared in our American-Slovenian churches and homes. They are beautiful and will add to the décor of your home.

To have your handmade Butare by Palm Sunday, orders must be placed no later than Friday, March 25. The order blank is available in this issue or can be found on our website at www.slovenianunion.org.

Kathleen Ferrante, 2019 SUA Convention Chair

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BUTARA SIZE*	UNIT PRICE	HOW MANY	TOTAL
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Contact me: kjferrante@gmail.com

GOD'S OWN GARDEN

By Staff Writer David Sodac, Branch 89 - Oglesby, IL

We finally did it! We made it to Slovenia for our first time! No more having to rely on other people's stories and pictures... we lived and breathed it ourselves firsthand. We fulfilled our travel dreams and spent ten wonderful days this past September in beloved Slovenia, the motherland of all four of my immigrant grandparents. The experience was everything we had hoped for, and so much more.

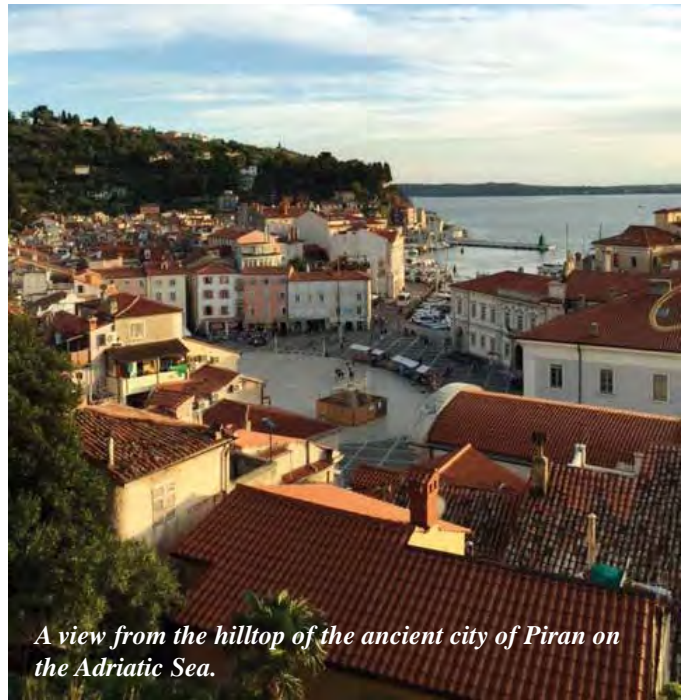


The surprise view looking out of the St. Marko's Belfry of my Grandmother Marija Piltaver Sodac's village.

Back in 2003, I had connected with the seventeen-year-old daughter of a second cousin from a Slovenian family that I had never known existed. Her name was Nina Sodec. Her father, Miha Sodec, was of my generation; our grandfathers were brothers. We corresponded for years, and she shared her love of her country and family through emails, letters, and pictures. She once wrote about an age-old folktale detailing how the land called Slovenia was gifted by God, a part of his own garden. It put a smile on my face and in my heart. It was an endearing story that I never forgot. We promised her someday we'd visit and see for ourselves... and we finally did!

We flew out of Chicago to Vienna, Austria, transferred planes to Ljubljana and then took a motor coach to the Mediterranean seaside city of Portorož. The first leg of the planned tour was to visit Slovenia's coastal region, basing out of a resort across the street from the Adriatic Sea. We walked the shoreline and took a cruise into ports of the ancient fortified cities of Piran and Koper. We were amazed to see olive groves, palm trees, and hundreds of red-tiled houses nestled on hillsides as we later motored inland. We passed orchards of fruit trees and grape vineyards bursting

with deep purple-colored fruits waiting to be selected and transformed into world class Slovene wines. Stopping to stroll through the medieval town of Šmartno, we experienced beautiful high hill views that once housed sentry outposts, guarding the country's eastern border. We visited the pride of Slovenia at the Lipica



A view from the hilltop of the ancient city of Piran on the Adriatic Sea.



David and Barb overlooking vineyard in Šmartno.



Hillside of Šmartno.

Stud Farm that has bred Lipizzaner for royalty since the 16th century. Then inland, we drove through the Dinaric Karst landscape that offered a carved-out sequence of underground caverns, stopping to tour the famous Postojna Cave. At our next stop, we toured the amazing Predjama Castle, pressed literally against a hillside cave forming an impenetrable fortress. We thoroughly enjoyed all we saw and experienced firsthand God's own little getaway paradise.

The second leg of the itinerary found us in the middle of Slovenia, the cosmopolitan, capital city of Ljubljana. For the next five days, we met with various relatives on my paternal grandparents' side of the family. Arrangements had been made in advance as to who would pick us up on which day, and bring us to the various birth villages and family landmarks. Cousin David Smukovic (of Račja vas),

his wife Sara, and their youngest daughter, Izabella, arrived early on Monday morning and swooped us off for an exciting day! David laid a map in my lap, an itinerary of 21 places we would visit and began his planned, whirlwind journey. We visited churches and cemeteries where family members attended services, received sacraments, and were buried. We saw and stopped at landmarks my grandparents would have frequented. Then we took a tour of the stunning Mokrice Castle; my relatives, as landowners and tenants, would have paid taxes to the noble families who lived in the castle and held dominion over them. We walked the villages and saw the still standing birth homes of both my paternal grandfather in Sobenja vas and grandmother in Krška vas. We visited the nearby city of Brežice, built on the left bank of the Sava River where the Sava and Krka rivers meet. The 12th century Brežice Castle stands magnificently in the center of town. The castle today is a museum of antiquities, archeological artifacts, and ethnographic collections on the history of the area and its people. The most impressive segment of the guided tour was the Knight's Hall with its imposing size and brightly painted and restored frescoes on the ceilings and walls. At day's end, we got back to David's family home and enjoyed the hospitality of his parents, Marjan and Irena, brother Gregor, and children Nikolai, Glorija, and Izabella while we snacked on homemade breads, wines, cheeses, meats, strudels, and potica. We were also introduced to their middle daughter Glorija Magdalena's complete collection of stuffed teddy bears!



Meeting the Smukovic Family (Front L-R) Glorija, Sarah, Barb, Nikolai, and Irena. (Back L-R) David, Marjan with Izabella, David, and Gregor.



Glorija Smukovic, the wolf, and the three bears.

The next two days we were at the whim of cousin Nina Sodec Kozjek, the once young secondary school girl that had first responded to my postal letter years ago. Of course, Nina is now a beautiful and poised professional who is married to Jure Kozjek and has two young girls of her own. We arranged to meet in Prešeren Square near our hotel. We spotted each other without any need for second glances and rushed to greet and hug with tears in our eyes. Nina wanted to show off her beloved capital city, and we embarked on another wonderful journey. We had a panoramic view from the crown of the city, Ljubljana Castle, perched high on the ridge overlooking the capital city. Tourists ride an all-glass, funicular railway that climbs straight up the medieval castle's stone wall to access the castle grounds. Back on the streets of Ljubljana, we strolled through the narrow alleyways of shops between rows of stone buildings, crossed the Dragon Bridge, and shopped the outdoor market square where Nina convinced us to try a freshly squeezed glass of sauerkraut juice. We had a light lunch at her

apartment outside of town and then visited with her parents, Miha and Slavi Sodec, and brother, Zan, at their condo in Ljubljana. Later we all met in a nearby *gostilna* to have supper and share family stories. The next day, Nina, her husband Jure, and youngest daughter, Lara, picked us up for morning coffee along the sun-glistening Ljubljana River. With our fill of caffeine, we set off for an adventure to Slovenia's most picturesque attraction, Lake Bled. We met up with Nina's sister, Tadeja Sodec Petrič, her husband, Anže, and their infant daughter, Zala, to explore all the beauty the area has to offer. There were the brilliant blue waters of the lake, the dramatic Bled Castle perched high on a steep cliff overlooking the lake, and our gliding across the glistening lake on a colorful, canopied rowing boat (*pletna*) out to the fairy-tale island Church of the Assumption. The Karavanke Alps provided the picture-perfect backdrop.



Aboard a pletna heading for Bled Island are (L-R) Tadeja with Zara, David, Anze, Barb, and Nina with Lara.



Meeting the Sodec Family (L-R) Barb with David, Nina holding Eli, Slavi holding Lara, Miha, and Zan.

What an amazing way to experience Slovenia, through the eyes and hearts of our relatives! We saw some astonishing places, visited numerous castles, cemeteries, and national parks. We met the relatives we only knew from e-mail correspondence and sat down to dinners with them as their family. There were no strangers. It was a whirlwind of experiences we will never forget.



View from the Lake Bled Island.

A particular highlight of the overall trip that will be one of the most memorable would have to be the experience of visiting my grandmother's (Marija Piltaver Sodec) family church, the Parish Church dedicated to St. Mark the Evangelist in Cerklje ob krki. This visit was one of the stops on the "gotta-see-everything" itinerary planned by my cousin David Smukovic. David knows the church well, as he and his extended family have also been members of this church since he was an infant. My grandmother's family had been active members of this church. She received all of her Holy Sacraments there, and her mother's (Ana Račič Piltaver) funeral mass was held there two months before my grandmother left her homeland forever in August of 1909. We met the parish priest, Mag. Janez Žakelj, at a pre-arranged lunch in a delightful *gostilna* in Čatež ob savi. After we got acquainted and ate, we drove on to the rectory of his church. He quickly gathered small glasses and poured us a shot of *pleterje brinjevec* (45% proof juniper berry alcohol) produced by the Carthusian Order of Monks at their monastery. Jokingly, he said it would help to settle our queasy stomachs from David Smuković's wild driving and then offered a welcoming toast. He explained that my grandmother's family would have

attended both the current church that was built in 1905 and the former church building that dated back to the 17th century. The former church building was torn down following extensive damage received from the 1880 and 1895 earthquakes and then rebuilt on the same grounds. He then took us across the gardens of the rectory and welcomed us into the church. The church was larger and more ornate than many of the other village churches that we had visited on our trip, the difference being that St. Mark's had been elevated to a Parish Church back in 1689. Mag. Janez walked us around the church and pointed out certain features. We commented on the beautiful paintings that hung behind the altar in the sacristy only to be told that my cousin Gregor Smukovic had been commissioned to paint them! Four Croatian religious nuns who live and work within the parish, were praying near the front. Mag. Janez stopped to talk with them while we took a moment to kneel and offer thanksgiving for having the means and opportunity to participate in this wonderful trip to Slovenia. He then resumed our tour leading us up to the choir loft area where he pointed out with pride an original, antique pipe organ built by a distant relative, Andrej Račič (1808–1883). Opening an old wooden door, he invited us to join him in climbing the staircase up into the church's belfry. He said there would be a surprise for us when we reached the top. We carefully ascended the spiral staircase making our way to the top. It was fairly dark and not easy to see the surroundings, but we knew we were right under the old bell. When we reached the top, Mag. Janez unlatched the slightly peeling wooden shutters of the belfry and flung them outward inviting us to come take a look at my grandmother's countryside! Looking out over this pastoral scene of heavily wooded and rolling hillsides dotted with red-tiled farmhouses was emotionally stirring. Then the hundred-year-old bell clanged loudly within a foot of our heads! It brought me to the reality of where we actually were and what we were doing in this country, so many thousands of miles away from home. This was my grandparents' land, their roots, and my roots. We climbed back down the bell tower's wooden staircase, with our ears still slightly reverberating and a noticeable grin on Fr. Janez' face. As we were exiting the church, we passed the flickering votive candles sitting on their iron stand near the sacristy. We were almost out the door when I felt an urge to go back and light a candle in memory of my grandmother. Kneeling down to say a quick prayer, I envisioned her being in this very same church, the

same spot near the sacristy, dipping a waxed taper to light a votive candle and beseeching her Beloved Virgin Mary to keep her safe in her travels to America. That would have been a hundred and twelve years ago.

The scrumptious, home-baked, fruit-filled strudels, the two quarts of golden-rich honey, the amazing poppy seed potica, the super thin homemade soup noodles, and the bottles of wine from the lower Dolenjska region were all quickly devoured upon our return to the States. All of these items were graciously gifted from assorted relatives who hosted us in Slovenia, relatives whom we had hugged in person for the first time ever. The sea salt chocolates were consumed, and the bath soap from the salt pans off the coastal city of Piran is just a sliver in the shower. The Rogaška crystal snowflake ornament and gingerbread/sweet honey lect heart ornament from Ljubljana were both given spots of prominence on our tree this past Christmas. The beautiful water-colored originals of Lake Bled given by a particularly talented cousin are now matted and hung on the wall. The 2ft x 3ft carefully researched family charts compiled by a genealogist/historian cousin, containing information back to the 1600s, are now displayed on an easel table; however, the hundreds of images and experiences we had won't escape our minds and hearts. We will always be left with the warmest of memories from our trip to the motherland of all four of my grandparents.

David Glumac, the CEO of 5houseswine.com website, a clearinghouse for introducing boutique premium

Slovenian wines, featured his spin of the age-old folktale story on *How Slovenia Got Their Country*. It seemed appropriate that it be shared in the closing of this Zarja article:

"Once upon a time – some would say about 6,000 years ago, give or take a couple of weeks – just shortly after Creation in fact, God gathered representatives of all the nations together, so that he could distribute the land he had created amongst everyone. Some representatives arrived early and received the largest bodies of land such as the Americas. Some came on time and received countries that became known as the Commonwealth and Spain. As they came up to him, he gave them their due – the Italians got Italy, Brazilians got Brazil, Australians got Australia, and so on – to each according to his needs and desires. Others came late but were still able to receive good land, just cold, like Finland and Russia.

After God had distributed all the lands of the Earth, and was ready to embark upon his day of rest, he noticed, out of the corner of his eye, a single man standing in the middle of the chamber. He asked of the lone person, who are you, and what are you still doing here? Have you not received your allotted piece of land?

The lone man spoke, Lord, you had called me a Slovenian, and I did not want to intrude, but I have not yet been given any land for me and my people. God examined all the lands of the Earth, and saw that he already distributed all the land, yet he did not want any of his children to be without a place to call home. He said, as I have no land left to give you, I shall gift unto you the land I had been saving for myself, for my rest on the Sabbath. Go, and care for it, until my Kingdom returns."

... So the story goes, now you know how the Slovenes got Slovenia. As those of us who have been fortunate to visit and revisit Slovenia can attest, God did indeed take a piece of his personal paradise and gifted it to Slovenes as their country. It's a beautiful land, filled with inviting and breathtaking geological surprises and awaiting experiences. SLOVEnia!



Lighting a votive candle inside my grandmother's church.

Annual Membership Drive

Slovenian Union of America, Inc

slovenianunion.org 815.727.1926

Bring in 3 new members and get yours FREE.

Complete this membership form and submit with a \$75 check or 3 separate \$25 checks
and send to 431 North Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432-1703.

If you already paid 2017 dues, we will defer for free 2018 membership.

New Member #1

Last Name _____ First Name _____ M _____ F _____

Street Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

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

New Member #2

Last Name _____ First Name _____ M _____ F _____

Street Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

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

New Member #3

Last Name _____ First Name _____ M _____ F _____

Street Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

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

Signed up by:

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____ Branch Number _____

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Name _____ Member ID No. _____ (located on back cover)

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____ Dues Amount _____ Donation _____

Slovenian Union of America

“April’s Showers of Dollars” Drawing

April 2017 Fund-Raiser

CASH PRIZES TOTALING \$2,955

27 Daily Drawings at \$65

April 1, 15, and 30 at \$200

Top Seller Prizes:

1st Place - \$150

2nd Place - \$100

3rd Place - \$50

\$10 PER ENTRY

How the fund-raiser works: Each day in the month of April, 2017, one (1) winner will be chosen to win the listed cash prize for that day - \$65 or \$200.

The month of April has much to celebrate - including April No Fool’s Day, Help with Tax Day, and the last day before May’s flowers. The winners chosen on April 1 – “April No Fool’s Day,” April 15 – “Help With Tax Day,” and April 30 – “Here Come May Flowers” will win \$200 each. In addition, the top sellers (1st, 2nd, and 3rd place) will win \$150, \$100, and \$50 respectively. A minimum of 300 entries must be sold. It’s a WIN opportunity for everyone!

*****Good Luck!*****

Your “April’s Showers of Dollars” drawing entry will be eligible for all daily drawings in the month of April, 2017. Sellers of the winning entries will receive \$10 as an award for their selling efforts. The daily drawing amount and the seller’s \$10 prize will be mailed to the winners of record the next business day. Winners will be notified by e-mail, if provided, and their names posted on the SUA website: www.slovenianunion.org.

The following entry form must be printed clearly and accompany your \$10 entry fee.

Detach at perforation

Entry Form (Please Print Clearly)

Entrant’s Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Seller’s Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Branch Number and Location: _____

Please mail completed form and \$10 check **payable to SUA** to the following address:

Eileen A. Plese, Fund-Raiser Chairwoman

2225 Mason Avenue

Joliet, IL 60435-5425

Phone: 815.725.5208 or sua@slovenianunion.org

“April’s Showers of Dollars” Drawing April 2017 Fund-Raiser

Slovenian Union of America

Need additional entries?

Copies are accepted or contact Eileen A. Plese:
Phone: 815.725.5208 or sua@slovenianunion.org

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28th National Convention - 2019 - Cleveland, Ohio

“April’s Showers of Dollars” DRAWING

April 2017 Fund-Raiser

www.slovenianunion.org

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2019 SUA National Convention. SUA holds its National Convention every four years in host cities around the country. These gatherings are important not only to conduct SUA business, but also to have a forum for Branch Member Representatives to come together to give their reports, share their ideas, discuss concerns, and further cement their mutual love and respect for all things related to their Slovenian heritage. Our next SUA National Convention will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, in 2019.

Plans are underway to make this another memorable event. The successful completion of this “April’s Showers of Dollars” Fund-Raiser will provide monies to help defray the costs of conducting SUA’s National Convention. The Convention Committee strives to offer an affordable convention package to enable Member Representatives and members from every SUA Branch to attend. The entries make excellent gifts for the holiday season, birthdays, and to say “Thank You.”

How Does the Fund-Raiser Work? Everyone participating in the SUA “April’s Showers of Dollars” Fund-Raiser has the chance to win cash prizes. Each day in the month of April, 2017, one winner will be chosen to win the listed cash prize for that day - \$65 or \$200. In addition, each day the person who sold that day’s winning ticket will win \$10. The daily winner and seller can be one and the same and win both prizes.

The month of April 2017 has much to celebrate - including April No Fool’s Day, Help with Tax Day, and the last day before May’s flowers. The winners chosen on April 1, April 15, and April 30 will each win \$200. In addition, the top sellers (1st, 2nd, and 3rd place) will win \$150 and \$100 and \$50 respectively. It’s a WIN opportunity for everyone.

Your Participation is Appreciated!

**Thank you for
your entry!**

Good Luck!



Slovenian Union of America

Across America - Branch Reports

BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

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

On December 13, over 40 members of Branch 1 gathered together at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Sheboygan for their annual Christmas party. A buffet of Slovenian food was prepared by the Board members which included salad with Slovenian spices and pumpkin oil, ham, *klobasa*, rice sausage, cabbage and dumplings, Slovenian potato salad, *flancati*, *potica*, and of course, pink tea. Not many leftovers for Santa and his elves. An angel ornament was presented



to Justin Virant in memory of his sister, Pauline Rugar, who passed away earlier this year. A Slovenian funeral candle was lit, and a moment of silence was observed in her memory and for past deceased members of Branch 1.

There was a short business meeting and elections were held. The officers for 2017 are President - Mary (Jeannie) Sandwick, Vice President - Denise Schueffner, Secretary



Branch Officers (L-R) Betty Repenshek, Mary (Jeannie) Sandwick, Denise Schueffner, and Jo Anne Richter.

- Jo Anne Richter, Treasurer - Betty Repenshek.

A concert of Christmas carols was put on by the South High Singers (a chorus group from one of our local high schools). Their program ended with Silent Night and the kids were really good sports as we passed out the Slovenian words for the song and they sang along with us (as best they could).

In keeping with the "sharing" spirit of Christmas, members brought in over 30 grocery items and hats, mittens, scarves, and socks totaling 158 to be donated to one of our local food pantries. It is nice to know that others may be kept a little warmer this winter season and that we share the warmth with others from our hearts.



Hope all of you had an enjoyable holiday season and Happy New Year to all from Branch 1.

MARY ANN SCHELLINGER

BRANCH 2 - Chicago, Illinois

Contact Information: Judy Stoll
708.479.2864/judithstoll@att.net

Take heart... spring is almost here, and I hope Mother Nature will be kind to us. This is a very quiet time for Branch 2 since we have no winter meetings. We did, though, enjoy a very nice Christmas luncheon that was attended by 23 members and friends. It was held at the Peaches and Pears Restaurant in Chicago and featured a wonderful family style lunch.

All the organizations that received donations from Branch 2 have acknowledged the gifts and expressed their thanks to us. Gen Buol is still working on obtaining the inscribed plaque that we hope to install on the statue of St. Francis in Lemont. The statue, which stands before the church, was commissioned and donated many years ago by Branch 2.

This past November, Henrietta Gorski passed away. She was 94, and through the years she spent much of her time caring for others. She was kind, friendly, and will be missed.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 6 at 1 p.m. at the Peaches and Pears Restaurant at 6435 W. Archer Ave. Besides attending to a few business matters, we'll have a delightful lunch and a pleasant get together... please join us.

JUDY STOLL

BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information: Annette Charron
719.569.7125/amtcharron@yahoo.com

Branch 3 members kicked off the holidays with their annual Christmas luncheon on Tuesday, December 6 at Park East Restaurant. Ornaments in the shape of trees or hearts



(Left to right) Mary Frances Sabo Kelley, Eileen Kaplan, and Marge Cullen celebrate at the Branch 3 Christmas luncheon.

served as favors at each place setting. Everyone also left with a Santa gift since all 30 attendees brought presents to share. Madeleine Khosla assembled and donated goody bags filled with special surprises. After lunch, branch members played a Santa game won by Andrea DeGarbo, and Linda Secora won the reindeer-themed game. College



Kaylene Khosla (left) and Jerica Khosla (right) with their grandmother, Marie Mutz, at the Branch 3 Christmas luncheon.

student Branch 3 members, Kaylene Khosla and Angela Perez, joined in the festivities. Branch President Marge Cullen and Vice President Eileen Kaplan introduced new member Robin Secora to the group. Christmas luncheon participants had the option of making a donation to a fund for pavement needs at St. Mary's Church.

Regular monthly Branch 3 meetings will resume in February; branch meetings take place in St. Mary's Church hall on the first Tuesday of each month.

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON
& BARBARA KARLINGER

BRANCH 13 - San Francisco, California

Contact Information: Michele Twers
michele.twers@comcast.net

Greetings from San Francisco. Mother Nature has made California very happy with the rains she has given us. Even though there has been much damage throughout the State of California, we so desperately need the rain and are enduring it.

Remember to mark your calendar now. Our Annual Member of the Year Luncheon will be on May 7 at 12:00 p.m. at Val's Restaurant, 2468 Junipero Serra Blvd., Daly City. Cost of Luncheon is \$39 per person. Send your check and entrée choice (prime rib, petrale, or roasted chicken) no later than April 28 to President Doreen Sustarich, 575 Hamilton Street, San Francisco, CA 94134. Please join us. We always look forward to visiting with our members and friends each year.

Get Well Wishes are sent to our former President Louise Petrusich who fell and broke her hip. We hope you are back up on your feet soon.

Birthday greetings to all our members celebrating in March and April.

Happy St. Patrick's Day to all. Remember to wear your green! We wish everyone a Holy and Happy Easter.

MICHELE TWERS

BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois

Contact Information: Georgene Agnich 773.205.1326
Spiritual Advisor Fr. Tom Paul conducted our Installation of Officers ceremony on January 15 at St. Joseph Parish Hall, after which members enjoyed a buffet dinner provided by our 2017 officers: Charlene Kobe - President, Jeanne Warsaw - Vice President, Robyn Coyne - Treasurer, Diane Hohenwater - Secretary, Josephine Lustik - Auditor, Jonita Ruth - Auditor, Jean Herbst - Auditor, Nancy Horwath and Sandra Kehring - Sergeants at Arms, and Georgene Agnich - *Zarja* Reporter. We also held our January business meeting.

Please plan to attend our St. Joseph Table dinner at St. Joseph Parish Hall on Tuesday, March 21. Doors open at 6 p.m., with dinner at 6:30 p.m. Please bring a dish to pass; our branch will provide the meat entree and beverages. Family members and friends are welcome as we honor St.

Zarja - The Dawn



(Left to right) Jean Herbst, Diane Hohenwater, Pat Schager, Eileen Plese, Mary Kay Demick, and Pat Figurowski.

Joseph and also St. Patrick.

Our annual fundraiser Bake Sale will be held Saturday and Sunday, April 1-2, in St. Joseph Church entrance, before and after all Masses. Volunteers will be phoning members to donate baked goods; poticas and strudels are always in big demand! Members who do not bake or live too far away are encouraged to send a cash donation.

Best wishes to member Eileen Plese who succeeds Denise P. Bartlett as SUA's new Fund-Raiser Chairwoman for the annual "April's Showers of Dollars." Please participate in this fun event which raises money for the 2019 SUA National Convention. And thank you to Denise P. Bartlett for chairing this event so ably for the past several years!

I offer my gratitude to former *Zarja* Reporter Diane Hohenwater for her excellent coverage of our activities these past years and for her instructional notebook, which has made my task easy!

Branch 20 members are welcome to phone Pat at 815.741.1863 if they know of any members who are ill, hospitalized, or having surgery, as well as any members who are celebrating special occasions or mourning the loss of a loved one.

GEORGENE AGNICH

BRANCH 23 - Ely, Minnesota

Sveti Miklavž - A New-Old Tradition: Around the world and for centuries the veneration of St. Nicholas has been part of the Christmas season. St. Nicholas was a real fourth century bishop who had a special affinity for children. Throughout Europe the saint has been honored in Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches and cultures. Our present render of Santa Claus comes from the Dutch name for St. Nicholas: Sinter Klaus. Even Slovenians have their Sveti Miklavž traditions. Branch 23 in Ely, MN instituted a Sveti Miklavž celebration.

As is the custom, St. Nicholas Day is celebrated on December 6. The Ely branch decided to hold its celebration on the Sunday before the 6th. The only remnant of a St. Nicholas Day at the church ended years ago. The priest in bishop's regalia would visit the religion classes and leave candy for the students. The Slovenian version was never done in Ely as far as this author knows.

With the impetus and energy of Albina Medved, Ely instituted the celebration. She was the force behind this celebration, remembering her family's different experiences with it. The branch was tasked with creating the whole celebration, but it was Albina's dedication that made it a success. Our plans included a simple program, with costumed angels and devils, a Miklavž in his miter and cope, a script, presents, and a coffee and goodies social.

As some of the more seasoned Slovenians may know, the presence of angels and devils is to instruct the children (of





all ages) that we can choose good and do it, or choose bad and do it. Many “Father Christmas” celebrations focus on this dichotomy. “He knows if you been bad or good,” “Coal or Candy,” “Naughty or Nice,” are all renderings of this thought. The devils are supposed to scare the “Hell” out of us. In Ely, our script was more philosophical than psychological. The Devils shook their tridents and chains every time the narrator mentioned choosing or doing the bad. The Angels sang angelically every time the good was mentioned. The lesson was repeated enough to make the point.

For gifts, the branch decided to remain traditional. We gave each child an orange, an apple, a rosary, and some candy. Albina also made them each a Sv. Miklavž cookie. Miklavž, with the help of the angels, rewarded the children. At the end of the celebration, our “ambassador of Slovenian Good Will,” ninety-six-year-old Julie Puzel, taught

the children how to say “Merry Christmas” in Slovenian.

The hall tables were decorated with napkins folded in the miter of Sv. Miklav. Members of the branch provided goodies. Hot chocolate was served to the kids. About seventy-five people attended, and about thirty-five young ones gathered. We did not know what to expect for numbers but were pleased by the turnout of children of all ages. We plan on continuing celebrating Sveti Miklavž in the future.

JIM LAH

BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois

Contact Information: Diane Data

diane3121@comcast.net

Zivijo! Branch 24 last met in early December for our annual Christmas party. What a good time it was! We don’t meet during the winter months, so not much else to report.

Our branch is in the early stages of a major undertaking.



Branch 24's annual Christmas party.

We plan to construct an outdoor altar/grotto at St. Vincent's Cemetery in LaSalle (where we hold our annual Cemetery Walk). Preliminary plans have been drawn up, construction quotes are being sought and soon we will be discussing fund-raising ideas. Keep in mind remembrances for deceased family members. This is truly going to be a forever addition to the cemetery.

As I am typing this report, I am thinking of Melania Trump! In less than a week, she will be the First Lady of the United States of America. Do you think that was ever in her dreams as a little girl growing up in Sevnica, Slovenia? I wonder if any of the Slovenian customs that we talk about at our branch meetings will show up in the White House.

Dober Dan!

DIANE DATA

BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Jan Gehm

414.321.1413/twogames@wi.rr.com

I hope all had a wonderful holiday season. May 2017 be a happy and healthy one for all.

If you were unable to attend our first *Martinovanje* celebration in November, you missed a very interesting talk on Slovenian wines and a presentation by Mark Skof. The snacks were plentiful and went well with the tasting of the various Slovenian wines now available in the Milwaukee area. Hopefully plans will be in the making for another celebration in 2017.

Our branch Christmas Party was a very nice affair with everyone in holiday spirit. The dinner was delicious, and

the raffle prizes were plentiful and appreciated. Our officers, elected in October, were installed by Denise P. Bartlett and are now ready to serve another year.

Looking ahead: Join us at Triglav Park on Saturday, April 8, at 10 a.m. to make your own *butara* and then join us at the 8 a.m. Mass at St. John's on April 9, (Palm Sunday) in procession into church. If you have a Slovenian costume, please wear it, and if you do not, please wear a red carnation as a proud sign of your Slovenian heritage. The celebrant will bless *butare* along with palms.

It is with a heavy heart that I tell you of the deaths of several of our members: Emil Ujcich, Bill Starich, and Irene Kunovar. All of these members were very dedicated to our branch and contributed to many of our activities. We will miss them at our meetings. Our sympathy to their families. May you rest in peace, Emil, Bill, and Irene.

You should have received the 2017 calendars, and I hope you refer to them regularly. Join us for our next meeting on Wednesday, March 22, at the West Allis Library at noon. You will be treated to a delicious lunch prepared by members.

MARY "MICI" BREGANT

BRANCH 47 - Garfield Heights, Ohio

Contact Information: Debbie Duris

330.467.2281/dcduris@gmail.com

Greetings! Our members had a delicious Christmas luncheon on Saturday, December 3 at Creekside. Even though I was unable to attend, since I am living in my Florida home for the winter, I was able to see and talk to everyone via



Branch 47 Christmas luncheon at Creekside Restaurant. Pictured in first row: Diane Fornaro and Beth Wallace. Second row: Elsie Lavrencic, Betty Zahler, Katherine Wallace, Margarita Franchini, Dorothy Cabot, Dorothy Squire, and Jo Walters. Third row: Marge Rys, Lynn McKittrick, and Debbie Duris.

Facetime using Debbie's phone. I really appreciated being included in this annual event. I loved seeing everyone. Isn't some of the new technology wonderful?



Branch 47 Christmas luncheon at Creekside Restaurant. Pictured from left to right is Debbie Duris, Virginia Kemmerling, and Margarita Franchini.

We have a few new exciting restaurants for our 2017 meetings. On Saturday, May 6 our luncheon will be at Brewster's Café Bistro Pub at 2681 Creekside Drive in Twinsburg at 1:00 p.m.

Our Saturday, September 9 luncheon will be at Shula's 2 Steak & Sports at 6200 Quarry Lane located at the Double Tree Hotel at I-77 & Rockside Road at 1:00 p.m.

The Christmas luncheon will be back to Maggiano's Little Italy at 26300 Cedar Road in Beachwood at 1:00 p.m.

Members are encouraged to share branch information with Debbie at her home at 330.467.2281 or e-mail her at dcduris@gmail.com.

Wishing everyone a Happy and Blessed Easter. I'd love to share any member stories. Call me on my cell 330.730.8951 or e-mail me at kjferrante@gmail.com.

KATHLEEN FERRANTE

BRANCH 93 - New York, New York

We were off to Williamsburg, Brooklyn in December to see a curated archive of Slovene video art presented by Barbara Borčič, director of the Center for Contemporary Arts in Ljubljana. DIVA STATION #3 is a sixty-six minute presentation of seventeen short works, ranging from less than a minute to just under ten minutes. Some pieces are humorous, some heart wrenching, one even gently erotic - none were long enough to be boring!

In January, a number of members were at the opening reception for Matjaž Krivic's photo exhibition "Silent Spaces" at the Tibet House Cultural Center. The award-winning documentary photographer, a soft-spoken man who has travelled the world the last eighteen years, answered questions and met with attendees. The large panoramic photos (59" x 19.6") show views of Tibet's sacred sites. The colors are incredible, particularly of water and night landscapes. I asked him where he was going next; his response: "Oh, back to Tibet!"

Many thanks to branch member Maria Whitmire for taking time over the holidays to drive and deliver a dozen cartons of books to the Slovenian Museum and Archives in Cleve-



Matjaž Krivic at opening of his show "Silent Spaces" at the Tibet House Cultural Center, New York City.

Photo by Stephanie Owens.



Member Ria Whitmire next to Matjaž Krivic at opening.

Photo by Stephanie Owens.

land. The Slovene books were donated as a bequest from the author's family, the late Simon C. Kregar, a prominent Ljubljana-born architect, who grew up in New York.

We're looking forward to our Slovene Conversation Classes resuming in the New Year - hard to believe we've been

Zarja - The Dawn

at it for four years! *Najlepša hvala* to Maria Rode, Joan Walker, and Ria Whitmire! Study Buddy sessions keep us going during vacation times - we've come up with some creative ways to make sure we don't forget what we've learned. Thanks to modern technology, one "buddy" from

away in January. Our thoughts and prayers are with her and her family at this difficult time.

The Branch 99 board met in January and discussed our issues regarding low attendance and interest. We are considering the possibility of merging our branch with other area branches. We are in early discussions, and no final

OPENING RECEPTION. THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2017 5-8PM



Silent Spaces, photos by Matjaž Krivic at the Tibet House Cultural Center, New York City – krivic.com.

my group has even kept up while visiting family in Ireland! Most exciting - we are introducing a mentoring program for new participants, matching seasoned participants with newcomers!

BRANCH 99 - Lemont, Illinois

Contact Information: Jana Hlade jmhlade@hotmail.com

Happy Spring! Although it doesn't quite feel like spring yet, warm weather is on the way. You may have received a birthday greeting or Christmas card in the mail from Branch 99 in the past few months. Thank you to Bill Zerial, our president, for sending a little sunshine to our members.

The Archdiocese of Chicago Office of Human Dignity & Solidarity had a multi-ethnic Mass in January. Bill Zerial and Fanika Gorsic attended the Mass wearing the traditional Slovenian costume. During the Mass, Bill represented Europe and was one of four people to give the gifts of bread and wine to Cardinal Cupich.

We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to member Julie Kaluza as her husband, Anton Kaluza, had passed

March/April 2017



Fanika Gorsic and Bill Zerial

decision has been made. If you have any suggestions or concerns, please contact Bill Zerial at billzer@sbcglobal.net or 312.208.5683. For now, planning any Branch 99 events are on hold until a decision is made.

Wishing you a wonderful springtime. Enjoy!

JANA HLADE

BRANCH 100 - Southern California

Contact Information: Jean Koci

949.495.0097/ajkoci@cox.net

Branch 100 celebrated with a Christmas luncheon on December 10, with a very nice attendance of good friends and members at our favorite Italian restaurant in Loma Linda. We thank Mary Lou Vidergar for staying with us during some difficult times. We were happy to see Paul looking so good and feeling well again. We are sure that Teresa Koci will take the office over with confidence and

leadership talents.

All other officers will remain the same. We are happy to announce that loyal member Dolores Glivar was chosen to be our 2017 Member of the Year, but sad, because Dolores will be moving to North Carolina even before we can schedule a luncheon to honor her. Dolores loves arts and crafts, and several times made red carnations for all of us for a festive addition to our holiday celebration.



Thank you to our outgoing Branch President MaryLou Jensen (left), and welcome to newly elected Teresa Koci (right) who will take over.

Mary Lou is always thoughtful with decorations for our parties, as well. This year, she brought poinsettias for the tables, and they became door prizes at the end of the party. We will miss Dolores very much, but Mary Lou promises to stay involved and be with us without so much responsibility.

We are wishing all a Happy New Year with good health and blessings throughout your families.

JEAN KOCI

BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

Contact Information: Bernadette Fitzsimmons
bettefitz@verizon.net

Branch 108 started the New Year 2017 by welcoming three new members, Angela and Michael Krulc, and Tanja Nelson. We met at the Embassy of Slovenia events, and our new members look forward to joining us soon for a meeting.

For the last five years, the Slovenian community in the Washington, D.C. area has been fortunate to have Nuška Zakrajšek, former Cultural Press and Public Diplomacy Officer present, organizing various events and also traveling throughout Slovenian communities across the United States. Nuška will be greatly missed by all since she has completed her appointment with the Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, D.C. We wish her best wishes on her future career endeavors.



Branch 108 members, Marge Whitmore, center, and Bernadette Fitzsimmons, right with prospective members. Pictured on the far left is Angela Krulc, who happily announced that she had completed her SUA application. Welcome Angela - NA ZDRAVJE!



Nika Kovacic, Bernadette Fitzsimmons, and Nuska Zakrajsek at the her last Embassy of Slovenia event in December 2016.

The season of Lent is upon us, and the Easter season not far behind. In coming weeks the earth will burst with flowers and trees blooming and budding, as we welcome spring and the resurrection of our Lord. Slovenians have rich traditions during *Pust*, Holy Week, and Easter, centering on church activities, preparing and cooking traditional meals. Potica most often comes to mind for special hol-

idays such as Easter. It represents the crown of thorns, which was placed on Jesus' head on Good Friday. Chapter 5 of *The Slovenian-American Table* cookbook, entitled "The Easter Season" pages 36 – 46 provides details of cherished traditions and recipes to celebrate Easter, with



Potica that Nika Kovacic and Bernadette Fitzsimmons made.

a touch of "Slovenian." Our family favorites are *praznični kruh* (braided sweet bread), *potica* and *pisanice* (colored Easter eggs). My mother Nika Kovačič has taught me how to make *potica*. There are many components to making *potica* that can be learned easily; however, her skillful hands sure beat mine when it comes to rolling out the dough, spreading the filling, and placing the *potica* in a round baking pan. It is so much easier to use medium sized rectangular baking pans, but the round one is traditional for Slovenians to make, especially in celebration of Easter. With practice, I hope to become proficient in getting the *potica* just right in a round baking pan.

As we celebrate old Slovenian traditions this season of *Pust*, Holy Week, and Easter, let us remember the Slovenian saying, "*S starim se novo hrani*" - With the old, it's preserved anew. *Vesela Aleluja!*

BERNADETTE FITZSIMMONS

BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities (TC) of Minnesota

Contact Information: Elaine Barthelemy

elaineab@yahoo.com

Branch 109 Twin Cities Slovenians love our music! Strains of *Glej, zvezdice božje* (Look, the Heavenly Stars) filled the room in the New Brighton Community Center for our December member's meeting as Mary Ann Palmer lead us in song. You could feel the Christmas spirit when we joined together in harmony in *Hitite, kristjani* (Oh, Come All Ye Faithful), and *Sveta noč* (Silent Night).

This was the final meeting as leader for outgoing Branch 109 President John Zakelj, and we thank him for his years of outstanding service in that capacity. John will continue to serve as a member of the board. We welcome officers, President, Mike Koski and Vice President, Chuck Podominick. Continuing officers include Jean Podominick, Membership Secretary; Mary Ann Setnicker, Treasurer; Liz Miller, Recording Secretary; and Mike Koski, SUA Representative. At-large board members are John Zakelj, Bob Grahek, Miro Medved, Frank Medved, Mary Ann Palmer, Rick Pisa, Norm Setnicker, Mary Alice Schwanke, John Perhay, Sue Rademacher, and Elaine Barthelemy.

Organizers of Branch 109's monthly meetings have a knack for finding a wide variety of topics. In December, Chisholm Slovenian, Mirjam Gremes, showed us a PowerPoint presentation that traced the history of lace making from Roman times to the present day and featured many intricate designs through the years.



Mirjam Gremes of Chisholm, Minnesota, demonstrates Slovenian lace making.

In her presentation, Mirjam taught us that Slovenian lace is always made using bobbins and told us it would take twelve years of study to learn all of the different



Marijanca Yartz making lace in Polhov Gradec, Slovenia.

techniques. She did a demonstration using a pillow and bobbins. Afterwards, she shared beautiful examples of Slovenian lace, many made by her mother, Marijanca Yartz, who lives in Polhov Gradec, about twenty minutes northwest of Ljubljana.

Marijanca has been making lace since she was a young girl, except for a time during WWII when materials were not available. Mirjam herself started learning when she was five years-old and travels back to Polhov Gradec every year to spend time with her mother. They both belong to a lace making club, one of a hundred throughout Slovenia.

Elsewhere in the country, the Idrija Lace School trains many excellent lace makers, continuing a tradition begun in 1876. Located in the western Slovenian city of Idrija

known for its lace making, the school has branches across Slovenia and in other parts of Europe. Some public schools in Slovenia also teach the lace making today, accentuating the importance of this art to our culture.

The January program found John Perhay sharing, “The Journey to Prhajevo.” In his presentation, John traced his family history and offered resources he used in researching



Samples of Slovenian lace.

his family background, and proved he is quite a detective! Starting with only a few sketchy details about his grandfather’s death in Ely, John eventually located the family’s ancestral home in Slovenia dating back to before 1620. Thanks to taking this journey, he was able to share previously unknown information with his father and an aunt before they passed away.

ELAINE BARTHELEMY



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WE LOVE HEARING ABOUT *THE SLOVENIAN-AMERICAN TABLE*

This conversation was sent to Denise P. Bartlett who did an amazing job proofing this beautiful cookbook.

Denise -

I purchased it from Helen Frohna, and thought it was wonderfully appropriate that it actually arrived on the feast of Sveti Miklavž! You are right - I love the book! Never have seen any cookbook as beautiful as this. The photos are amazing and the stories are wonderful. It is truly a work of art to be displayed and kept in a place where it can always be seen and frequently viewed.

The first pages (134 and 135) that randomly turned up for me when I opened the book show recipes for 2 of my all-time FAVORITE salads: Krompirjeva solata and Fižolova solata. And the photos made me drool! Next time I will make the potato salad, I will use Yukon Gold, and next time I make bean salad, I will add marinated artichokes, as the recipes suggest. They are great new little twists to freshen up the way I normally make those salads. I am still drooling! The potato salad on Page 82 is another one I grew up on.

Love the picture on Page 40 for Cvetna nedelja. Love the stories about traditions, and really love that this book remembers the Saints and faith-related celebrations.

Thank you for making this available to us, and thanks to all who had part in creating this lovely cookbook.

Beta Modic, Wenatchee, WA



Way to Go, Patricia Gruden!

The National Board of the Slovenian Union of America would like to offer a big compliment to Patricia Gruden – Branch 50, Cleveland, OH for advising that the Ohio branches were paying sales taxes.

National Treasurer Robert Kuhel investigated and obtained the necessary forms, and now all three Ohio branches are exempt from sales taxes.

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The Slovenian “*Ljubljanske Butarice*” as those found in the Ljubljana Market Place.

The Slovenian tradition of making “*butare*” for Palm Sunday dates back hundreds of years when real palms were not available. Using Slovenian ingenuity, wood shavings dyed in various colors became popular when greens were not available. To this day, “*Ljubljanske Butarice*,” has remained a very important part of the Slovenian culture. Today “*butare*” are being made in the United States in crafting as exact as those found in the Ljubljana marketplace. Even the dyes are from Slovenia.

See pages 6-7 of this issue of
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