

# Zarja

The background of the cover is a photograph of a town built on a hillside. In the center, a prominent white church with a tall, pointed yellow steeple and a cross on top stands out. To its left is a large, multi-story white building with several windows. To the right, a building with a red-tiled roof is visible. In the foreground, there are lush green trees and bushes. At the bottom of the image, a small blue boat is docked on the edge of a river or stream. The sky is overcast.

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## The Dawn

Summer Time in  
*Novo Mesto*  
on the Krka River

# 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](mailto: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 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, two (2) months preceding the issue. For example, articles for the Fall issue must be received by July 10. Thank you.

### **Submission Guidelines**

E-mail your photos attached as jpeg files. If you have an old photo that is irreplaceable, please make a good-quality copy to share with us. (Scanned copies must be a resolution of 300 or higher.)

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



# THE STATE OF THE UNION

It is June 2019. In just a few days the gavel will be opening the 28<sup>th</sup> SUA Convention in Cleveland. The Ohio branches have worked diligently to compose an agenda that is rich in both business and pleasure. There is time to submit your registration. Don't miss out on the three days of cultural activities. Check out this listing of events on the back page of this issue.

Don't pass up this invitation from the Slovenian Genealogy Society International (SGSI)!

## Invitation to All SUA Convention Attendees

*If you arrive in Cleveland before the convention or stay afterwards, you are invited to visit the Macek Research Center at the Slovenian Genealogy Society International Headquarters located at 6415 St. Clair Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44103.*

*Our center contains many unique resources that may be useful when researching your family history. Please call 216-505-5569 or email [sgsi.rc@gmail.com](mailto:sgsi.rc@gmail.com) to make an appointment for your visit.*

Jeff Dormish, President  
Slovenian Genealogy Society International, Inc.

## National Board Meeting

The National Board met in Joliet on March 14-16. On Saturday, March 16, Georgene Agnich (Branch 20) delivered a most interesting history of the area known today as the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor. The Stonich building, which is the SUA national office, is located within this historic district. A hearty Slovenian-style lunch of locally-made smoked sausage, sauerkraut, and boiled potatoes was served to national board members and volunteer auditors Diane Data (Branch 24), Judy Stoll (Branch 2), and Georgene Agnich in the upstairs apartment. After lunch, the volunteer auditors performed an audit of the 2018 SUA financial records following instructions from Treasurer Robert Kuhel. The following letter, written by Georgene Agnich, is the response from the auditors:

*March 29, 2019*

*Ms. Mary Lou Voelk, President  
Slovenian Union of America  
9157 Clubhouse Drive  
Foley, Alabama 36535*

*Dear Mary Lou:*

*I am writing on behalf of Branch 2 member Judy Stoll, Branch 24 member Diane Data, and myself to comment upon our audit of the 2018 accounting records of the Slovenian Union of America at the home office on Saturday, March 16, 2019.*

*National Treasurer Robert ("Bob") Kuhel gave us a concise overview of all the accounts we were to audit, patiently explaining what each account was and how they related to each other and to the general ledger. He also gave us a pamphlet with guidelines for conducting such an audit.*

*As we performed checks of randomly selected months in each account, we determined that the accounts were internally consistent and also consistent with each other and the general ledger. We also noted that there was appropriate backup documentation for income and expenses. We were impressed by Bob's professional methodology and his meticulous attention to detail.*

*We wish to express our thanks to the National Board for the opportunity to participate in the audit and for the delicious Slovenian-style lunch and appreciation gifts which we received in return.*

*Sincerely,  
Georgene Agnich  
Branch 20*

*Cc: R. Kuhel  
D. Bartlett  
J. Stoll  
D. Data*

**SUA Collegiate Scholarship:** *for your journey down the education road.*  
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**For Applications:** [slovenianunion.org](http://slovenianunion.org)

Diane Data walks hand in hand with Mary Setina, who is represented in the steel cut-out outside the museum doors. The cutout commemorates Mary Setina, a Slovenian immigrant who settled in Joliet and operated a candy and tobacco store in “Slovenian Row” in downtown Joliet. The steel cutouts mark significant places within the I &



M Canal National Heritage Corridor. Setina is the mother of Josephine Erjavec, founder of Branch 20; therefore, Jonita Erjavec Ruth is Setina’s granddaughter. The steel cutouts mark significant places within the I & M Canal National

Heritage Corridor. Remember to have your photo taken with Mary Setina the next time you are in Joliet!

Megan Johnson, Branch 102 Willard, Wisconsin

I refer to the map of Slovenia with inserts of prominent iconic sites on the back cover of *Zarja*, Summer 2018, drawn by Megan Johnson of Branch 102, Willard, Wisconsin. I purchased a copy of this map/drawing. The quality of watercolor paper stood prominent, allowing Megan to use a delicate outlining for the country and its iconic places. Congratulations go out to Megan for her interest and love of heritage. The drawing is a treasure!

In closing, I look forward to the 1,000 mile road trip to Cleveland and the gathering of Slovenian Americans in the notable city of Cleveland.

Sincerely,

Mary Lou Deyak Voelk, President  
 Slovenian Union of America



## Branch 20 - Joliet, Illinois Members Welcome Guests from Parkland Community College in Champaign

Branch 20 members John Lukancic, Mike Vidmar, Diane Hohenwater, Sandy Rodeghero, and Georgene Agnich, along with Ray Koncar, welcomed 15 guests from Parkland Community College in Champaign on March 28 to tour St. Joseph Church, Ferdinand Hall, the Ancel Center, and the SUA Heritage Museum on a quest to learn about Slovenian history and customs in Joliet. They had enjoyed Balkan cuisine at Skardarliya Restaurant in Brookfield prior to their prompt arrival at the church at 1:45 pm. The guests included John Eby, CPP, who is Parkland's Program Manager/Business Training and Community Education.

Pastor Timothy Andres greeted everyone and gave a prayerful welcome inside St. Joseph Church. He introduced tour guide John Lukancic, the son of Slovenian immigrants, lifelong parishioner, and curator emeritus of the Ancel Center, which is the church's museum. John spoke about the founding of the parish by Slovenian immigrants in 1891, their building of two churches on the site since then, the significance of the church to Slovenian life, and the restoration prior to the 2005 centennial celebration of the current church building. John then led the guests through the sacristy outdoors to visit Ferdinand Hall right behind the church. He explained that this building was St. Joseph's first school, built in 1895 and expanded to accommodate the growing student population.

Next, John led everyone to the nearby second school, built in 1914 but closed by the bishop in 2011, to tour the Ancel Center within two of its classrooms. The Ancel Center, dedicated in 2012 in honor of lifelong parishioners Edward Ancel and wife Olga (Erjavec) Ancel, is the museum of St. Joseph Church. Here, curator Ray Koncar

assisted John in showing the museum's many treasures to the attentive guests.



*John Lukancic and Mike Vidmar relax while Parkland students sign SUA Heritage Museum guest book as they depart.*

The last stop on the tour was the SUA Heritage Museum, where Ray Koncar delighted the guests by playing button box tunes and Georgene Agnich was the tour guide. Mike Vidmar, member of Branch 20 and of KSKJ, gave a talk about the founding of the KSKJ in Joliet in 1894 and about the fraternal order's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. Diane Hohenwater offered refreshments of cheese and crackers, grapes, potica, Slovenian wine, Slivovitz, and coffee as the guests browsed the museum, bought souvenirs, asked questions, and signed the museum's guestbook. By 4:45 pm, it was time to board the bus for Champaign. The guests received folders of information about Slovenian history, culture, and genealogy, as well as St. Joseph Church 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary keychains and pens and KSKJ hand-sanitizers, pens, and brochures, as they departed with a deeper appreciation of Joliet's Slovenian heritage.



*Ray Koncar and John Eby at SUA Museum, and Mike Vidmar at refreshments table.*



# Donations

*Thank you! - Hvala lepa!*

## **\$1,000 Donation**

Anonymous,  
\$500 Educational Grant; \$500 Cultural Grant

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Diane Selke, 43, SUA  
Diane Varney, 50, +Jennie Fitzthum, mother  
Dolores Hennelly, 16, Cultural Grant  
Fredrick Mlakar, 100, SUA  
Georgene Agnich, 20, SUA  
Helene Kolosov, 99, Honor of my parents  
Jacqueline J. Hanks, 50, +Jennie Omersa  
James Lilek, 20, SUA  
Janet Steensland, 20,  
+Margaret Stalzer & Fr. David Stalzer  
Jay Komater, 89, SUA  
Jeanette Weber, 50, SUA  
Jerry Lomshek, 100, Raffle  
Joan K. Daniel, 1, +Agnes Gergisch  
(Branch 1 Charter Member), mother  
Joseph Barbarich, 5, +Carrie Velikan  
Judy M. Hann, 20, +Mary C. Tomasic  
Katherina M. Kaye, 43, +Mici Coffelt  
Lillian M. Hartmann, 43, +Delvin Hartmann  
Loretta Catarozoli, 43, +Mick Hartmann  
Lynn M. Zalokar, 93, +Marilyn (Kovacic) Zalokar  
Margo Cowper, 20, Educational Grant  
Marie Bakse Horecky, 16, +Mary Bakse  
Marie Kranjec, 99, SUA  
Marie Tiedmann, 2, +Mary Koscak  
Mary (Mitzi) Irene Banich, 89, SUA  
Mary Ferkul, 35, SUA  
Mary Jane Hiti, 50, SUA  
Mary Jean Sweeney, 20, +Theresa Zelesnik Jordan  
Mary Jo Savol, 20, SUA  
Mary Lou Golf, 20, +Mary Barbic  
Megan Rehn, 89, SUA  
Menky Mata, 20, +Sylvia & Harry Troop  
Michael Vidmar, 20, +Adrianna Vidmar  
Michele Kochevar, 2, +Helen Kochevar  
Mira Kosem, 50, Educational Grant  
Nancy L. Criss, 30, +Joann Yones Mallow  
Nicholas Vidmar, 20, +Albert (Gus) Vidmar  
Paul Barbarich, 5, +Sophie Barbarich  
Rosalie Skocaj, 42, +Albina Skocaj  
Rosemarie Duh, 50, +Mrs. Justina Duh  
Sharon Gillen, 50, +Ann Tercek  
Sue Ann Yovanovich, PhD, 5, +Fran Yovanovich

Susan O'Block Kellen, 26,  
Honor of Phyllis Bergent O'Block  
Valerie Sorensen, 3, SUA  
Vida F. Habjan, 50, SUA  
Virginia Bestic, 55, +Frances Juvancic  
William F. Koncar, 20, +Dorothy Koncar

### **\$5 Donation**

Adam Lenkaitis, 24, +John Pohar  
Alex Lenkaitis, 24, +Bill Prokup  
Anton Malensek, 93, SUA  
Antonia Burich, 50, Honor of Venerable Bishop Baraga  
Bernice Ceglar, 35, +Pauline Plevell  
Betty Wiley, 3, +George & Elizabeth Skube  
Beverly Batic-Sciarrabba, 50,  
+Beloved mom - Mary Batic  
Cathy Lenkaitis, 24, +John Pohar  
Charlene Kobe, 20, SUA  
Frances Schultz, 20, SUA  
Jenny Collins, 30, +George & Elizabeth Skube  
June D. Burich, 50, +Anton A. "Tony" Burich  
Kathleen Simmonds, 93, SUA  
Lucinda Soltesz, 109, SUA  
Michelle Zupan, 93,  
Educational Grant +Antonja Horvat Zupan  
William Kobe, 20, SUA



1, Kohls, G. W.	43, Frohna, Mark
1, Shircel, Richard A.	50, Fondran, Greg
1, Thiel, Judy A.	50, Kosir, Natalie
2, Gornick, Jenna	50, Kosir, Nicholas
2, Gornick, Kate	50, Stupica, Maya
3, Holland, Cheryl	93, Borden, Julia
3, Jesik, Theresa	93, Brence, Christopher
3, Mead, Deborah	93, Guitard, Stephanie
3, Volk, Elaine	93, Haule, Mihael
16, Golob-Huntoon, Marge	100, Dragovan, Wileen
16, Recendez, Sandy Golob	100, Recek, Alyssa
23, Gerzin, Louis M.	103, Amore, Aylin
23, Mortaloni, Michaelann	109, Allen, Kelly
23, Mortaloni, Ronald	109, Polutnik, John
23, Zobitz, Francine	109, Polutnik, Michael
26, Gregorin, Dale	109, Polutnik, Robert
30, Kilpatrick, Blair	109, Van Sloun, Rose
35, Gerheardt, Susan	

# Member of the Year

## Slovenian Union of America

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### MARY SANDWICK

#### BRANCH 1, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN

Branch 1 is honoring Mary Sandwick. We asked Mary to tell you about herself in her own words. "I was a child in a family of six children, all of us raised in a proud Slovenian family. We have always been proud to be 100% Slovenian.



I grew up eating Slovenian foods and practicing their traditions. I was even lucky enough to visit Slovenia with my family. I am currently the Assistant Manager at Pizza Ranch, and I have been blessed with a wonderful daughter, Melissa.

My parents were very involved with St. Cyril and did a great job keeping us in touch with our Slovenian heritage. I started going to SUA meetings with my dad and enjoyed seeing cousins and making new friends. When the opportunity arose for me to be the President of Branch 1, I was humbled and honored to carry on the traditions that the previous generations graced us with. I will continue to do my best as president. I really enjoy coming up with new Slovenian-themed games. This has been a blessing for me and a great way to stay in touch with my heritage."

Mary brings much enthusiasm to all our meetings. She is very "proud to be Slovenian," and we are very grateful to have her as a member of our branch as she lets her Slovenian heritage shine.

### MARY FRANCES SROKA KELLEY

#### BRANCH 3, PUEBLO, COLORADO

Mary is being honored as Member of the Year for her involvement in many sponsored Branch 3 programs. She is the oldest child of the late Dr. and Mrs. John Sabo of Pueblo.

Mary's great-grandmother, Frances Okorn Hoffer, was a native of Metlika, Slovenia. Since Mary's grandmother, Frances Hoffer Sabo, died in childbirth in 1927, Mary's Slovenian memories come from family members. She remembers making krofe with cousin, Marie Brunjak Culig, cooking govidine with her mother, Heddy Plese Sabo, and enjoying Great Aunt Kate Jerman's (Grandma Frances's sister) sour potatoes. Aunt Kate was the reason the family ended up in Pueblo. Father Cyril Zupan, OSB, pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Pueblo, heard Kate playing the organ during a trip to Chicago in the late 1890s and arranged for Kate and her family to move to Pueblo to provide music for his Slovenian parish. (Read about Father Cyril in this issue's article on page 18, "Queen of the Most Holy Parish.") Mary fondly recalls visiting Aunt Kate after Mass on Sundays and playing a composition on the piano for her. A favorite tradition is visiting the crèches of local parishes on St. Stephen's feast day (December 26).

Education was a family value that was emphasized. Mary attended grade school at St. Patrick's and Shrine



of St. Therese. She graduated from Pueblo Catholic High School and received a B.A. in History from Marycrest College in Davenport, Iowa. She completed a M.S. in Behavioral and Learning Disabilities at the University of Northern Colorado and did postgraduate studies in liturgy at the University of Santa Clara. Mary retired from Pueblo District 60 after 32 years of teaching and then worked as Religious Education Coordinator for local parishes.

Mary's first husband, Captain Richard Sroka, died in Vietnam in 1964. In 1969, she married Gerald Kelley. She has three children: Sara Sroka Kihn (Brian), Sean Michael Kelley (Deanna), and Katie Kelley Berumen (Anthony). Mary enjoys spending time with her grandchildren: Evan Kihn, Morgan Kihn, Anthony Berumen, and Lily Berumen.

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## **STEVE FON**

### **BRANCH 5, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA**



Steve is a longtime supporter of the Indianapolis Slovenian Community, attending Holy Trinity School, working with his father at Fon's Grocery, working at the local butcher shop in Haughville, and holding membership in many of the Indy Slovenian groups: SUA, KSKJ, Slovenian Cultural Society, Slovenian National Home, and Indianapolis-Piran Sister City. His favorite travels are to Slovenia, visiting many family and friends! Steve can't wait to take the grandkids to Slovenia!!

His children write: "I always think of going to the Nash with Dad, Sunday pitch-ins and stuffing newsletters for

the Slovenian Cultural Society, and Polka Masses at Holy Trinity. It was always special to Dad, and now important to all of us to continue the traditions!" One of Steve's children added, "The Annual Slovenian Picnic, working the SLOVENIA booth at the International Festival, and my very first trip to Slovenia was possible because of Dad being so involved within the Slovenian community! He has continued the communications and friendships Grandma Mary Fon established many years ago. Not too many men are brave enough to take six women to Slovenia by themselves, but in 1999 Dad took on the challenge! He was so proud and excited to show us Slovenia. We all survived, even when Grandma got us lost and said 'ask that person. He looks like a relative!' At random times during the day, Dad would surprise us with polka music blaring throughout our house! He continues that tradition with my daughter. She loves to dance and sing with him. He has always taught us to cherish our Slovenian heritage. My first memory is our Sister City signing trip to Piran at 5 years old, thinking it was just a big meeting. Looking back at meeting the Piran Mayor, the US Ambassador, and Indianapolis City officials, I realize how crucial my Dad was in helping set all this up. My Dad's Slovenian heritage is very important to him, as is his continued relationships with our family in Slovenia. My Dad completely embodies what it means to be Slovenian!"

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## **ALL MEMBERS**

### **BRANCH 20, JOLIET, ILLINOIS**

In an ongoing celebration of our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Branch 20 will honor all our members, past and present, at a "Members of the Year" banquet on Tuesday, May 21, at St. Joseph Parish Hall. Father Thomas Paul, Branch 20 Spiritual Advisor, will give a special tribute to Our Lady of Brezje.

Nine decades have passed since fourteen Slovenian women held Branch 20's first meeting on June 11, 1928, at the Joliet home of Mary



Russ. During those decades, Branch 20 became the Union's largest branch through the dedicated efforts of so many members eager to pass their beloved Slovenian heritage to each new generation. Over the years, our members have set an example of faith, hard work, and generosity for all to see. They supported St. Joseph Church and its former grade school. They promoted education with Branch 20 scholarships, donations to the SWUA Scholarship Foundation, and donations to area schools. They promoted Slovenian culture by organizing national heritage days, hosting the annual Grape Harvest Dance for 36 consecutive years, and helping to create and maintain the national office and museum in Joliet. Members raised money for World War II and relief efforts after the war, for the creation of a Maria Pomagaj chapel in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., and for the restoration of the Statue of Liberty.

Our members have enriched society with their faith, patriotism, hard work, and love of their Slovenian heritage. They have distinguished themselves in religious service, business, education, the arts, sports, volunteer work, politics, and other areas of community life. Therefore, it is with gratitude and respect that we celebrate our founding members, our sustaining members, and our current members for their unflinching devotion to our cherished Slovenian heritage and to each other over the past nine decades.

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## **KRISTINE WALBURN**

### **BRANCH 35, AURORA, MINNESOTA**

Kristine, as a Member of the Year, is fitting well with her deep tradition in the SUA. She was born to Slovenian parents, Thomas and Frances (Bradach) Smolich, on May 11, 1950, and was raised in Aurora along with her



two younger brothers, Tom and Mike. Kristine graduated from Aurora High School in 1968 and attended college for a while before being married. She has four children: her three daughters Michelle, Nicole, and Rebecca, and a son, Zachary, with her second marriage. She was a stay-at-home mom until 1986 when she went to work as a waitress in town. Also, she worked at ERT Electronic and bartended in different businesses for a couple of years. Currently, she works as a manager at American Legion in Aurora. Kristine's grandmother, Mary Smolich, was the last charter member of the SUA. She passed away September 17, 1993, only six days shy of her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday. Kristine's mother, Frances Bradach, was a member of SUA for 52 years and a secretary-treasurer for 39 of those years. Kristine's daughter, Michelle, was a SWUA Scholarship winner in 1988.

Living the legacy of Slovenian heritage and traditions has been instilled in Kristine from the very beginning; she was enrolled into the SUA on the day of her birth. Both her grandmother and mother have encouraged and instructed her on how to make noodles, krofe, potica, and strudel. Her children have all learned to make krofe. A couple have attempted potica, and all still want to learn how to make strudel.

Kristine is also a member of the All-Slav Club, KSKJ, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Council of Catholic Women. She regularly attends the monthly branch meetings and is willing to help and participate in branch activities.

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## **FRANK MARKELC**

### **BRANCH 43, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN**

Milwaukee's Branch 43 is proud to announce our well-deserved Member of the Year - Frank Markelc. Frank is proud of his 100% Slovenian ethnicity; though he hasn't traveled to Slovenia, he still speaks a little Slovenian. He certainly enjoys his participation in three of Milwaukee's Slovenian organizations. Besides our branch's meetings and special events, Frank enjoys playing balina (bocci) in an annual league and the activities of the local Slovenian Social Club. All this at 91 years young!

Frank will tell you he has had an abundant life. Barbara, his wife of 51 years, died four years ago. Frank has two children, James and Susan, and six grandchildren. After serving in the Army in the early 50s, Frank's career was working for 25 years for the City of Milwaukee Fire Department as a Stores Clerk III, which entailed working in the repair shop for the fire equipment and being very active in his union, retiring in 1992.

Frank has trophies for bowling, baseball, even Sheepshead, and his balina play improves each year. He has fond memories of playing the accordion in a trio, dancing, and still enjoys playing Sheepshead three times a week. Frank has been a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles since 1947, serving 13 terms as President, and was recently nominated to the Eagle's Hall of Fame. He also served as



1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander of AMVETS Post #27.

Frank has been a very generous branch member, always willing to help when certain activities seem out of reach. He has a quick wit and is a great conversationalist; his stories from the past decades are very interesting. Frank's Slovenian attributes are very appreciated by our branch members. On May 14, a special luncheon was held in Frank's honor at Meyer's Restaurant in Milwaukee.

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## **KATHLEEN SIMMONDS**

### **BRANCH 93, NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

We are proud to present our very own Kathleen Simmonds for member of the year for 2019. Kathleen lights up every room she enters and makes you instantly feel as though you are good enough. She is warm, friendly, and a pure delight to know. We are grateful to have her as a part of our Slovenian community.



No one deserves this award and honor more than our beloved Slovenian-Australian actress, producer, and reformed lawyer.

Her broad New York theatre repertoire includes an off-Broadway debut as Lorna in *Golden Boy*, directed by Aaron Latham, and the leading roles of Olivia in *Twelfth Night* and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Shakespeare in New York's Bryant Park.

Kathleen is also a producer - a role she believes all actors should undertake to fully understand their craft and industry. In 2018, she attended the 90<sup>th</sup> Oscars with a short film on diversity in Hollywood and was Line Producer on the Netflix feature documentary *Reversing Roe*. Her producer credits also include Associate Producer and Casting Director on documentary films and mini-series for HBO, Amazon, and Sundance AMC.

Her latest project, *Woe Is She*, a new dark comedy web series (which she produced and stars in) is currently doing the international festival circuit and has already been nominated as an Official Selection at the Brooklyn WebFest. The series is set for release in 2019.

Congratulations, Kathleen Simmonds!

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## **KAREN SIXEL**

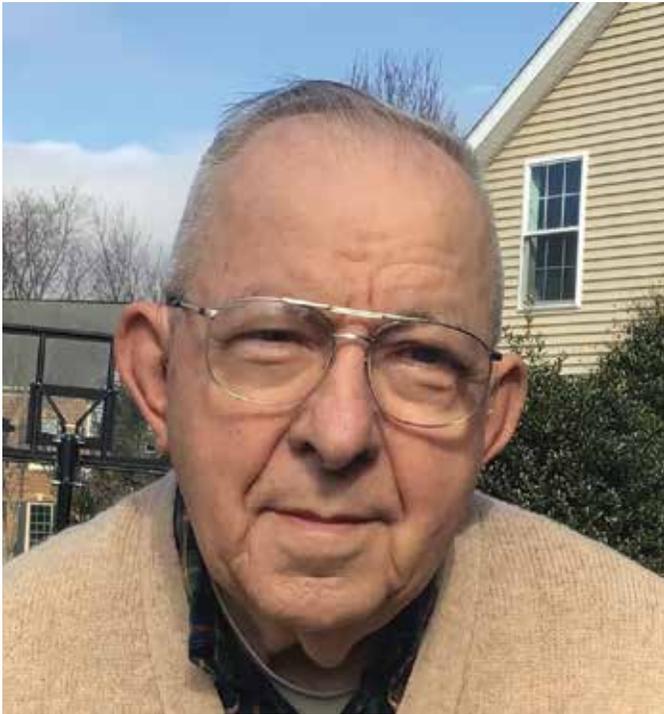
### **BRANCH 102, WILLARD, WISCONSIN**

Karen Sixel is Branch 102's newest member and our 2019 Member of the Year! Karen was nominated by our treasurer, Sue Pakiz. When Sue nominated Karen, she said, "Karen has been attending meetings for three years. She makes food for the potlucks, and she participates in the meetings. What else can you ask for in a Member of the Year?"

While not a Slovenian by heritage (she's Swedish), Karen married Mike Sixel on May 22, 2015, and became a Slovenian by marriage. Karen has two sons and one granddaughter. Karen's hobbies include sewing, quilting, genealogy, and scrapbooking. In addition, she enjoys family gatherings and daily wildlife activities on the Yellow River. Karen's church community is important to her, and she is active in two Bible studies. Her favorite Bible verse is Phil 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Branch 102 is proud to call Karen our 2019 Member of the Year!



## **RICH TERSELIC** **BRANCH 103, WASHINGTON D.C.**



The Washington, D.C. branch selected Rich Terselic as its Member of the Year. He was the first male to become a branch member and since joining has served as both secretary and treasurer. He has also had a role in national level SUA activities, serving on the Standing Research and Advisory Committee. Several articles he wrote dealing with Slovenian culture and music have been published in *Zarja*.

Rich was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and with wife Mary Lou, moved to the Washington, D.C. area in 1965. He is retired from federal government service as well as having managed a family business. Mary Lou and Rich, who live near Frederick, Maryland, have four adult children and fourteen grandchildren. Several of their family are also SUA members.

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## **JOHN ZAKELJ** **BRANCH 109, TWIN CITIES OF MINNESOTA**

Encouraged by Yul Yost, John officially joined Branch 109 in 2008 and served as president from 2011-2016, years when membership grew and finances were stabilized. John was instrumental in organizing and facilitating Slovenian language classes, now in their ninth year. Each year, John proudly wears his Slovenian costume at the Festival of Nations, at our Martinovanje party, and at other branch events. A modest but strong leader, John encourages and supports all who are willing to share their own stories, knowledge, and love of Slovenia.

Born in 1948 in a camp in Austria, John was the eldest

child of Anton and Cecilija (née Gantar), refugees from Žiri in northwestern Slovenia. Years later, John helped his father publish the book *Flight to the Unknown* in Slovenia about their refugee experience. (You can find the English translation online under *Anton Zakelj - Diaries and Memoir*.)

In 1949, John's family emigrated to Willard, Wisconsin where an older Slovenian couple had agreed to sponsor them. Six months later when the 10-cow farm proved too small to support them all, the Zakelj family moved to Cleveland, Ohio. Anton took any available work, mostly heavy manual labor in hot, dirty factories. Throughout their struggles, Anton and Cecilija treasured their Slovenian heritage and were determined to pass on their language, culture, and religion to John and his three siblings. As part of Cleveland's large Slovenian community this meant Slovenian school on Saturday mornings, church services in Slovenian, and many Slovenian cultural events.

From Cleveland, John went to Boston College, where he studied Slavic Languages and Psychology. After graduation, he received fellowship offers from Harvard and others, but the Vietnam War intervened. John's application for conscientious objector status led him to service in Minnesota as a VISTA volunteer, working with the poor or disabled. Eventually, he spent a long career with the state Department of Human Services, working on funding and legislation to improve community mental health services.

Semi-retired, John enjoys birdwatching, gardening, photography and spending time with his wife, Bonnie Watkins, and his children, Johnny and Cecelia Watkins.



# A "TASTE OF SLOVENIA" is BORN

By Branch 23 Ely, Minnesota

## *What can we do to protect our heritage?*

Many ideas were tossed around at our SUA Branch 23 meeting when someone said something about Slovenian food. After several ideas were discussed, "Taste of Slovenia" was born.

Our first event was held on August 6, 2016 at St. Anthony's Church Hall in Ely and has been celebrated each first Saturday in August since then. In 2019, our fourth TASTE event will be held, and it continues to grow by leaps and bounds.



We began with a dozen tasting booths around the hall for which our guests purchased tickets and made their way from booth to booth collecting samples, visiting with friends, and listening to traditional Slovenian

music furnished by the Barich Brothers and Bernie Palcher. The event featured items like žlinkrofi, beef noodle soup, mushroom soup, blood, potato, and pork sausage, an assortment of soured vegetables, soured beef, krofi, canned peppers with fresh bread, pohanje, apple strudel, and walnut potica. People visited while enjoying these traditional foods. They listened to the music, sometimes singing along and having a dance or two.

A Slovenian gentleman in traditional dress greeted guests with the traditional welcoming bread and slivovitz. Many items from Slovenia had been set on display, and there were items for sale. The Branch 23 ladies made and prepared ninety bags of noodles. Demonstrators made apple



strudel, walnut potica, and pohanje, and guests are able to sample these as well.

During our second event, we were honored to display the Slovenian Banners at the Ely-Winton Historical Society, which many chose to visit. Traditional Slovenian door prizes were awarded.

Each year this event has grown, and additional foods have been introduced. Crowds line the avenue waiting for the doors to open, and many spend the entire time enjoying the demonstrations, which have included the making of bobbin lace by Mirjam Gremes.

On August 3 of this year, we will be able to feature a larger assortment of foods and hot pads and dish cloths with Slovenian logos for sale. An ethnic cookbook which has been put together by Branch 23 will be available.

A "Taste of Slovenia" is the longest running ethnic celebration in Ely. It is the pleasure of SUA Branch 23 to present this event annually.

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***This year's "Taste of Slovenia" will be on  
Saturday, August 3, 2019***

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# Keeping Slovenian Faith and Culture Alive in Manhattan

By Staff Writer David Sodac  
Branch 89 Oglesby, Illinois  
[bd sodac@gmail.com](mailto:bd sodac@gmail.com)



In a downtown neighborhood that has storied tales of the first known Mafia hit in New York City, you will discover the heart and soul of the first Slovenian Catholic Church. St. Cyril's Church is squeezed into the business district called St. Mark's Place in the midst of the New York borough of Manhattan. Many New Yorkers refer to this district as the main cultural street of the East Village. St. Cyril's Church has served and continues to serve its parishioners for over a hundred years in an unpretentious brownstone building on 62nd St. Mark's Place. A New York publication once described the church of St. Cyril as taking up exactly the same space as any of the walk-up buildings on St. Mark's Place in the East Village, almost hiding in plain sight. The church's present pastor, Fr. Krizolog Cimerman, laughingly

described his church as being in the midst of a sushi bar and a somewhat trashy artist gallery. Despite its unexpected location and size, the church has since evolved into the centerpiece of the New York City's Slovene community. Founded in July 1916, it is still New York City's only Slovene parish.

Through the years, the Slovene immigrants arrived in three surges to the shores of New York. The first immigration surge began arriving to New York City from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the late 1800s. This wave has been characterized as being comprised of individuals who were young, unmarried, and seeking better economic opportunities. The second and third surges of immigration occurred following World War I and then after World War II.

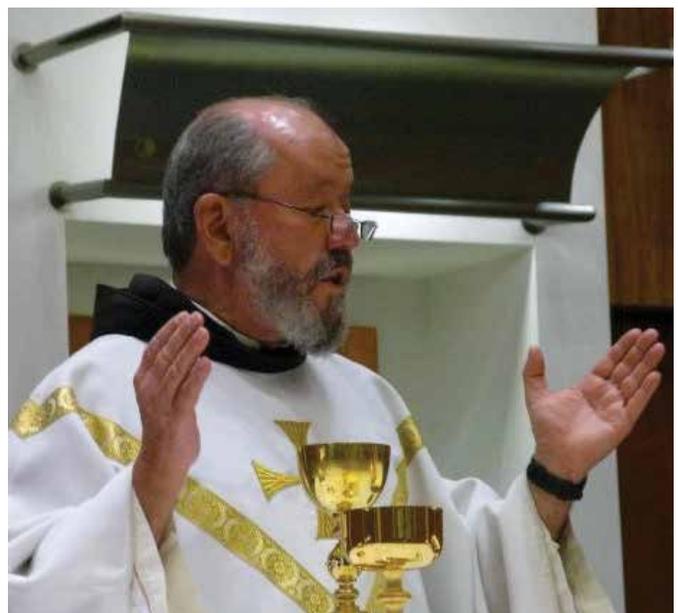
People sought to escape their destroyed homeland as a result of both wars. Countless feared Communist control and oppression and sought political freedom. This third Slovene surge of immigration occurred during a time of America's restrictive immigration policies. Many could only come onto America's shores with proof of an American sponsor, a place to live, and guaranteed employment. Numerous Displaced Persons (DPs) were either sponsored by the Franciscan order or procedurally facilitated by them through the immigration process. Parish members and the pastors of St. Cyril's Church continually rose to the occasion and personally greeted the newly arriving Slovenian families at the immigration facilities and escorted them back to their church. Once welcomed and comforted at the parish hall, parish members would bring them to their homes and feed them, provide them sleeping accommodations, and help make arrangements for train travel to their final destinations.

Newly arriving immigrants were met by representatives of religious orders and organizations. They were offered aid and safety in temporary housing facilities located off of 2nd Street near Castle Garden and later Ellis Island. There were places such as the St. Leo House established for German immigrants, the Lutheran's Pilgrim House, and St. Raphael's Society for Slovenian Immigrants that was formed in New York in May, 1909. All of these organizations sheltered them with good, clean beds and substantial meals until they could make their arrangements for trains to other destinations, secure employment, and find more permanent housing. Many eventually settled into this Manhattan area, attracted by its diverse and familiar European cultures of Germans, Poles, and Ukrainians clustered together in nearby neighborhoods. Some initially found work in the straw-hat industry. This was a familiar industry to many of the early Slovene immigrants who came from the area of Domžale, just north of Ljubljana and near the foothills of the Kamnik Alps, where the local villagers braided wheat straw. These experienced skills found a new niche with the abundance of East Village Orthodox Jews who reverently covered their heads with hats.

While the Polish, Ukrainian, and German Catholics established church facilities in their native languages, there wasn't a Slovenian Catholic church to at-

tend. However, very familiar with the Austrian and German languages, the immigrant Slovenes were welcomed by the German parish of St. Nicholas on nearby Second Avenue. With the numbers of attendees increasing, Masses began to be offered in the Slovenian language. In time, so many Masses were being offered in Slovenian that the parish suggested that the Slovenian immigrants seek a church of their own. With the persistent intervening of Franciscan Father Kazimir Zakrajšek and a community of several thousand Slovenians, a brownstone building at 62 St. Mark's Place was purchased to serve as their church. In June of 1916, St. Cyril's Parish was established. The first Mass was offered on July 4th, Independence Day, 1916. The Slovene Franciscan friars promised to continue sending priests to serve at the parish and have done so since the beginning. Since the church began, eight Franciscan friars have served St. Cyril.

Since those early years, the church's attendance has dwindled significantly and most of the original founding families' children have moved out of the city and into the suburban areas. The old brownstone building began experiencing significant and expensive structural repairs. In 1971, Fr. Krizolog Cimerman O.F.M. assumed the duties of pastor. He was charged with the task of assessing the parish situation and expected to close down its operations in a two-to-three-year timeline. However, both Fr. Krizolog Cimerman and St. Cyril's Church are still there in the brownstone building on St. Mark's Place. Af-



*Father Krizolog Cimerman*

ter the threat of losing their church became more of a reality, the American-Slovenian community banded together and managed to financially donate enough money to keep the church afloat. In 1996, a \$350,000 grant from the Slovenian government helped provide assistance with the renovation.

The old brownstone building houses the church on the first floor. The original 6-foot-wide, 16-foot stained glass window of Venerable Bishop Freder-



*Interior nave of the renovated church.*

ic Baraga remains positioned over the entry. However, in 1997, the original church nave was entirely renovated and now reflects an ultra-modern design. Slovenian artist Bogdan Grom created the Stations of the Cross for the remodel. The priest residence is on the top floor. The basement that was once home to the parish school has now been rechristened as the Slovenian Cultural Center. Fr. Krizolog shared that that he not only wants to primarily meet the spiritual needs of his small parish but also to promote the Slovenian culture. Masses are scheduled regularly on Saturdays at 6 p.m. in English and Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in the Slovenian language. Cultural hours are held every third Sunday of the month following the Slovenian Mass. The cultural hour,



*Bobbin Lace Good Shepherd wall hanging.*

with a large following, typically offers a traditional Slovenian fare, often of klobase and sauerkraut. When the Consulate General of the Republic of Slovenia Office in New York closed in 2012, St. Cyril's basement rooms often became the staging place where the Slovene Consulate and the Slovenian Union of America would schedule many of their events. The church building also became a frequent venue for Slovene artists who reside in New York, including individuals from the residential flat in Brooklyn that is supported by the Slovene Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Grantees from the Fulbright Program are invited to share their knowledge on varied topics through planned presentations at the church. Parishioners living out in the suburbs trek in for the annual religious holy days of Easter and Christmas and also the traditional celebrations of Slovene holidays such as National Day and Martinovanje. All of these occasions help to maintain the Slovenian cultural heritage. In an interview given for the Catholic New York Newspaper, Father Krizolog Cimerman shared that he sees his primary duty as helping people in the transformation from the Slo-

venian world into the American world and helping them to remain in the Church to preserve their faith.

In 2016, on the special occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the church, celebratory activities and events jam-packed the church calendar. The Mass was celebrated by Archbishop of Ljubljana, Most Rev. Msgr. Stanislav Zore, with concelebrants Fr. Krizolog Cimerman, the pastor, Fr. Marjan Čuden, Provincial of Slovenian Franciscan Province of the Holy Cross, and several other notable priests. The solemn Mass was attended by over 300 people, several of them dressed in the Upper Carniolian national costume. A reception gala followed in the church hall. Guests were entertained by the Fantje na vasi singing group from Cleveland, Ohio. A formal dinner followed at the New York Athletic Club. New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan, one of the guests of honor, was presented with the traditional Domžale straw hat at the gala. The Slovenian Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Božo Cerar, addressed the gathered guests. Many dignitaries were in attendance including the Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrej Logar; Slovenian Ambassador to Switzerland, Marta Kos Marko; Austrian Ambassador Dr. Valentin Inzko; and Mr. Jurček Žmauc, former consul general in Cleveland, Ohio. The President of Slovenia Borut Pahor had visited the church along with foreign minister Karl Erjavec earlier in the centennial year.

Tanya Vajk, a past president of New York City's SUA Branch 93, agreed to a trans-Atlantic, long distance phone interview for some background data on this article. She was very enthusiastic in wanting to share her experiences and feelings being a former parishioner at St. Cyril's Church. In reference to Fr. Krizolog, she said, "There is no doubting how genuine this man's heart is!" Tanya was most impressed with the current direction of the parish and, more importantly, its leadership by Pastor Fr. Krizolog Cimerman. She had worked diligently with him back in 2016 to pull together the Centennial Anniversary celebration of the church. She shared, "Fr. Cimerman is such an unbelievably wonderful and diplomatic leader with a great sense of humor. He's invaluable to the parish and the New York Slovenian community." Tanya Vajk also sees St. Cyril's Church as vibrantly addressing what she views as the "new wave of Slovenians" being welcomed into the city of New

York, consisting of the young people of free and independent Slovenia, many of whom are striving artists, writers, musicians, and professionals seeking to further their careers and opportunities. Father Krizolog Cimerman, who has headed the church for more than a quarter of a century, complimented his parish's cultural initiatives: "It is a great achievement for Slovenian culture and spirit to persevere in the global metropolis that is New York."



*Father Krizolog Cimerman (third from left) greets Darja Bavdaž Kuret, Brent Hartley, and Božo Cerar.*

Under a 1996 bilateral agreement between Slovenia and the United States, both countries will strive to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of all national, religious, or ethnic groups that reside or once resided in its territory and were victims of genocide during the Second World War. St. Cyril's Church has recently been endorsed as qualifying for such protection and preservation. This past year, the U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia, Brent Hartley, visited the church in the company of the Slovenian Ambassador to the United Nations, Darja Bavdaž Kuret, and former ambassador to the U.S., Božo Cerar, to get acquainted with Slovenia's efforts of preservation. Former Ambassador Božo Cerar said Slovenia was hoping that the US would grant the church a special status in agreement with the New York Archdiocese in order to co-preserve this unique heritage. St. Cyril's Church is most definitely the heart of New York City's Slovenian community and deserves such safeguards.



# Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Parish

## *Kraljica sv. Roznega Venca*

### *A Slovenian/Croatian Church in the Industrial Town of Globeville*

*Interior 1921.*

The procession began at nearby St. Joseph's Polish Church, with the Knights of St. John, two Slovenian choirs, six fraternal societies, and distinguished clergy escorting Bishop J. Henry Tihen to the new structure. As Bishop Tihen blessed the building, he praised the parishioners for their sacrifices and reminded them that poor people, rather than princes, built the great churches of Europe. It was Sunday, July 4, 1920, the day selected for the dedication of Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church (*Kraljica sv. Roznega Venca*) in Globeville, now an area of Denver, Colorado. For this group of Slovenian and Croatian immigrants, establishing their own parish was an amazing accomplishment and the culmination of a long journey.

Blacksmith Andrew Boytz was conscripted by the Austrian army, and expected to train soldiers in the trade. Family lore says that, in the days before

photos were used for identification, Boytz borrowed a friend's passport and left for America. He made his way to Kansas City, then the silver town of Leadville, Colorado, and arrived in Globeville about 1901. Boytz got a job at the Globe Smelter, and his wages were sufficient to buy a home at 4455 Pennsylvania and raise his family there.

After Florian Krasovich completed his compulsory military service, he was unable to find work in Sleme, Slovenia. Leaving everything behind, he found a community of Slovenes in Globeville and a job in the Globe Smelter. It took him two years to earn enough to rent a small home and send for his wife, Mary, and sons, Tony and Frank.

The Boytz and Krasovich families were part of a great migration of Eastern Europeans to the U.S. from 1880 to 1920, a time of political upheaval



*Holy Rosary Church was designed by architect A. Desjardins in the Romanesque Revival style and constructed of white brick with twin bell towers and a rose window. Parishioners, local businesses, fraternal societies, dramatic clubs, and glee clubs sponsored the three altars, stained-glass windows, stations of the cross, baptismal font, and statues as a sign of their devotion. Three large bells would eventually be housed in the north tower to call the faithful to Mass.*

and financial hardship in Europe. Fleeing economic hardship and conscription into the armies of Austria Hungary, Germany, and Russia, newcomers usually settled with relatives in manufacturing centers like Pittsburgh, Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, and Joliet. But many were lured by tales of instant wealth in Colorado's mines, of clean air, and of mountains like those at home. What they found were gritty jobs in coal mines, foundries, and smelters in the industrial towns of Pueblo, Trinidad, Canon City, Salida, Leadville, Walsenburg, and Globeville.

Located just north of Denver, Globeville was the site of three large smelters, foundries, pattern shops, rolling mills, brickyards, railroads, and meatpacking plants. Newcomers secured jobs and then sent for family members and neighbors from their villages. Most of the early arrivals came from small farms, had a scant knowledge of the English language, and were paid much less than native-born workers. There



*Globeville was incorporated in 1891, with a large immigrant population and a town council that reflected that diversity. Annexed by the city of Denver in 1902, the community still identifies with its ethnic heritage and prefers to be called by its town name.*

and urged the Slovenes and Croats to support St. Joseph's Polish Church in the neighborhood. But Southern Slavs longed to confess their sins, hear a homily, and celebrate religious feasts in their native tongue. Many quit going to Mass and became lax in their faith, while others saved their money and waited. As often as he could, Father Cyril Zupan, OSB, pastor

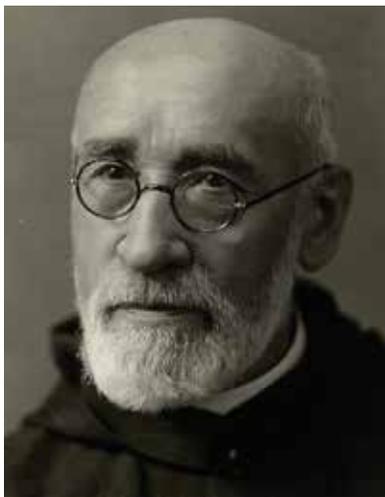
were sizeable communities of Germans from Russia, Carpatho-Rusyns (Russian Orthodox), Poles, and Southern Slavs (Slovenes and Croats) in the town.

During the late nineteenth century, nativists had no use for "Papists" (Catholics) and their large families and viewed eastern European immigrants as unlikely to contribute to America. Unwelcome, each group of newcomers created a support system of ethnic taverns, fraternal societies, and churches.

Most of Globeville's Slovenes were from Lower Carniola (Dolenjska) region or Bela Krajina, both areas in the southeastern part of the country and from the Littoral (Primorska) region in the southwestern part of Slovenia. The town was also home to Croats from the region of Zumberek, across the Kupa River from the Metlika area of Slovenia. Having been neighbors in the old country, they shared common interests and goals.

In 1902, Slovenes and Croats made their first attempt to found a church of their own, but were met with resistance from the German-born bishop, Nicholas C. Matz. Bishop Matz opposed ethnic churches

of St. Mary's Parish in Pueblo, would travel two hours by train to say Mass and hear confessions at St. Jacob's Croatian Hall or the Slovenian Home.



*Father Cyril Zupan*

In August 1917, the appointment of a new bishop revived the goal of building a parish. A committee composed of John Cimzar, Jacob Pavela, John Peketz, Sr., George Pavlakovich, and Father Zupan called on Bishop J. Henry Tihen asking permission to organize a church. The presence of Father Zupan helped their cause since he had already established two other Slovenian parishes, St. Mary's in Pueblo and St. Joseph's in Leadville. The zeal of the growing community moved Bishop Tihen to create Holy Rosary Parish in February 1918. The many fraternal organizations – KSKJ, Western Slavonic, American Fraternal Union, and the Croatian Fraternal Union – set to work raising more money by holding concerts, plays, dinners, dances, and a week-long bazaar. Fifteen years of planning and scrimping enabled the parish to move quickly. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on May 27, 1919, a cornerstone blessed on August 17, and the structure was completed on February 20, 1920.

The tireless Father Zupan served both Holy Rosary and St. Mary's in Pueblo until February 1921, when Reverend John J. Judnic, a native of Kot, Slovenia,

was appointed to guide the fledgling congregation. Father Judnic arrived from St. Joseph's Church in Leadville and stayed with Florian and Mary Krasovich (who had indoor plumbing) while the congregation built a handsome brick rectory for him.

In 1927, the parishioners again took on debt to build a school, "in order to safeguard the faith and morals" of their young people. Father Judnic moved from the rectory into a tiny apartment in the back of the church to make room for four



*Monsignor John J. Judnic*

Dominican Sisters of the Third Order of St. Dominic of Springfield, Illinois. A handsome brick edifice, designed by renowned Colorado Springs architect Thomas McClaren, was completed in time for 152 scholars to begin the school term in September 1928. Father Judnic continued to live in his tiny quarters until the completion of a new rectory across the street some 20 years later.

The 1920s were a time of progress for Globeville's immigrant communities. Although two of the smelters had closed, railroads, manufacturing, and meatpacking offered steady wages. Most people were employed and moving from tiny frame homes to modest brick houses. Everything important – the family, job, church, school, fraternal organization, and the local market – was within walking distance. Few people owned a car or needed one. Before World War II, the immigrant communities in Globeville remained remarkably intact.

During the 1920s, each of the ethnic groups in the community began the delicate dance of maintaining the traditions and culture of their homeland, while gradually assimilating. More children were completing school, learning English, and bringing the language home to their parents. And there was jazz on the radio, newspapers,



silent films at the Cozy Theater, and baseball. In 1929, Western Slavonic instituted an English-speaking lodge, Trailblazers No. 41, to appeal to younger members. By the 1930s, Masses at Holy Rosary included a sermon in English, as well as one in Slovenian.

Like all the neighborhood's ethnic parishes, Holy Rosary offered numerous ways to socialize. There was the men-only Holy Name Society, Knights of the Altar, Knights of St. John, and the Knights of Columbus. Women could join the Ladies Sodality, the PTA, and the Altar and Rosary Society. For young people, the group to join was the Holy Rosary Choir, whose mission was to "develop the vocal talent of the parish and to take care of the musical requirements of the divine services." The group held its business meeting the first Wednesday of the month and rehearsals every Friday evening, each event followed by a social hour. And there were summer picnics, trips to the mountains, and a winter train ride. The choir also produced several plays each year, eventually raising enough Depression-era dollars to replace a small reed organ with a beautiful Reuter pipe organ in 1932.

The high point of the liturgical year was Easter, with parishioners bringing baskets filled with potica, sausage, honey, and wine to church for a blessing on Holy Saturday. A statue of the Risen Christ was carried during a solemn procession on Easter Sunday with the congregation singing "Zveličar nam je rojen zdaj."

World War II swept Globeville and Holy Rosary into



*The Seal of the Confessional Play: (Photo courtesy of Dolores Saltz.) Front Row, left to right: John Trontel, John A Yelenick, Eddie Krasovich, Elsie Kasinga Lillian Krasovich, and John Vidick. Back Row, Albert Horvat, Tony Padboy, John Peketz Jr., Raymond Canjar, George J. Miroslavich, Joe Tezak, and Steve Machuga.*



*School c1930.*

the future with the force of a tidal wave. People who had never traveled farther than Pueblo for a lodge convention joined the armed services and saw action all over the world. When they returned, they felt less obligated to marry within their faith or to maintain the culture or language of their grandparents. By 1950, VA loans were available on *new* construction but not to fix up an older home in Globeville, and a younger generation bought houses in the outlying suburbs.

Other changes would divide and demoralize the neighborhood. In 1948, the first interstate highway, I-25, eliminated the western part of Globeville. In 1961, another interstate, I-70, was constructed at the very doorstep of St. Joseph's Polish Church, and displaced so many German Russians that two of their churches closed and another relocated to the suburbs. Residents who were forced to move found it impossible to find a comparable house or business with the money the city gave them. Those who remained saw their property values decline and had to deal with noise, dirt, and constant vibration.

Through all the turmoil, Holy Rosary remained both the spiritual center and source of great pride for the Slavic community. For thirty-eight years, Father Judnic, who was eventually made a monsignor, guided the church during the Depression, World War II, and the construction of I-25. He is remembered as holy, compassionate, and hard-working, and his death on July 12, 1959 signaled the end of an era.

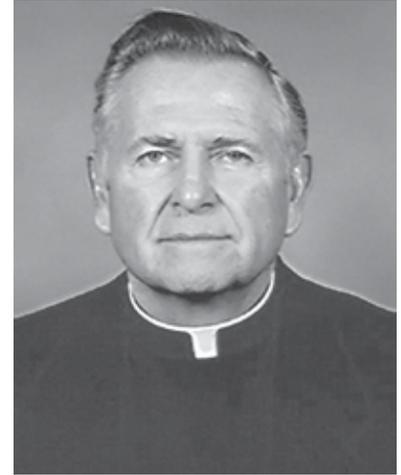
Reverend John A. Canjar, who grew up in the parish, succeeded Monsignor Judnic. He was faced with the loss of parishioners, rebuilding after the devastating flood of the Platte River in 1965, and efforts by the city of Denver to turn Globeville into an industrial area.



*Father John A. Canjar*

As descendants of the original parishioners left the community, Father Canjar welcomed the Hispanics and Blacks who moved into Globeville. He was active in anti-poverty programs, and served at the North Denver Action Center, a part of the Model Cities Program.

Father Kestel's successor, Father Joseph Meznar, had deep roots in the parish. His parents were married at Holy Rosary, and both he and his brother, Father Robert P. Meznar, were baptized there. Although the neighborhood demographics had changed dramatically, Father Meznar sought to ensure the permanence of Holy Rosary's Slovenian personality with a complete restoration of the interior of the church in 1995, financed by the Western Slavonic Association. In 1999, he obtained Colorado State Historic status for the church, convent, and school buildings.



*Father Joseph Meznar*

(5DV.349). In November of 2009, after 27 years at Holy Rosary, Father Meznar retired.



*Father Leopold Mihelich*

By 1969, when Father Leopold Mihelich assumed the pastorate, both the Globeville community and Holy Rosary were struggling. Uncertainty discouraged people from fixing up their homes, contributing to an epidemic of blight. As Slavs

continued to move away, a dwindling congregation and declining enrollment forced the parish to close the school in May 1969. Yet Father Mihelich carried a torch for Slavic culture by teaching lessons in the Slovenian language on Saturdays.

The next two pastors had no connection to the Slovenian or Croatian culture but attempted to preserve that heritage. Monsignor Edward A. Leyden led the parish from 1977 to 1980 and obtained protective coverings for the stained glass windows. Reverend Edmund Kestel served the parish from 1980 to 1982. An accomplished musician and musical scholar, Father Kestel introduced the Polka Mass to Holy Rosary.

By 2009, very few residents with Slovenian or Croatian heritage called Globeville home, and their fraternal societies no longer had a presence there.



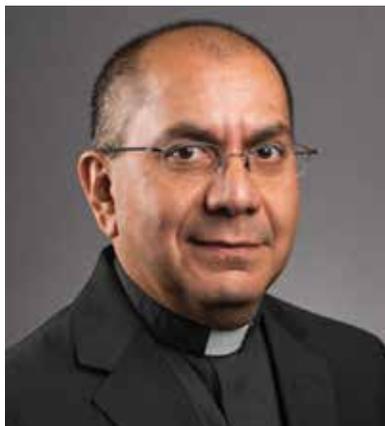
*Father Noé Carreón*

The neighborhood was 68% Hispanic, and in 2010, Holy Rosary was assigned its first bilingual pastor, Father Noé Carreón.

Father Noé arrived just as the economic collapse of 2008 was in full force, and he discovered that the aging church, convent, and school were all in need of extensive repairs. This energetic priest welcomed back former parishioners, built up a Hispanic congregation, and raised enough money to create a parish center in the former school. Fathers Felix Zemeño Martín and Monsignor Jorge de Los Santos continued the renovations and increased the numbers of parishioners.

Today, Father Luis Escandón, an articulate and

compelling speaker, delivers homilies that inspire all parishioners. Father Luis connects with both the English-speaking descendants of the founders, as well as a substantially larger Hispanic congregation.



Father Luis Escandón

A walk through the neighborhood demonstrates that the two faith communities have a lot in common. Roadside shrines are common in Slovenia, Croatia, Mexico, and in the Globeville community. In yards and gardens, the Blessed Virgin Mary is often commemorated alongside Our Lady of Guadalupe. Memorials to St. Joseph, Mother Cabrini, and angels are also popular.

Hispanics possess a deep love of the Catholic faith and have enriched the parish with prayer and Bible study groups, several choirs, and weekly nocturnal adoration. They have also donated considerable time to restoration work on the church, convent, and school. The entire congregation shares a devotion to the Virgin Mary and commemorates the Feast of the Queen of the Holy Rosary on October 7<sup>th</sup>, as well as a robust celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

Globeville's faith communities are works in progress. While the German Russians no longer have a presence in the neighborhood, St. Joseph's Polish Parish has been invigorated by an influx of Poles who arrived after the fall of Communism. Likewise, Holy Transfiguration of Christ Orthodox Cathedral has experienced an increase in Romanian and Great Russian parishioners. Holy Rosary has also enjoyed modest growth, with young singles and families moving into Globeville.

As the parish prepares to celebrate its centennial, English-speaking, Hispanic, young, elderly, newcomers, and long-time parishioners will come together to renew our Catholic faith and devotion to the Mother of God.

by Mary Lou Egan, Branch 3

## *Holy Rosary will celebrate its centennial on July 4, 2020.*

Check out our website:  
<https://holyrosarydenver.com>  
 or our Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/HolyRosaryChurchDenver/>

*Holy Rosary's Centennial Fund will be used to clean and tuck point the century-old brick and obtain newer protective cover for our beautiful windows.*

Send contributions to:  
 Holy Rosary Parish  
 4688 Pearl Street  
 Denver, CO 80216



*Mary Lou Egan is a member of Holy Rosary Parish, the Western Slavonic Association, and Slovenian Union of America, Branch 3.*

*Send your stories, photos or reminiscences of Holy Rosary to Mary Lou at [marylouedesign@comcast.net](mailto:marylouedesign@comcast.net). With permission, we'd love to include your memories on our website.*



# Slovenian Union of America

## Across America - Branch Reports

### BRANCH 1 - Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Contact information: Mary Ann Schellinger  
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The week of Valentine's Day, our branch had planned a potluck and heart cookie decorating event to "share our love" with others. Well, Mother Nature had other plans for our scheduled event as we had a winter storm that date, and we had to reschedule for the following week. Our members



got together on February 19th to share their dishes prepared for the potluck and afterwards participated in decorating 100 heart-shaped sugar cook-



ies. The finished products were taken to the Salvation Army by Branch President, Mary Sandwick, to be shared with the residents of the shelter.

What a wonderful way to put a little warmth in people's hearts and in their tummies. It really is true when we

say that there is "LOVE" in every Slovenian.

Our Slovenian "LOVE" was also shared as many members of our branch were busy in their kitchens baking poticas for the Palm Sunday bake sale at our Slovenian parish of Ss. Cyril Methodius.



MARY ANN SCHELLINGER



## BRANCH 2 - Chicago, Illinois

The following report (which was written in the middle of our terrible and brutal winter) is from Judy Ovnik: Greetings from Chicago... or should I say "Chiberia." Thankfully the polar vortex is behind us, and we can look forward to better weather soon.

This past December, Mary Reich, our most senior Branch 2 member, celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. What a milestone! Mary was born in Chicago on December 5, 1918. A luncheon was given for her by her family on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at Palermo's restaurant in Oak Lawn. The theme of the celebration was "100 years of love and laughter." It was a wonderful afternoon, and everyone agreed that Mary looks marvelous. Branch 2 friends celebrating with Mary on this occasion were Gen Buol, Mary Podder, Meta Hanzlik, Jennie Kovacic, Lorraine Ovnik, and Judy Ovnik. Thank you, Judy, for that article and to Mary... HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY from all of Branch 2!

I have some catching up to do since I missed the last *Zarja* issue. We celebrated the Christmas holidays at a charming, small restaurant hidden away in Hodgkins called Buck's Pit Stop. Because of the name, I figured they would have buffalo and venison on the menu, but I learned that the owner loves the NASCAR agenda. The walls are covered with photos of race cars, drivers, and trophy presentations, and, of course, the guys changing tires in the pit stop. Their menu offers many interesting items, but the special of that day was pot roast over buttered noodles, and that was the choice for many of us. I must also mention that the homemade key lime pie was out of this world. Thanks to Jennie Kovacic for suggesting this place where 12 members enjoyed the food, drinks, and good company.

I'd like to welcome our two new members, Cindi Dodick and Pamela Hoagland. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Gen Buol has volunteered to be our representative at the National Convention in Cleveland in June. Meta Hanzlik and Daisy Zeleznaker will accompany Gen and participate in all the planned activities. We made a monetary donation to the Ohio SUA branches that are hosting the convention, and Mary McKittle (Branch 47 treasurer) responded with a very nice thank you note.

Recently, Georgene Agnich (Branch 20), Diane Data (Branch 24), and I were asked to come to the SUA headquarters in Joliet to review the annual financial report prepared by our national treasurer, Bob Kuhel. Besides reviewing his impressive and beautifully presented work, we were also able to inspect and enjoy the museum. This little gem is unique, interesting, and loaded with attractive displays, historical items, and memorabilia. I can only imagine how much work went into organizing this significant Slovenian Museum. Make it a point to visit it soon.

Georgene also presented a deeply researched talk pertaining to the longstanding relationship between the Slovenian community and the city of Joliet. Did you know that our

museum is located on "Slovenian Row?"

We also went upstairs to see the refurbished apartment which is used to house out-of-town visitors or SUA Board members when they meet. In our case, it meant a tasty luncheon of sausage, potatoes, and some great desserts. Afterward, I reflected on the incredible amount of work our dedicated Board and other volunteers have done to insure the best for the SUA. Thank you for your time and efforts!

Please join us for our next meeting which will be held on Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, at 1 p.m. It's going to be at Buck's Pit Stop because I got to have that pie again.

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## BRANCH 3 - Pueblo, Colorado

Contact Information:

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Many Branch 3 members were involved with the Slovenian Heritage Dinner held at St. Mary Help of Christians Church on November 3, 2018. The annual dinner celebrates the culture and cuisine of Slovenia as well as the Slovenian immigrants who were instrumental in establishing St. Mary's parish. The Preseren Slovenian Choir sang at the Polka Mass which preceded the dinner. Monsignor Marvin Kapushion was honored for his devotion to the Catholic community and for presiding over many Slovenian cultural Masses over the years. The sold-out dinner was held in the church hall with over 300 attendees who enjoyed traditional Slovenian music provided by accordionists Jay Skul and Gary Kleinheim. Krajnska klobasa (klobase), Krvava klobasa (blood sausage), and rolls were served, along with many additional favorites: Jesperen (bean and barley soup), Kislo zelje (sauerkraut), Sarma (stuffed cabbage rolls), and Bojon kisli krompir (Bojon potato salad). Dessert included a variety of strudels.



*Danny Golob honors Monsignor Marvin Kapushion at the annual Slovenian Heritage Dinner at St. Mary's in Pueblo.*

At the branch meeting on February 5, Eileen Deverich was introduced as a new SUA member. Eileen Kaplan told the story of Pust and Kurenti, and MT Karlinger brought her Kurent doll handmade by Marko Klinc, which she bought during the 2018 Zarjafest tour in Ptuj. Kathy Kochevar and MT Karlinger presented an overview of the Branch 3 Slovenian Heritage Essay Contest. Marge Cullen announced her retirement as President of Branch 3. Linda Justice was the hostess and served delicious cupcakes. The mystery gift was donated by Marie Mutz. The March 5 meeting featured the election of Branch 3 officers. The following were elected unanimously: Eileen Kaplan - President, Betty Skul - Vice President, Diane Slaten - Treasurer, and MT Karlinger - Recording Secretary. The hostess, Patty Derby, had a Mardi Gras theme and served homemade cupcakes and rainbow sherbet, and Madeleine Khosla provided the mystery gift. At the April 2 meeting, the members welcomed back member Peggy Martin who had been absent for several months due to illness. Annette Charron, SUA VP-Outreach, gave a report on the recent national board meeting held in Joliet. Agnes Glavich was the hostess and served cupcakes and a tasty frozen strawberry dessert. Angela Mock provided the mystery gift.



*Sofia Jansson getting strudel from (left to right) Lisa Jansson, Marilyn Krall, Kay Perko, and Joanie Mihalick at the Slovenian Heritage Dinner.*

In the next *Zarja*, the Branch 3 report will cover the annual Member of the Year Luncheon honoring Mary Frances Kelley.

ANNETTE SABO CHARRON &  
BARBARA KARLINGER

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### **BRANCH 5 - Indianapolis, Indiana**

Warm Summer Greetings to all Indianapolis Branch 5 Members! After a whirlwind of birthdays, graduations, and race parties, I am ready for a nice, relaxing summer, sipping wine in the shade!!

Congratulations to 2015 SWU scholarship recipient Stephen Fon for graduating from University of Dayton in

May with a Bachelor of Arts in biology. Stephen wants to continue his studies in a graduate program. Good Luck, Stephen!



*Congratulations to Stephen Fon, 2019 University of Dayton graduate.*

Congratulations also to member Helen Zupancic Smith on her retirement! Helen worked over 43 years at the same bank in the accounting department. Best Wishes, Helen!

The Slovenian National Home has a new website, [sloveniannationalhomeindy.com](http://sloveniannationalhomeindy.com). Check out the site for all the latest information about events in INDY. The Nash is hosting a Summer Celebration at SNH on August 10, 2019! Food, fun, and music will be happening all day, so check on the website for more information as the plans are finalized closer to the date. Hope to see you there!

Due to the cost of postage, we have been relying solely on e-mail for Branch 5 information. If you need info mailed to you, please let Phyllis, Mary, or Karen know and include correct mailing addresses. Thank you.

Rick Trauner, a longtime supporter of all things Slovenian, passed away unexpectedly in February. Rick knew no stranger and was always genuinely interested in everyone who crossed paths with him. Rick's smile will be missed by all!

Have a safe and sunny summer!

MARY, KAREN, & PHYLLIS

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### **BRANCH 20 - Joliet, Illinois**

Contact Information: Georgene Agnich  
773.205.1326/ [jamesschaible1469@att.net](mailto:jamesschaible1469@att.net)

Branch 20 cancelled its January 20 meeting and instal-

*Zarja - The Dawn*

lation of officers because of extreme winter weather. At its February 19 meeting, members present agreed that the officers' oaths sworn in January 2018 were still in force. Diane Hohenwater demonstrated how to make Slovenian barley soup at that meeting. Marla Lustik succeeds Pat Figuirowski as Sunshine Chairperson; please notify Marla of any anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, or other special occasions of members, as well as any deaths.

We offer our condolences to the family of member Susan Hrpcha, who passed away November 28, 2018; to the family of member Theresa M. Burns, who passed away February 10, 2019; and to the family of member Beverly A. DeJule, who passed away February 11, 2019.

On March 16, Georgene Agnich gave a talk about the historic Stonich Building, which is SUA's national office and museum, to SUA's national board. She also participated in an audit of SUA's 2018 finances with Branch 24's Diane Data and Branch 2's Judy Stoll, after a delicious Slovenian-style lunch with the national board members.

Many thanks to bake sale co-chairs Jo Lustik and Marla Lustik and to the many members, near and far, who donated bakery or cash and bought raffle tickets to make our April 6 and 7 fundraiser a big success! Thanks to Char Kobe, Pat Figuirowski, Eileen Plese, Pat Butterbach, Diane Hohenwater, and Georgene Agnich for helping Jo and Marla at the event. The raffle winners were Larry Pubentz (potica); "Muggs" Mali (apple strudel); Arthur and Nikki Hrvatin (plush Easter bunny); Cindy Kadella (Slovenian wine); and Georgene Agnich (Easter wreath).



Joseph Parish Hall.

Branch 20 honored all its past and present members at its Member of the Year Banquet on May 21 at St.

GEORGENE AGNICH

**BRANCH 24 - LaSalle, Illinois**

Contact Information: Diane Data

[diane3121@comcast.net](mailto:diane3121@comcast.net)

Zivijo! Happy Spring and Happy Easter to all SUA members. For most of the country, this has been a most brutal winter. We, in the Illinois Valley, experienced a polar vortex, with a sweep of Arctic air bringing in record-breaking temperatures at the end of January. Temperatures of 23

Summer 2019

below zero were recorded! The cold hung around most of February and into March. We even had a 6 inch snowfall on Sunday, April 14, and today it is in the 70s.

I must correct an error I made in listing our new officers: Chris Drag has taken on the duties of Secretary and Barb Kuzma is our new Vice-President. Thank you, ladies.

Charles Marchiori passed away on January 2 at age 94. Chuck was the husband of the late Emily Marchiori and is the father of our member, Lynda McKibben. Emily and Chuck were active members for years. They are together again. Our member, Florence "Flo" Smorkol, passed away on March 6. She enjoyed a 40-plus-year nursing career. She is survived by two daughters and two sons along with grand and great-grandchildren. Frank Assalley, the husband of our member, Jackie, passed away on April 4. He is survived by two sons and a daughter, Mary Newcomer, who is also a member of Branch 24. Please keep these families in your prayers.

On March 16, I travelled to the home office in Joliet, Illinois to assist with an audit of the 2018 accounting records of the SUA. Judy Stoll of Branch 2 and Georgene Agnich of Branch 20 were also a part of the team. We were impressed by Bob Kuhel's professional methodology and his meticulous attention to detail.



While at the home office, Georgene addressed the National Board about the SUA Slovenian Heritage Museum. I was impressed with a fact about my friend, Jonita Erjavec Ruth, who went before the City of Joliet in 1993 with a proposal of three requests: 1. The City to assign N. Chicago St. as "Slovenija Row"; 2. The City to include this area for participation in its "Banner Project"; and 3. The City to consider funding a Mural Project to beautify the wall of the Santa Fe elevated tracks across from St. Joseph's Catholic Church. The

murals would be designed by Lucija Dragovan. The City of Joliet agreed to all three proposals. Jonita was the faithful caretaker of the museum for a good many years, and the reminders of her hard work are still evident on "Slovenija Row."



We met for the first time in 2019 on April 16 to plan our spring luncheon and summer picnic. A very well attended meeting! Dober Dan!

DIANE DATA

### BRANCH 43 - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

After a delicious meal which was prepared by members, our official meeting on Saturday, March 23, began. We had this Saturday meeting to afford working members a chance to attend and socialize with other members. As usual, it started with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and prayer, followed by singing "Happy Birthday" to members having a March Birthday. President Jan Gehm reminded all present of upcoming events. Some of them will be over with by the time this issue of the *Zarja* is received. Martinovanje is tentatively planned for November 9, 2019. You will be informed as plans materialize.

Our Christmas Party will be held on December 7, 2019, at Aliotas. Mark your calendars!

The Regional Convention is set for October 6 or 13. A venue has yet to be determined. Our Regional President, Jackie Smith, will keep us up-to-date as plans are made.

Jackie Smith gave a short talk on emergency procedures and what to have easily available if you need to call for emergency help. Her talk was very informative, and we thank her very much.

We had no meeting in April or May due to our Butare making at Triglav Park, the Palm Sunday Mass and breakfast, and the event naming Frank Markelc as Member of the Year. Congratulations, Frank!

Once again our working members will have the opportunity to attend our June meeting since it will be held on Wednesday, June 6, at 6 p.m. Since this will be our last get together until the August 4 social at Triglav Park, hopefully we will see some new faces. Join us at Triglav Park for a fun afternoon on August 4. After Mass at 11 a.m., a dinner will be available with a lot of music and fun for the rest of the afternoon.

I hope all had a very Happy Easter, and best wishes for a productive and enjoyable convention in Cleveland, Ohio.

MICI BREGANT

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### BRANCH 50 - Euclid, Ohio

Contact Information: Rick Tomsick  
[rictomsick@gmail.com](mailto:rictomsick@gmail.com)

Greetings from the "5-0" on America's North Coast! Planning is well underway for the big national convention which will be at the Marriott Hotel on the east side of Cleveland from June 13 to June 16 this year. The ceremonies will conclude with a Mass at St. Vitus Church. Please see the SUA Facebook page for additional details.

On a sad note, as many of you know by now, our beloved Josephine Arko passed away on March 4, 2019. I've included a photo from her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday party last fall with Rose Mary Toth, Ivanka Matic, Cookie, and our treasurer, Pat Gruden. Please also see the attached photo of Jo's daughters, Geri, Joanne, and Arlene. Jo's daughter, Geri, had some beautiful things to say about her mom; no doubt many of these reflections ring true for many of us who

came from wonderful Slovenian parents. "She raised us in a Slovenian Catholic tradition that emphasized religion, hard work, and Slovenian culture. A great cook, Mom often served Slovenian-style food. She was known for her apple strudel and could whip one up in no time, stretching that



Bottom row: Rose Mary Toth, Jo Arko and Catherine "Cookie" Maxin; Top row: Ivanka Matic, and Pat Gruden.

dough to *paper thin* across the kitchen table. Mom honored her own mother by visiting with her every week. The entire family, uncles, aunts, cousins would gather round that big dining room table every Sunday. Mom worked very hard to keep a nice home for us. After we had grown, she could be found volunteering at many Slovenian functions. Her appearance was important to her, and she was always stylishly dressed with hair and makeup done. She always looked much *younger* than her age." I can certainly attest to that last statement. Jo Arko was an elegant, beautiful person in our group, always full of zest, and will be greatly missed.

I enjoy hearing from our members around the country. Recently, Geri Grdina Amato e-mailed me. She's in California, and mentioned how she was able to mail order sausage from Azman's Meat market near my house. Now this is funny, because I had no idea that they shipped meat



around the country, AND Bill Azman is actually my second cousin, so maybe I should have known about this remarkable service. So now I'm getting ready to have them send some local klobase across the country to my daughter in Colorado and my son in Rhode Island!!

Please keep all members of Branch 50 and all of the SUA in your prayers, especially remembering the sick, and the poor souls in purgatory, and those they have left behind, to bring comfort and joy to all who mourn.

The best way to stay up-to-date with the SUA is on its **Facebook** page – and feel free to look for me there as well. There is a lot of up-to-date information on the page, and of course you can get directly in contact with fellow members.

Please write to me at [ricktomsick@gmail.com](mailto:ricktomsick@gmail.com) with any family news, and I will add you to our list of updates for Branch 50 (you don't need to be a member of Branch 50). I always like to hear from members near and far.

RICK TOMSICK

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### **BRANCH 93 - New York, New York**

Contact Information: Kathleen Simmonds  
[917.780.9412/kathleensimmo@gmail.com](mailto:917.780.9412/kathleensimmo@gmail.com)

Branch 93's young professionals' evenings continue to be incredibly well-attended, and everyone looks forward to our monthly catch ups. Our March event was hosted at the Seeing Place Theatre where we were treated to an extraordinary performance by member Gaia Visnar in Jean Genet's "The Maids." This fascinating, dangerous play was beautifully executed by Gaia and the rest of the cast. We shared wine with the jam-packed audience and celebrated this amazing achievement for one of our most active young SUA members.

In March we also had the privilege of attending the opening of the photo exhibition: 20 Years of Slovenian



*The Seeing Place Theatre presents "The Maids" starring Gaia Visnar and Erin Cronican. Photo by Russ Rowland.*

Commitment to Humanitarian Mine Action at the United Nations. The event was hosted by The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations, H.E. Mrs. Darja Bavdaž Kuret, in the presence of H.E. Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia. The exhibition marked 20 years of Slovenia's commitment to humanitarian mine action all around the world. Slovenia wanted to assist the population in post-conflict areas by helping to remove anti-personnel mines/ERW that have taken and affected so many lives. The moving photographs show the work of the ITF - the places and faces marked by anti-personnel mines and other ERW.

From now until June 16, our beloved Eva Petrič has been invited to participate in the prestigious art exhibition which is held at New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine. This year's theme is "The Value of Sanctuary: Building a House Without Walls," and Eva's monumental piece "Collective Heart" as well as three of her other lace assemblages will be displayed. The exhibition also features thirty other world renowned artists. This will be Eva's 26th site-specific lace installation (including one at the Delegates Entrance of the UN in NYC last June).



*Eva Petrič's "Collective Heart" installation at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City.*

We are very proud of our Slovene Conversation Online program, which is going tremendously well thanks to the generous grant that we received from the Office of Slovenians Abroad. We are always looking for native Slovene speakers to join our team. If you are interested in sharing your gift of the Slovene language with others (and keeping the language alive!), please contact our Branch Reporter or President.

KATHLEEN SIMMONDS

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### **BRANCH 100 - Southern California**

Contact Information: Jean Koci  
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Arnie and I as well as daughter, Carol, were able to attend a presentation by Dr. Svanibor Pettan last evening at a local university in Laguna Niguel. It is Soka University, a private school in our area. They have hosted the Slowind Quintet several years ago and seem interested in cultural

exchanges, especially with a musical nature. I received an invitation from Professor Michael Golden announcing this presentation: "Minorities in a War-Peace Continuum - How Applied Ethnomusicology Can Help."

It was a pleasure meeting Dr. Pettan who is a professor at the University of Ljubljana. He talked about music bringing people and nations together for better understanding. The Slovenians seem to have a serious interest in getting along with their neighbors, and placing music as an incentive seems to be an important way to accomplish that end. It was an inspiring evening. We hope to connect with the Dr. Pettan when we visit Slovenia in September.

JEAN KOCI

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### BRANCH 102 - Willard, Wisconsin

Contact Information: Candy Johnson  
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For the people who read my last report, I wrote about the brown winter we were having here in west central Wisconsin. I wrote that report in early January. My words couldn't have been more wrong! At the end of January, we found ourselves in the midst of a Polar Vortex with temperatures (not wind chills) of 25 or more below zero. Then it started snowing. It snowed and snowed and snowed. In February



(in Eau Claire, Wisconsin), we got almost 54 inches of snow! I thought it would never stop snowing, and when it did, I thought it would never melt. As I look out my window right now, there's hardly any snow left, so we're back to a brown winter (actually, it's spring). Not to go on and on about weather, BUT since I started this report, it snowed

another 11.3 inches in mid-April, bringing our total to 97.9 inches for the season!

Junior members, Mike and Sandy Brierton, both used their Slovenian Heritage and SUA involvement for recent school and scout events. Sandy applied for one of 15 slots for The North Central Technical College's "Presidential Leadership and Community Involvement Camp" in Wausau, Wisconsin. She proudly listed her involvement with SUA Branch 102 and our efforts to keep the Slovenian heritage alive. Mike recently completed the Boy Scout "American Cultures" merit badge course which explores the different nationalities that make up America. For the requirement to attend and report on an ethnic group, he shared various activities at Branch 102 meetings, such as Regional President Jackie Smith's presentation on bee hive

art from Slovenia, pictures shared by members who visited Slovenia, and of course, our fabulous potluck lunches featuring traditional Slovenian foods or recipes from the *SUA Slovenian American Table* cookbook.

Branch 102's spring meeting was held on April 13. Members brought home-baked goods for our annual bake sale. Once again, we want to give a big THANK YOU to Theresa Zorman for working the sale after Mass. She does this every year, and we don't know what we'd do without her!

We also honored our 2019 Member of the Year, Karen Sixel. Karen thanked the group for honoring her as Member of the Year. She indicated it was great to see a group like the SUA dedicated to honoring and keeping Slovenian heritage alive.

CANDY JOHNSON



## BRANCH 108 - Olney, Maryland

Contact Information: Bernadette Fitzsimmons  
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In February, Branch 108 members met at The Embassy of Slovenia Cultural Day celebration. It was good to meet up with Tina Varagic, Candace and Damjan Novoselnik, and Lynn Koiner after a long winter. We miss seeing Tanja Nelson, as she has been quite busy working on a Master's in Business Administration. Katya Delak travels considerably for work and is sorry to miss joining us at events. Nika Kovacic stays in touch by phone with Marie Robinson, May Kokal, and Helen Sisto, all ladies who don't get out as much as they used to.

It is a milestone year for Thomas and Matthew Fitzsimmons who graduated from college and graduate school, respectively, this past spring. Thomas is spending his summer in Slovenia as an American Slovenian Education Foundation Fellow (ASEF) and loving this once-in-a-lifetime experience of both working and touring the country of his ancestors. With busy schedules all around, we still hope to find a date to meet for a member appreciation luncheon in late summer or early fall.

Please keep two of our members' families in your prayers; Mary Daum's husband, Gary, passed away unexpectedly in recent months. Mary is Fran Hrastar's daughter, and granddaughter Claire are all long-time members. Our oldest member, Charlie Koiner, fell asleep on his favorite chair in mid-January and went to eternal rest at the age of 98. It was only a couple of weeks before that he was featured in a documentary about Maryland's urban farmers. Lynn continues to maintain the farm, which is known as The Charles Koiner Center for Urban Farming (CKC Farming).

Bonnie Pausic and Bernadette Fitzsimmons are planning to attend the SUA National Convention in Cleveland and look forward to the many interesting events.

Understanding Slovenian Sayings by Bernadette:  
*Praznikov se vsak kot veseli.*

Everyone somewhat looks forward to holidays  
*Praznikov se še podklopna cunjka veseli.*

Even an under the bench rag looks forward to holidays.

BERNADETTE FITZSIMMONS

## BRANCH 109 - Twin Cities (TC) of Minnesota

Contact Information: Elaine Barthelemy  
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Twin Cities Slovenians continue to learn more about our homeland and our culture thanks to members who have traveled to Slovenia and others who have studied about Slovenians in Minnesota. At our February member meeting, Mary Shah and her son, Shahzore, presented *Mary Kay Visits Slovenia*, a slide show of their April 2018 trip that included visits with relatives, an excursion to Lipica where the famed Lipizzaner horses are bred, and the traditional sights in Ljubljana. Shahzore is a member of the



*Shahzore and Mary Shah, February presenters.*

BriNotes, and he joined with other group members, Miro and Karen Medved and Silvester Vivic, in singing "Pozimi pa rožice," "Če študent na rajžo gre," "Terezinka," and "N'mau čez jezero."

February also found us celebrating Slovenian culture at the Julian H. Sleeper House Museum in St. Paul, a museum run by Dr. Seth Hawkins. February 8<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of the death of Slovenia's greatest poet, France Prešeren.



*Cultural day celebration at the Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, D.C. Pictured from left to right Tina Varagic and friends, Candace Novoselnik, Bernadette Fitzsimmons, Lynn Koiner, Nika Kovacic, and Damjan Novoselnik.*



*Miro Medved, Silvester Vivic, Karen Medved, and Shahzore Shah serenading the members.*

Our special program titled *Quiz Show* featured Dr. Hawkins asking questions about Slovenian history, geography, food, and much more.



*President Mike Koski and Dr. Seth Hawkins at the Sleeper Museum.*

In March, David Kress of the Ely Winton Historical Society, assisted by his wife, Sally, addressed the following topic: *The Clashes between Immigrant Cultures - That Really Never Happened*. From him we learned about the three different iron ranges in Minnesota with 43 different cultures including Slovenians, Croatians, Finns, British, Italians, and Scandinavians. They settled in clusters by nationality, but all had substandard housing and dangerous working conditions compounded by social prejudices and tensions between the various ethnic groups. It took a walkout in 1907 and strike of 1916 to improve conditions, and later strikes resulted in better wages and more safety measures.

Honoring Member of the Year John Zakelj and learning about the Slovenian display for this year's *Festival of Nations* were the focuses of our April member meeting. After we sang the Slovenian National Anthem ("Zdravljica"), *FoN* organizer Sue Rademacher taught us more about Slovenian poet France Prešeren whose work "Zdravljica" was declared the national anthem of Slovenia in 1989. Sue



*Sally and David Kress with the display of his presentation on the Iron Range.*



*John with his family as he received his Member of the Year plaque: Matthew Knopik, Cecelia Watkins, John's wife Bonnie Watkins, John Zakelj, and Johnny Watkins.*



*John Zakelj, Sue Rademacher, and Mike Koski in front of the painting of the Franciscan Church of the Annunciation.* also brought in what will be the backdrop for our booth, a large painting she made of the Franciscan Church of the Annunciation in Prešeren Square in Ljubljana.

Hvala to Chuck Podominick who organizes the best programs for our monthly meetings.

ELAINE BARTHELEMY

*Zarja - The Dawn*



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If you have any questions about the 2019 SUA National Convention, please contact Debbie Duris, Registration Chair  
Call: 330.467.2281 or E-mail: [dcduris@gmail.com](mailto:dcduris@gmail.com)