

# Call for candidates to the National Athletic Board

by COURTNEY KOENIG  
Fraternal Director

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — The SNPJ Fraternal Department is currently accepting nominations for the SNPJ National Athletic Board. This is the body that regulates and manages the Society's athletic programs, tournaments and related activities.

The National Athletic Board is a six-member body that meets twice each year via conference call. The current SNPJ National Athletic Board includes District 1 Director Jason Cadez, District 2 Director Den Brand, District 3 Director David Sankovich, District 4 Director Rick Gorjup, District 5 Director Ken Anderson, and District 6 Director Mary Donovan.

Candidates to the National Athletic Board must be a member of SNPJ in good standing for at least two years. He or she must also have a practical knowledge of the Society's major athletic activities.

Athletic directors play an important role in our Society, are aware of athletic needs in their district, and encourage participation from youth and adults in all areas, from local to national competition. They oversee all regional and national tournaments, and they report their activities at the two Athletic Board meetings.

SNPJ has six athletic districts, which are as follows:

**DISTRICT 1:** Cambria, Somerset, Luzerne, Fayette, Washington, Westmoreland, and Elk counties in Pennsylvania; and the state of Florida

**DISTRICT 2:** Allegheny and Beaver counties in Pennsylvania

**DISTRICT 3:** The Borough of SNPJ and Mercer County in Pennsylvania; and Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana, Belmont and Stark counties in Ohio

**DISTRICT 4:** Cuyahoga, Ashtabula, Lake, Portage and Summit counties in Ohio

**DISTRICT 5:** The state of Michigan

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## briefly

### Home Office closed for the Society anniversary

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — The SNPJ Home Office will be closed Monday, April 1, in observance of the Society's 120th anniversary, which we celebrate each year on April 6. Regular office hours, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., will resume Tuesday, April 2.

### Sygan Lodge 6 electing two officers in April

**SYGAN, Pa.** — SNPJ Lodge 6 will hold a regular meeting on Monday, April 8, starting at 7 p.m. at the Lodge. During this meeting we will hold the nomination, election and installation for the offices of Lodge auditor (one) and Youth Circle director. All Lodge 6 beneficial members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

**KAREN A. PINTAR**  
Lodge 6 President

### March 1 mergers for Lodges in Pa., Cleveland

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — As of March 1, 2024, all members of SNPJ Lodge 190 in St. Michael, Pa., have been merged into SNPJ Lodge 749 in Johnstown, Pa.; and all members of SNPJ Lodge 614 in Cleveland have been merged into SNPJ Lodge 604 in Cleveland.

We thank the officers of SNPJ Lodges 190 and 614 for their service to the members of their Lodge, and we wish them all many more healthy and happy years in the SNPJ. We also thank the officers and members of SNPJ Lodges 749 and 604 for agreeing to accept these Lodges in the respective mergers. We wish you much success going forward.

**KAREN A. PINTAR**  
SNPJ National Secretary/COO

## THE DEADLINE

The next two *PROSVETA* issue dates are April 1 and May 1. All material must be received by noon on Monday, March 18, for the April 1 issue, and by Monday, April 15, for the May 1 issue. If you're concerned about making the deadline, send an e-mail to [prosveta@snpj.com](mailto:prosveta@snpj.com) or submit your material via the publications area of our website, [snpj.org](http://snpj.org).

And the winner is...

The \$100 winner of the fourth quarter drawing in the 2023 SNPJ Recommender Program is:

Michelle Von Merta-Sustarich  
Lodge 304, San Francisco

Congratulations, and thank you for participating!

# Heritage Center counting down to the 2024 season opening date

by KATHY PAULENICH (776)  
SNPJ Heritage Center Director

**BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa.** — "In like a lion, out like a lamb." That's how the month of March is always described in terms of the weather. Of course it doesn't always happen; we all know winter and cold weather in the northern states is always unpredictable. But we can think spring!

Speaking of which, be sure to mark your calendars for the season opening at the SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center on Saturday, May 25, from 1 to 5 p.m. The committee has held two Zoom meetings to start planning for the year. Zoom meetings are so convenient, especially to view items before making a purchase.

The Zoom meetings are a new adventure in learning for several Heritage Center Committee members, me included! Thankfully, our younger, more "techie" committee members helped us out. I guess you're never too old to learn something new.

Do stop in the Heritage Center gift shop; we have some new items on order that will be available on May 25.

Additional dates to mark in your calendar are June 7-9 for Heritage Center Weekend. We will open the weekend activities with a dance in the Gostilna on Friday, June 7, featuring Patty Candela and The Guys from 8 to 11 p.m.

Saturday, June 8, will be a busy day, offering a balina tournament in the morning organized by Denny Brand at the Balinarena, a paint-and-sip session led by Sarah Loudon at 6 p.m. in the barn, and bingo at 8 p.m. in the Gostilna.

On Sunday, June 9, Joe Valencic from Cleveland will present a movie about Slovenian women in the U.S. at noon in the Wine Room. You will recognize many of these wonderful Slovenian ladies. The movie screening is a free-admission activity.

Heritage Center Weekend concludes Sunday

**SEE HERITAGE CENTER**  
ON PAGE 5

# Orange Coast Lodge 786 announces a series of event dates for 2024

by TERESA KOCI  
Lodge 786 Secretary/Treasurer

**ORANGE COUNTY, Calif.** — Lodge 786 kicked off 2024 with a business meeting and potluck at the home of Ken and Teresa Koci on Jan. 21. Much appreciation is given to Mike and Marie Bajc and Don Milek for mulling over and auditing the 2023 financial reports.

Many others joined us, thankfully, in between the heavy rainstorms we had that weekend. Linda and Butch Trembly drove the distance from Moorpark, along with John and Joe Govednik from Redondo Beach.

President Fred Mlakar brought the meeting to order, keeping conversation concise and to the point, so the meeting moved along rapidly. Various reports were given, along with an interactive discussion of what we should do during the course of 2024. As a result, save the following dates. Contact Teresa Koci, Lodge 786 Financial Secretary, to be added to the Lodge 786 e-mail notification list so you may have the most up-to-date information on all Lodge activities.

Sunday, April 7, 2 p.m.: Meeting, social and dinner at Copenhagen Corner Restaurant, 31161 Niguel Rd., Suite B, Laguna Niguel. Come enjoy this small, family-owned restaurant serving authentic Danish food — it's a new local hot spot. We will be going Dutch from the Danish menu, so bring your bucks.

The owner asks for an approximate number of people more than a week prior to April 7, so please RSVP to Teresa Koci by Wednesday, March 27. Visit the website for more information, [www.copenhagen-corneroc.com](http://www.copenhagen-corneroc.com).

Sunday, Aug. 11, 10 a.m.: Social, meeting, picnic/barbecue and nature walk at



**Logan L. Richmond**  
Born Dec. 21, 2022  
Euclid, Ohio, Lodge 158

Loyalites Lodge 158 welcomes Logan Louis Richmond as the newest addition to the Lodge. Logan is the son of Cory and Emily (158) Richmond, grandson of Steve and Margaret Mackanos, and great-grandson of Barbara Mackanos (158). We welcome Logan to the Society and extend our best wishes to his entire family.



follow SNPJ on **Facebook!**



Members of the former SNPJ Youth Circle 2 will have the opportunity to reunite with old friends during the 40th Super Button Box Bash planned Sunday, April 21.

# Youth Circle 2 reunion a highlight of Super Button Box Bash in April

by JOE VALENCIC (5)  
Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame

**CLEVELAND** — Get out your song sheets, pull on your Slovenian costume and join the SNPJ Circle 2 reunion!

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Super Button Box Bash, first hosted by the SNPJ Circle 2 Slovenian Junior Chorus. All former Circle 2 members are invited to the American Croatian Lodge in Eastlake, Ohio, on Sunday, April 21, to celebrate. Your group performance is the featured event.

Raise your voice in Slovenian song and play your button box on stage with your friends. We are enticing longtime Circle 2 musical director Cecilia Dolgan, the creator of the Super Button Box Bash, to arrive from Chicago and give the downbeat for the sing-along. Song sheets will be provided; Slovenian costumes encouraged. Kathy Hlad follows with button boxers in an accordion salute.

Enjoy accordions all day long at the Super Button Box Bash with 10 of your favorite bands and entertainers for a non-stop polkathon. The

**SEE BUTTON BOX BASH**  
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**NATIONAL SECRETARY/COO**  
**Karen A. Pintar**

**NATIONAL TREASURER/CFO**  
**Robert J. Lawrence**

**Correspondence received at:**  
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Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.  
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Elton, PA 15934

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**Region 3: Donald F. Srnick**  
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**Region 4: Justina Rigler**  
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Lemont, IL 60439

**Region 5: Fred Mlakar**  
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Irvine, CA 92620

**SNPJ Recreation Center**  
**270 Martin Road**  
**Enon Valley, PA 16120**  
**(724) 336-5180 • fax (724) 336-6716**  
**Toll-free: 1-877-767-5732**  
website: [www.snpjrec.com](http://www.snpjrec.com)  
e-mail: [snpj@snpjrec.com](mailto:snpj@snpjrec.com)

## St. Marys Lodge 581 plans their activity calendar for the year

by MARCIA KLANCER BLEGGI  
Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer

**ST. MARYS, Pa.** — SNPJ Lodge 581 has filled its schedule with activities for everyone.

Our Slovenian language class, which started Feb. 21, is a big hit. A total of 19 students in two classes have signed up and are very eager to learn the Slovenian language via Zoom. Students from SNPJ Lodges across the United States have found a way to get together and motivate each other to practice the Slovenian language.

On April 13 (rain date of April 20), Lodge 581, along with Friends of Jackson Road, will clean up Jackson Road and West Creek Road. Everyone who has assisted with this project, in addition to doing a good deed and a community service, has had a great time enjoying good food, music, and the joy of being outside working together. Contact us to volunteer.

Last year the drag races at St. Marys Airport were canceled. The

races are again scheduled in 2024, on June 16, July 28 and Sept. 8. Lodge 581 members will be parking cars. All volunteers who help will receive free admission to the races. The money we earn will be donated to the Jerry Troha Music Scholarship Fund; the scholarships are awarded in May.

Our next baking class hasn't been scheduled yet, but we will have at least one day for potica and strudel baking.

On Aug. 25, the SNPJ Lodge 581 and North Central Pennsylvania Slovenian Polka Boosters combined picnic will be held at the Kersey Fireman's. Polka music will be performed by the Frank Stranger Orchestra and a catered meal will be served. The picnic is planned from 2 to 6 p.m. Save the date for the annual Christmas party on Dec. 15 from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Johnsonburg Fire Hall with the Bill Bevc Band.

The next Lodge 581 meeting will be held Sunday, April 28, at Wildwoods in St. Marys starting at 12:30



St. Marys Lodge 581 officers for 2024: [from left] auditor **TYLER HANNAH**, auditor **JOHN MOORE**, President **PATRICIA MOORE**, auditor **JOHN TROHA**, and Secretary/Treasurer **MARCIA BLEGGI**.

p.m. All Lodge members are invited and encouraged to attend. A North Central Polka Boosters dance will follow from 2 to 5 p.m. Bring your friends for the dance!

For more information on Lodge 581 activities, contact President Pat Moore at (814) 837-9218 or Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Klancer Bleggi at (814) 335-4983.

## Events schedule taking shape for Detroit Lodge 677 members

by KAREN SCHNUELL-RUTH  
Lodge 677 Secretary

**DETROIT** — Upcoming SNPJ Lodge 677 meetings are scheduled April 24, July 24 and Oct. 23 starting at 4 p.m. The date of the December dinner with officers will be determined later.

Our officers for this year include President Ken Anderson, (248) 649-6228; Vice President Stephen Anderson; Secretary Karen (Ragsdale) Schnuell-Ruth, (313) 938-2981; Treasurer and SNPJ National Board member Tracey Anderson, (248) 548-2499; and Recording Secretary Carol Roberts.

We would like to develop a database so all Lodge 677 members can be updated as new activities are planned, and to avoid spending so much on postage. Please send your e-mail address to [kschnuellruth@gmail.com](mailto:kschnuellruth@gmail.com).

Your summer plans should in-

clude a trip to the SNPJ Recreation Center in Pennsylvania. The Campsite cabins have been improved! If you have never visited the Recreation Center, it's a great half-way stop if you are heading to New York or Washington, D.C. The Campsite offers a full range of activities (swimming, fishing, balina, corn hole, hiking, etc.) and is surrounded by beautiful rolling hills, farms, and quaint small towns.

Are any of you sports fans interested in joining a Sunday golf league? Contact Carol Roberts, our league secretary, at (586) 662-1283.

And what's summer without baseball? Join SNPJ members at Jimmy John's Field in Utica, Mich., on June 29 at 5:30 p.m. This event includes a picnic meal and the baseball game; the price of the tickets is yet to be determined. If interested, contact Ken Anderson at (248) 649-6228.

## Save the dates for upcoming Orange Coast Lodge activities

### LODGE 786 DATES

FROM PAGE 1

The Duck Club of Irvine, San Joaquin Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary. This year we will have access to the rustic Duck House in case of inclement weather. This is an event for all ages!

We'll hold a brief meeting and family picnic at the beautiful wildlife sanctuary. In addition to the Duck House, amenities include a covered picnic/barbeque area, a large grass area for kids to play, the Audubon house and gift shop, and 12 miles of walking trails where visitors can see more than 200 bird species. Parking, restrooms and the picnic area are all close and easily accessible, so bring the whole family.

You are encouraged to take a look at the website for sanctuary

details and directions, <https://www.irwd.com/san-joaquin-marsh/the-duck-club>. More details will follow later this year, so please be sure you're on the Lodge e-mail notification list.

Sunday, Nov. 24, 11:30 a.m.: An early Lodge Christmas party at Laguna Village Clubhouse in Laguna Hills. Music, lunch, a Lodge meeting, a visit from Santa, and more socializing.

This clubhouse is a newly-selected venue with ample, easy-to-access parking. Many thanks to Cathy Udovch for arranging our use of the clubhouse. More details will be forthcoming later this year, so once again, stay tuned and be sure to get on our e-mail list for all Lodge notifications.

I'm looking forward to seeing you soon!

*best wishes to our*

## Honorary Members

### Indy Lodge 34 member worked for the Treasury Department



Sis. EDNA S. NIMMONS (34)

**INDIANAPOLIS** — Sis. Edna S. Nimmons, a member of SNPJ Lodge 34, outlived her SNPJ life insurance policy in November 2023 and has since joined the ranks of the Society's Honorary

(outlived) Members. She writes:

"My original SNPJ insurance policy was purchased at my birth in 1927 by my grandfather, Frank Popelar, who was an active member of SNPJ. In 1965 I continued with the SNPJ paid-up policy that I have been notified as outlived. In celebration of my 70 years of fraternal membership, I was awarded the custom-embroidered blanket that I use and treasure every day. Thank you.

"I was born at home on a farm near Livingston, Ill., on Nov. 15, 1927. I grew up on this farm, and later on a farm in Litchfield, Ill. My father farmed with horses until he began using a tractor in the 1930s. In those days I milked cows by hand every day before and after school. There were no school buses, and I walked through the pasture as it was shorter that way on my way to grade school. Going to Litchfield High School, I rode in a milk truck with the driver being another older student. Milk was contained in eight- or 10-gallon cans that needed to be unloaded at Litchfield Creamery, processors of milk, butter and ice cream, and also a producer of Milnot.

"I graduated from Litchfield High School in 1944 at the age of 16. Our country was at war in those days, and I was interviewed at graduation by government officials for a position as secretary in an office of the U.S. Treasury Department in Chicago. I had never before ridden on a train or been to any large city. My fears were somewhat tempered with several classmates who were also going. My office was located on the seventh floor of the Merchandise Mart, where we typed on electric typewriters (another first) and could look out over the Chicago River.

"Following over two years in Chicago, I returned to Litchfield to work for Litchfield Community Savings and Loan as a loan officer and a board member secretary. Later I sold real estate until my retirement in 2010. Other events in my life include vacation trips to Alaska, the British Isles, Hawaii, and much of the United States. As a medical volunteer I made several trips to Honduras.

"I married in 1948 and have been blessed with three beautiful children. Howard, the oldest, is a retired CPA; Kenneth, also retired, was president of Schutt Mfg., a manufacturer of football helmets. Marilyn, the youngest, has a successful career as an online certified quilting instructor. I also have six grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren, with one great-grandchild deceased.

"Thank you, SNPJ, for all that you do."

On behalf of the members of Lodge 34 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend best wishes to Sis. Nimmons for continued health and happiness.

## Have something for Up-and-Coming?

Lodge/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Event \_\_\_\_\_

Site \_\_\_\_\_

If a concert or dance, who is performing? \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Who to contact \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Complete and return to:  
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## Up-and-Coming...

### A look at events planned by the Slovene National Benefit Society

- MARCH 17 ... Westmoreland Federation St. Patrick's Day celebration, 2-5 p.m. at the Yukon Slovenian Hall, Yukon, Pa. Music by the Dick Tady Orchestra; food and refreshments available for purchase. For more information contact Lois Denning at (412) 554-7404.
- APRIL 6 ..... Sygan Lodge 6 Couples Nite Out in the Sunshine Room. Tickets are \$120 per couple and include appetizers, dinner, drawings, and dancing to the music of Dancing Queen. To purchase tickets call the club at (412) 221-9862.
- APRIL 21 .... SNPJ Region 1 second annual Free Dance at the Yukon Slovenian Hall, Yukon, Pa. Music by the Polka Classics, 2-6 p.m. Pork dinners, Slovenian sausage and Slovenian desserts available for purchase. For more information e-mail [maury@zoominternet.net](mailto:maury@zoominternet.net) or call/text (724) 553-6873.
- MAY 18 ..... Fourth annual Music Festival & Craft Show at the SNPJ Farm, Kirtland, Ohio. Features 16 polka bands and more than 40 crafters.
- MAY 25 ..... CAL Don Gorjup Golf Open at Rolling Green Golf Club, Huntsburg, Ohio. For details contact Rick Gorjup at (440) 354-5001.
- MAY 27 ..... Memorial Day holiday dance hosted by Val Pawlowski at the SNPJ Farm, Kirtland, Ohio.
- JUNE 2 ..... Polka dance hosted by Joey Tom-sick at the SNPJ Farm, Kirtland, Ohio. Entertainment features the Eddie Rodick Orchestra.
- JUNE 9 ..... Second annual Family Fun Day hosted by the Miss SNPJ Pageant Commission at the SNPJ Farm, Kirtland, Ohio. Music by the Chardon Polka Band.
- JUNE 14-16 ... SNPJ Young Adult Conference at the SNPJ Recreation Center, Borough of SNPJ, Pa. For registration and event details contact Fraternal Director Courtney Koenig at 1-800-843-7675 ext. 144, or e-mail [ckoenig@snpj.com](mailto:ckoenig@snpj.com).
- JUNE 16 ..... SNPJ Farm Ladies Auxiliary picnic at the SNPJ Farm, Kirtland, Ohio.
- JUNE 23 ..... Westmoreland Federation 13th annual Pretty in Pink fundraiser at the Yukon Slovenian Hall, Yukon, Pa. Dancing from 2-6 p.m. to the Polka Classics, Basket drawings, 50/50 drawing and door prizes drawings. Food and refreshments available for purchase. For details contact Lois Denning at (412) 554-7404.
- JUNE 23 ..... SNPJ Loyalties Lodge 158 annual picnic at the SNPJ Farm, Kirtland, Ohio. Entertainment features the Don Wojtila Band. Free admission.

# We've Got You COVERED

by GINA WISE  
SNPJ Marketing Manager

## The Rockin' Roths

From time to time, for whatever reason, the song "I'm Just a Bill" from Schoolhouse Rock comes into my mind.

"I'm just a bill, yes, I'm only a bill  
And I'm sitting here on Capitol Hill  
Well, it's a long, long journey to the capital city  
It's a long, long wait while I'm sitting in committee  
But I know I'll be a law someday  
At least I hope and pray that I will  
But today I'm still just a bill sitting here on Capitol Hill"

I was too young at the time to consider the impact these educational anthems were making on me... but here I am, 48 years later, quietly replaying this tune in my head, along with "Conjunction Junction" and "Mother Necessity." The rhythmic rhymes stuck with me, as did the knowledge they imparted, so I guess they did their job!

Despite their unique benefits, sharing some advantages of owning a Roth IRA is probably not the most exciting read, so I will attempt to share it in the style of Schoolhouse Rock with the hopes of the information sticking with you:

*[Verse 1]*  
When you earn some money from your employment,  
You might want to save some for future enjoyment.  
But how do you invest it in a smart and savvy way?  
Well, there's a special account that you should get to know today!

*[Chorus]*  
It's called a Roth IRA, and it can make you smile,  
'Cause you pay the taxes now, and then you wait a while.  
And when you're older and grayer, you can take it out tax-free,  
A Roth IRA's tax-free growth helps you save for retirement, you see.

*[Verse 2]*  
Roth IRAs are different from Traditional ones,  
'Cause you don't get a tax deduction when you contribute the funds.  
But that's okay, you will get a nice break,  
'Cause when you withdraw your money, the IRS will not take!

*[Chorus]*  
It's called a Roth IRA, and it can make you smile,  
'Cause you pay the taxes now, and then you wait a while.  
And when you're older and grayer, you can take it out tax-free,  
A Roth IRA's tax-free growth helps you save for retirement, you see.

*[Bridge]*  
But there are some set rules that you must ace,  
Like not contributing more than the IRS limits that are in place.  
You also cannot withdraw your earnings prior to being 59½ years old to the day,  
And your account must be open a minimum of five years, or penalties you will pay.

*[Verse 3]*  
Unlike other types of retirement accounts out there to convey,  
There are no required minimum distributions from a Roth IRA.  
A Roth provides tax diversification when making withdrawals down the road,  
Depending on your tax bracket and needs, a Roth could lighten your load.

*[Chorus]*  
It's called a Roth IRA, and it can make you smile,  
Cause you pay the taxes now, and then you wait a while.  
And when you're older and grayer, you can take it out tax-free,  
A Roth IRA's tax-free growth helps you save for retirement, you see.

*[Verse 4]*  
No matter your age – if working – you can contribute to a Roth IRA,  
Just beware of the income limits from which you should not stray.  
Your beneficiaries can also enjoy tax-free withdrawals if you leave a Roth behind,  
This can be a valuable legacy for loved ones who will consider you kind.

*[Outro]*  
So, if you want to save for retirement in a smart and simple way,  
Consider opening a Roth today.  
You'll be glad you did, 'cause soon you will smile,  
It may seem far off now, but trust me, retirement will be here in just a little while.

For additional details, and to determine if a Roth IRA is right for you, call 1-800-843-7675 or visit [snpj.org](http://snpj.org) to be put in touch with an SNPJ advisor near you!

SNPJ does not provide tax, legal or accounting advice. Consult with a tax, legal or accounting professional regarding your specific situation.



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## Defense Ministry signs agreement with Maribor U

**MARIBOR (STA)** — The Slovenian Defense Ministry and Maribor University signed a cooperation agreement in early February, some six months after similar accords were signed with the universities in Ljubljana and Koper. The agreements cover education, training, research and development.

The goal is to strengthen cooperation that died down somewhat after 2016, when previous agreements with the three universities expired. Last year, similar agreements were also signed with the Maribor-based Alma Mater Europaea University, a private school, and the Faculty of Organization Studies in Novo Mesto.

The February agreement was signed by Maribor University Rector Zdravko Kačič and Defense Minister Marjan Šarec; the latter expressing satisfaction with the signing, saying Maribor and the entire northeast of the country had played a vital role in Slovenia's history in general, as well as the nation's military history.

"Maribor is important to us," Minister Šarec was quoted as saying in a press release. "The agreement signed today indicates a path forward – of the Slovenian military becoming integrated in society and the education system."

Kačič said the university had a very positive view of this cooperation. "We are aware that the Slovenian military is the pillar that allows us to do what we do."

The cooperation will take place on several levels: graduate and post-graduate programs related to military sciences, defense studies and the system of protection against natural and other disasters, and a military module offered as part of other accredited study programs.

The Defense Ministry will be investing EUR 23 million (\$24.7 million) in research and development, which accounts for more than two percent of Slovenia's current defense budget.

## Brnik Airport marking a 60th anniversary in 2024

**BRNIK (STA)** — This year marks the 60th anniversary of passenger traffic at Brnik Airport. As noted in a January press release, 47.7 million passengers have traveled through Slovenia's main airport [since its opening]. In the coming months, a number of events at the airport will mark the anniversary.

In 1964, when passenger traffic at Brnik was launched, 78,000 people traveled through the airport that year, a figure that barely compares to the 1.27 million passengers recorded last year.

The first routes established were to Belgrade, Dubrovnik, London and Algiers, operated by the Yugoslav carriers JAT and Adria-Aviopromet. This summer, passengers will be able to fly to 26 destinations on 22 carriers, according to airport operator Fraport Slovenija.

To mark the anniversary, videos and exhibitions at the airport over the next few months will present the development of the airport over the past six decades. In addition, a number of events are scheduled to mark the occasion.

Fraport Slovenija is seeing a marked increase in passenger numbers after a trying period: first, the bankruptcy of Adria Airways, followed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Preliminary forecasts by carriers for this summer indicate a 10 percent increase in flight frequencies on regular routes.

Fraport has invested EUR 67 million (\$73.2 million) since it took over the airport 10 years ago and intends to invest almost as much by 2030. The largest investment to date has been the new passenger terminal. The company's next investment cycle will focus on a modernization and expansion of the airport's runways, ramps and other hard surfaces, along with a green transition.

## Ski resorts struggle at the start of the season

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — With the start of the new year, Slovenia's winter resorts and ski lift operators had been struggling mightily this winter in the face of unseasonably high temperatures and an almost complete absence of natural snow. The number of skiers recorded at the end of 2023 was less than half the 2021 figure, but there was still hope following the low temperatures recorded in mid-January.



Boštjan Paradiž, the head of the Association of Ski Lift Operators, told the press that the weather in December kept many ski resorts closed. Many of the small resorts remained idle, while most of the largest resorts were operating at limited capacity. The first serious snow of the season in Slovenia fell Jan. 19-20.

"The cooler spell seen [in mid-January] at least allows for artificial snowmaking," Paradiž added, while comparing the roughly 150,000 skiers recorded at the end of December 2023 to 180,000 during the same period in 2022, and 330,000 in 2021.

"It's too early to say whether this winter season is already lost, but the fact is that the first part did not give much reason for optimism. The thing is, Christmas and the New Year holidays are among the highlights for many resorts."

As Paradiž sees it, Slovenian ski resorts will have to secure sufficient resources to produce artificial snow and [maintain] large enough reservoirs in the future if skiing is here to stay. However, Slovenia's winter resorts aren't located at very high altitudes – the sole exception being Kanin, in the northwest on the border with Italy – and a push has come from the government for the resorts to transition to year-round tourism.

Most of the major Slovenian ski resorts have received major subsidies from the government, and together they invested almost EUR 80 million (\$86.7 million) in infrastructure last year. The resorts did so mainly with a view to further expand operations beyond winter, which the government made a condition for the EUR 55 million (\$59.6 million) in grants provided.

Paradiž argued that this support and development are crucial; however, he feels the transition will require time. He pointed out that Slovenia's ski resorts are still driven by winter tourism, which accounts for roughly 65 percent of total revenue for many of them.

## Waste in Koroška region now being sorted by robot

**SLOVENJ GRADEC (STA)** — The Kocerod waste treatment company in the northern Koroška region purchased a waste sorting robot in 2023. Initial results are promising, and the company is already planning to purchase a second robot in 2024.

"Waste sorting is physically demanding work," said Kocerod director Ivan Plevnik, adding that there was "no future in doing the work as it had been done in the past decades."

The company purchased the robot from AMP Robotics, an American company, and installed it last December. The robot is currently undergoing a trial run to determine its efficiency. "Initial results show that working with this machine... is extremely efficient and that this is the solution for sorting in the future," Plevnik said.

The robot scans all waste and can provide information on it. It can sort up to three waste parcels at a time by imitating the movement of human hands.

Kocerod is already planning to purchase another robot to completely automate its waste sorting process. The company employs 110 workers, 11 of whom work in sorting. Estimates show that the robot can replace two to three workers per shift. To account for that, the workers will be transferred to other work sites, and the company will not replace some retiring workers with new hires.

The waste sorting plant, which operates at a maximum capacity of 5,500 tons per year, processes around 4,200 tons of waste every year. Following the August floods, the plant received some 2,750 tons of additional waste in 2023.

## Newly updated riding hall opens at Lipica

**LIPICA (STA)** — A renovated riding hall was inaugurated at the Lipica Stud Farm in late January. In addition to a new roof, a completely new training arena, electrical and other updates, the hall is now more comfortable for spectators.

The hall now features an exhibition room where visitors can admire the carriages used at Lipica, the world's oldest, continuously operating stud farm.

Just over a year after the tradition of Lipizzan breeding was added to the UNESCO representative list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity, an exhibition about this classic riding school has been renewed as part of the riding hall renovation.

During the introduction of the newly remodeled facility, for the first time the training demonstration was accompanied by videos of training and other content, stud farm director Tatjana Vošinek Pucer said. Pucer cut the ribbon at the new hall, alongside Slovenian President Nataša Pirc Musar and Economy Ministry State Secretary Matevž Frangež.

"I'm truly very happy that cultural monuments such as Lipica are being renovated," Pirc Musar told the press. "It has true cultural value, and the addition to the UNESCO list was well deserved."

She expressed satisfaction that the UNESCO addition was prompted by eight countries, which means that they will work even more closely in the future. "This is great added value. In the past there was a lot of rivalry, and now they work together."

Pirc Musar also said she was excited about new legislation being drafted for the state-owned stud farm by the Economy Ministry since it will serve as a strategy for cultural heritage management. State Secretary Frangež said the bill would be passed this year.

Secretary Frangež also talked about the investments planned at the farm, saying the riding hall marked the half-way point of an extensive investment cycle that started years ago with renovations to the center of the property, the manor, and most of the stables.

By 2030, when the Lipica Stud Farm will be celebrating its 450th anniversary, the Economy Ministry wants it to be in top condition. This year, the pool and wellness center at the recently renovated Maestoso Hotel will also be updated.

## Castle work completed... after a half century

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — The lengthy renovation of Ljubljana Castle that spanned more than 50 years is finally complete, and the castle opened its last renovated room – known as the Kazemate, which will serve as a multi-purpose venue – in late January

The Kazemate is the largest room in the castle, measuring 31 meters (approx. 102 feet) in length. In the late Middle Ages the Kazemate served as a passage to the courtyard; later, when the castle became a penitentiary, the Kazemate was a large sleeping area for prisoners. In the early 20th century the room served as a carpentry workshop.

Following the renovation, the room is now set up as a multi-purpose hall, keeping its authenticity while allowing various events to be held there. "We deepened a part of the space and restored it, and we installed a movable floor," said Majda Kregar, one of the architects working on the renovation of the castle, adding that the floor required some innovation. The renovation of the room, which totaled EUR 2.5 million (\$2.72 million), was funded by the Ljubljana municipality.

The overarching project, the renovation of the entire castle, began in 1969. Back then the castle was "highly degraded" and in need of "thorough intervention," Kregar said. [The architects] hoped to create a "lively cultural center that would be attractive to the citizens of Ljubljana," she added. The renovation has preserved all elements that testify to the castle's growth over the centuries, including walls, ceilings, arches, and defensive and other openings.

Now the castle "is alive and makes its own survival possible," said Kregar, adding that it appears as if the renovation was completed in one move. The project's architects received an award for their work last year from the city of Ljubljana.

While the renovation within the castle's walls is completed, there is still more work to be done, including the renovation of the bastion outside the walls. "And traffic has to be removed from the Castle Hill plateau; underground parking arranged..." said Kregar.

Ljubljana Castle is a venue for many concerts, film screenings, educational events and theatrical performances. In 2023 the castle welcomed 1.19 million visitors, nearly 200,000 more than in 2022. More than 75 percent of all visitors are foreign guests.

The articles comprising this feature have been reprinted with permission from the Slovenian Press Agency (STA).

## SNPJ fraternal sympathies

### BRO. ARTHUR H. KUHEL • LODGE 8 •

**CHICAGO** — The members of Lodge 8 sadly report the Sept. 3, 2023, passing of Bro. Arthur Henry Kuhel, 92, of Mesa, Ariz.

Bro. Kuhel was born Nov. 21, 1930, in Chicago, the son of the late Ladislaw and Anna Kuhel. He graduated from Bowen High School, where he played baseball. On Nov. 5, 1955, he married Margaret Gibbs. He worked for Nazdar in Chicago for 15 years and for EECO in Phoenix, Ariz., for 20 years. He enjoyed his 25 years of retirement.

Arthur loved sports. He was an Arizona Cardinals season ticket holder for many years and enjoyed a little tailgating. He also loved baseball, especially the Chicago White Sox and Arizona Diamondbacks, and enjoyed watching Phoenix Suns NBA games.

A Korean War veteran, he was a member of the Korean War Veterans Association. He also had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., on the Veterans Honor Flight.

He was a 74-year member of SNPJ Lodge 8, and a member of the Bowen High School Alumni Association, Knights of Columbus, and VFW.

Arthur is survived by his daughter, Karen; four sons, William, Paul, Glenn and Douglas; and eight grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife, Margaret; and his sister, Joanne.

A Funeral Mass was celebrated for Bro. Kuhel on Sept. 8 at Resurrection Catholic Church, Tempe, Ariz. A graveside committal service was held Sept. 11 in Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery, Mesa.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 8 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we offer our sympathies to Bro. Kuhel's family, relatives and friends on their loss.

### BRO. GARY L. HOLLAND • LODGE 562 •

**BARTON, Ohio** — The members of Lodge 562 sadly report the Sept. 26, 2023, passing of Bro. Gary L. Holland, 73, at his home in Woodsfield, Ohio.

Bro. Holland was born Sept. 26, 1950, in Marietta, Ohio, a son of the late Clifford Dale Holland and Bessie (Kuhn) Holland. A U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam era, he was a retired employee of the former Ormet Corp. in Hannibal, Ohio.

Gary enjoyed hunting, riding motorcycles, toys, watching westerns, spending time with family, and making people laugh.

Surviving are his wife, Janet Davis Holland, whom he married Nov. 19, 1969; a daughter, Kimberly Holland of Tuscarawas, Ohio; a son, Timothy (Suzanne) Holland of New Martinsville, W.Va.; nine grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by two sons, James Allen Holland and Christopher Michael Holland; two brothers, John and Kenneth Holland; and two sisters, Hazel Stark and Evelyn Phillips.

Military and funeral services for Bro. Holland were held Sept. 30 at Watters Funeral Home, Woodsfield. Burial followed in Liberty Cemetery, Lebanon, Ohio.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 562 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we offer our condolences to Bro. Holland's family, relatives and friends on their loss.

### BRO. THOMAS MARNICH • LODGE 106 •

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — The members of Lodge 106 sadly report the Nov. 30, 2023, passing of Bro. Thomas W. Marnich, 84, of Stowe Twp., Pa., surrounded by his family. He was a 30-year SNPJ Lodge 106 member.

Bro. Marnich was born Aug. 22, 1939, a son of the late William and Caroline Marnich. Tom was a 1957 graduate of the former Stowe High School where he played center for the Stowe Stallions football team and met the love of his life, Marian. After graduating high school he served two years in the Army and four years in the Reserves.

Tom was quite the mechanic, handyman and coach. He formerly worked at J&L Steel, for the Stowe Police Department, and retired from USAirways after 26 years of employment.

“Skip,” as he was lovingly called by many, was an avid Pittsburgh sports fan and especially enjoyed watching the Steelers. He loved cars, golf, poker and Westerns, but his true passion was raising his children and spending time with his grandchildren, watching them participate in all of their activities. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Marian (Spadaccia) Marnich; five children, Tommy (Dawn) Marnich, Ronny (Bonnie) Marnich, Cheryl (the late Tommy) DeAngelis, Melissa (John) Scrabis, and Tressa (Dave) Fulmer; 10 grandchildren; a great-granddaughter; two brothers, Rudolph and Robert Marnich; and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a brother, William Marnich.

A blessing service for Bro. Marnich was held Dec. 4 in Musmanno Chapel, McKees Rocks, Pa. Burial with military honors followed in the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies, Cecil Twp., Pa.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 106 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our condolences to Bro. Marnich's family, relatives and friends on their loss.

### SIS. MARY B. STERCHI • LODGE 2 •

**LA SALLE, Ill.** — The members of Lodge 2 sadly report the Dec. 4, 2023, passing of Sis. Mary B. Sterchi, 93, of Mendota, Ill., at home surrounded by her loving family.

Fondly known as “Mimi,” “Grama Mimi” and “Auntie Mimi,” Sis. Sterchi was born April 10, 1930, in Oglesby, Ill., a daughter of the late Stanley and Barbara Ann (Hrovat) Sitar. She attended La Salle-Peru High School, then began her working career as a telephone operator with Bell Telephone Company.

She met her sweetheart, Donald, while on a blind date, and on Sept. 24, 1955, they exchanged marriage vows at Holy Family Church in Oglesby, a union that lasted 67 years. The following year they were blessed with the birth of their first child.

Mimi enjoyed being a housewife and a loving, caring and nurturing mother. She enjoyed attending her children's music activities and her daughters' acrobatic or ballet lessons, along with listening to music, singing, and whistling any tune when called upon.

When her children were all in school, she returned to the workforce and was employed for 22 years as a dietary aide at Sunrise Nursing Home, then Heritage Manor. She also volunteered as a CCD teaching aide, and with the Bloodmobile and Abigail's Clinic.

She was a wonderful cook and baker and always enjoyed creative writing, which led her

to be known as the “card lady,” which continued throughout her entire life until the age of 93. She wrote letters and cards to family and friends, helping to lift their spirits or wishing them joy and happiness on special occasions and holidays.

She lived her life sharing and expressing her knowledge, wisdom, love and caring ways. She especially loved animals; throughout her life she lovingly cared for her many pets: parakeets, cockatiels, cats and dogs.

A 75-year SNPJ Lodge 2 member, Mary was extremely proud of her Slovenian heritage. She was also a lifelong member of Holy Cross Church in Mendota.

She is survived by two daughters, Dawn Ann Bauer of LaMoille, Ill., and Lisa (Tim Engels) Avery of Mendota; two sons, Steven (Ruth Ann) Sterchi and Donald “Sonny” (Karen) Sterchi, both of Mendota; four grandchildren; three stepgrandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; six stepgreat-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Donald, on April 13, 2023; a brother, Milton, in infancy; a son-in-law, Rick Bauer; three nieces; sisters and brothers-in-law Dorothy and John Senica Sr., Betty and Sam Torchia, and Donna Kain; and a step-grandson.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sis. Sterchi on Dec. 11 at Holy Cross Church. Burial followed in Forest Lawn Memory Gardens, La Salle. Her children bid her *lahko noč*.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 2 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we offer our sympathies to Sis. Sterchi's family, relatives and friends on their loss.

### SIS. ANDREA M. HOLLAND • LODGE 584 •

**MILWAUKEE** — The members of Lodge 584 sadly report the Dec. 9, 2023, passing of Sis. Andrea M. Holland, 78 of Chisholm, Minn., formerly of Side Lake, Minn., at Heritage Manor in Chisholm.

Sis. Holland was born Feb. 14, 1945, the daughter of the late Andrew and Mollie (Sterle) Franchak, at Chisholm Hospital, later known as Buchanan Nursing Home. She graduated from Chisholm High School, class of 1963.

Andrea attended Hibbing Junior College and the University of Minnesota, and graduated from Hibbing Hospital

School of Radiology. In 1997 she retired after 32 years from the Duluth Clinic-Adams in Chisholm as a radiologic technician. She had also worked for the Chisholm Mesaba Clinic, Hibbing Adams Clinic, Chisholm Memorial Hospital, Chisholm Adams Clinic, and St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth, Minn.

Andrea was united in marriage to Gary Holland on April 29, 1967, in St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Chisholm. They were married for 49 years when Gary passed.

A 60-year SNPJ member, she was also a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (AART).

She participated in a women's volleyball league, bocce ball leagues in Chisholm and Side Lake, and a women's bowling league. She loved her frequent casino trips and watching her grandchildren participate in various activities, and enjoyed having her family at the cabin on Little Sturgeon Lake. She also loved being in her garden and having the best looking lawn in Side Lake.

Andrea is survived by two daughters, Terri (Brian) Vajdl and Karen (Billy Jon) Butkovich, both of Chisholm; six grandchildren; a great-granddaughter; several in-laws; and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

In addition to her parents and husband, Gary, she was predeceased by her mother- and fathers-in-law; a sister-in-law; a brother-in-law; and many cousins and other relatives.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sis. Holland on Dec. 27 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Interment followed in Calvary Cemetery, Chisholm.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 584 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our condolences to Sis. Holland's family, relatives and friends on their loss.

### SIS. AGNES BOSTJANCIC • LODGE 138 •

**STRABANE, Pa.** — The members of Lodge 138 sadly report the Jan. 1, 2024, passing of Sis. Agnes “Aggie” Bostjancic, 104, at her home

in Strabane Woods with her family by her side. A 61-year SNPJ Lodge 138 member, Agnes outlived her SNPJ life insurance policy in October 2017, joining the ranks of the Society's Honorary Members.

Sis. Bostjancic was born March 8, 1919, in Strabane, a daughter of the late Michael F. and Gertrude Rhebar Tomsic. She lived her entire life in Strabane and attended Trinity High School.

Agnes was co-owner and operator of Bostjancic Beer Distributors from 1976 until 1989, and in her later years, after retirement, she worked for 17 years at McDonald's in Canonsburg, Pa., until she was 89 years old.

A faithful member of St. Oscar Romero Parish-St. Patrick Church and its Christian Mothers and Guild, she was also a member of SWU Branch 71, VFW Post 553, and KSKJ St. Jerome Lodge 153, all of Strabane; VFW Post 191 of Canonsburg; the Canonsburg Senior Citizens; and American Legion Post 902 Ladies Auxiliary, Houston, Pa.

On July 29, 1936, she married Joseph Bostjancic Jr. who passed away Feb. 26, 1960.

Left behind to cherish her memory are her devoted children, Joseph Bostjancic of Bluffton, S.C., Stanley (Sharon) Bostjancic of Eighty Four, Pa., and Virginia (Earl Hancher) of Washington, Pa.; her beloved grandchildren, Linda (Glen) Cowan, Michael (Courtney) Bostjancic, Scott (Kirsten) Bostjancic, Anthony (Anu) Rosello and Brad (Karolyn) Rosello; 11 great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Agnes was the last of her immediate family. Deceased, in addition to her husband and parents, are her sisters, Dorothy Lesko, Josephine Verholtz and Mary Pleskovich; and brothers Joseph, John, Frank and Michael Tomsic.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sis. Bostjancic on Jan. 6 in St. Oscar Romero Parish-St. Patrick Church, Canonsburg. Interment followed in St. Patrick Cemetery.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 138 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our sympathies to Sis. Bostjancic's family, relatives and friends on their loss.

## DEATHS REPORTED

For the month of January 2024

LODGE	NAME	DATE OF DEATH	CITY, STATE
A01	Jennie Schafers	11-29-2023	Pittsburgh, Pa.
2	Neil A. Tipton	11-11-2023	Peru, Ill.
2	Marilyn M. Resetich	11-13-2023	Silvis, Ill.
2	George A. Knafelc	11-26-2023	La Salle, Ill.
2	Rose A. Prey	11-27-2023	Oglesby, Ill.
2	Richard L. Nekrosius	12-12-2023	La Salle, Ill.
3	James E. Mikolic Sr.	12-04-2023	Johnstown, Pa.
5	Mary Podlogar	11-19-2023	Euclid, Ohio
6	Marcello Daris	07-13-2023	Canonsburg, Pa.
6	Edward A. Cetnarowski	12-03-2023	Pittsburgh, Pa.
6	Anthony J. Grandovic	12-16-2023	Coraopolis, Pa.
8	Anthony F. Pishkur	12-03-2023	Michigan City, Ind.
8	Patricia A. Kosich	12-25-2023	Fort Myers, Fla.
34	Sharon L. Speck Barcal	12-24-2021	St. Louis, Mo.
41	Debra A. D'Arrigo	12-05-2023	McMurray, Pa.
87	Leslie A. Murray	12-29-2023	Wolf Creek, Ore.
89	Paul F. Machak	06-09-2023	Ashland, Ore.
106	Thomas Marnich	11-30-2023	McKees Rocks, Pa.
126	Miranda R. Gulyash	10-19-2023	San Francisco, Calif.
142	Christine M. Kohli	12-29-2023	Geneva, Ohio
158	Ethel G. Kovach	12-17-2023	Mentor, Ohio
174	Nancy A. Rabic	12-17-2023	Whitney, Pa.
218	Betty Mooso	11-30-2023	Greeley, Colo.
225	Terry J. Snell	11-15-2023	Pittsburg, Kan.
257	Nancy A. Gorenshek	11-22-2023	Chagrin Falls, Ohio
257	Rita A. Grachanen	12-31-2023	Georgetown, Texas
518	Lester J. Appl	12-04-2023	San Diego, Calif.
564	Daniel J. Sandford	12-25-2023	Flint, Mich.
564	Sally A. Kuzniar	01-09-2024	Warren, Mich.
584	John M. Padgett	09-12-2023	Arvada, Colo.
584	Andrea M. Holland	12-09-2023	Side Lake, Minn.
584	Richard Bauman	12-10-2023	Cudahy, Wis.
584	Robert S. Pintar	12-14-2023	Cudahy, Wis.
643	Anthony F. Swead	05-05-2023	Warren, Ohio
643	Stephen Fabian	11-06-2023	Northfield, Ohio
665	Robert H. Gramc	07-20-2023	Pittsburgh, Pa.
665	Joseph Palumbo	09-14-2023	Mt. Lebanon, Pa.
677	Mark A. Tatangelo	10-04-2023	Clinton Twp., Mich.
715	Diane M. Reutzel	12-01-2023	Pittsburgh, Pa.
715	John A. Groll Jr.	01-04-2024	Pittsburgh, Pa.
776	Evelyn E. Betts	10-06-2023	Cranberry Twp., Pa.

KAREN A. PINTAR  
National Secretary/COO

## PROSVETA 2024 Publication Dates

### JANUARY 2024

<b>1</b>	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
14	(15)	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26
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### FEBRUARY 2024

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### MARCH 2024

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### APRIL 2024

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### MAY 2024

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### JUNE 2024

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### JULY 2024

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### AUGUST 2024

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### SEPTEMBER 2024

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### OCTOBER 2024

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### NOVEMBER 2024

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### DECEMBER 2024

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Publication dates are highlighted in black boxes; deadline dates are circled. The deadline for submissions is noon on the dates circled above. Submissions may be mailed to PROSVETA, 247 West Allegheny Road, Imperial, PA 15126; faxed to (724) 695-1555; e-mailed to [prosveta@snpj.com](mailto:prosveta@snpj.com); or submitted via the Publications section of the SNPJ website, [snpj.org](http://snpj.org).

ANNOUNCE IT

Lodge 449 member making the grade at Murray State University

**CICERO, Ill.** — SNPJ Lodge 449 member Zachary A. Stimach, 19, was named to the Murray State University Presidents List for the fall 2023 semester. A native of Forest View, Ill., Zach is majoring in engineering physics and currently maintains a 4.0 GPA. He plays percussion with the Murray Racer Band and was named Rookie Member of the Year at the annual band banquet. He is also a member of the Applied Engineering Club and competes in a sanctioned bowling league.



**ZACHARY STIMACH**, a member of Lodge 449 in Cicero, Ill., was named to the Murray State University Presidents List for the fall 2023 semester.

Zach, who is also an Eagle Scout, was “born into scouting.” Starting as a Little Scout Buddy, he followed in his brother’s footsteps, joining Cub Scouts Stickney Pack 137 in first grade. While a Cub Scout, he achieved two Catholic religious medals, Light of Christ and Parvuli Dei. Zach completed many activities as he moved through the Cub Scout ranks, earning the Arrow of Light. Crossing over to Berwyn Troop 32, he started climbing through the Boy Scouts ranks.

Visiting the Owasippe Scout Reservation every summer, Zach earned numerous merit badges and served as Scribe, Patrol Leader and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. He eventually completed National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) and Okpik (cold weather camping training), earning his ice cubes. He went on to staff NYLT once, and staffed Okpik three times. Zach earned two more religious emblems in scouting, Ad Altare Dei and Pope Pius XII. Having received both religious medals at the Cub Scout level and both at Scouts, he earned the Pillars of Faith Award.

Zach was voted into Order of the Arrow, the Scouting honor society, by his fellow scouts, joining OA Lodge Tak-hone where he was appointed chapter secretary. He served as Elangomat several times for incoming OA members, served as a ceremonialist, and eventually achieved the OA Brotherhood rank. He was also a participant on a trip to Philmont in New Mexico, one of the scouting high adventure camps, where he spent 12 days hiking in the mountains. He was awarded the Eagle Scout rank in December 2022.

Zach attended high school at Nazareth Academy in La Grange Park, Ill., where he performed in the band, bowled, and played football and volleyball. Having played percussion since fourth grade, he was a key member of the drum line, and a member of the Drama Club, Chess Club, Robotics Club and Anime Club.

Zach was a lineman on the Nazareth football team that won the IHSA Illinois State 5A Championship in 2022. A member of the first boys bowling team at Nazareth, he advanced to the ICCP Bowling Sectionals in individual competition.

A consistent honor roll student throughout high school, he was a member of the National Honor Society and Tri M Music Honor Society. At his class of 2023 graduation, Zach was awarded the Louis Armstrong Jazz Award and the Senior Scholar Athlete Award.

Zach has been an active member of SNPJ Lodge 449, attending Lodge meetings and activities. He has also participated in Chicago District Federation events, attending the annual Christmas parties and performing in the programs, and participating in the Federation’s annual Memorial Day services. He is looking forward to attending his first SNPJ Young Adult Conference this summer.

Loyalites Lodge 158 members warming up to spring

by DANIELLA VOLPE  
Lodge 158 Treasurer

**EUCLID, Ohio** — Happy spring, everyone! Although Punxsutawney Phil wasn’t totally right about the early spring, we’re still excited to see what the season has in store for us. Soon enough, the flowers will be blooming and it will be time to break out the shorts and sandals.

Even when it’s cold out, we here at Lodge 158 don’t stop working. We’re excited about everything we have going on in this upcoming year, so keep on the lookout for all of those updates.

First things first, however – we have some important dates to mention. First off, a

big happy birthday to Colleen Cleary on March 17.

Next, though a little further away, we want to make sure you get it marked in your calendars now: On June 9, the Miss SNPJ Pageant Commission is hosting their Family Fun Day picnic at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio. The theme is “Welcome to the Jungle;” and the picnic will include appearances by the Chardon Polka Band for entertainment, and Jungle Terry and his little critter friends. The Farm will offer a kid-friendly menu along with the Slovenian classics, kids’ games and activities, and fun for the whole family.

The picnic proceeds go directly to the Pageant Booster

Fund to help with the cost of running the Miss SNPJ Pageant, held in July during Slovenefest at the SNPJ Recreation Center in Enon Valley, Pa.

Speaking of picnics, the Loyalites Lodge will be hosting ours on Sunday, June 23. We want to keep this year’s theme a mystery, so be sure to keep up with us on Facebook, our website, and in *PROSVETA* for the unveiling later this year.

Another thing we want to celebrate is that we have many members who are not just Slovenian; we have a whole group of Irish ladies amongst us. On Feb. 17, the Celtic Nations Ladies Drill Team hosted a Night at the Races in order to

raise money for their upcoming marching season. We hear everyone in attendance had a great time, and they will be holding the event again next year. Keep up the good work, ladies!

We also want to remind all Lodge 158 young adults to please send in their letters of interest to Lodge Secretary Jan Smrdel in order to be considered for the Young Adult Conference, scheduled June 14-16. We want to see as many young adults as possible attend this year.

As always, we send our thoughts and prayers to all of our ill and deceased members and their families during these difficult times.

SNPJ members chase away winter at the Cleveland Kurentovanje Festival

by KARA MARUSZAK  
Lodge 142

**CLEVELAND** — In early February, SNPJ members took to the streets of Cleveland to scare away winter at the 12th annual Kurentovanje (Kurent) Festival and Parade at the Slovenian National Home on St. Clair. The weeklong Kurent event featured Slovenian cultural and culinary classes, and concluded with the main parade and festival.

This year SNPJ participated in the parade with two floats, and many SNPJ members could be seen volunteering, along the parade route, or on the dance floors.

The main SNPJ parade float was organized by Region 3 Vice President Don Srnick and featured Miss SNPJ 2024 Morgan Sinan, Lake County Commissioner John Plecnik, and a band of polka musicians. We are so glad Morgan was able to join the float along with her parents, Maury and Kathleen Sinan. It was their first Kurentovanje, and we

hope they will return for future celebrations!

I would also like to give a big shout-out to our musicians, Kathy Hlad, Bill Perko, Nancy Prudic, Patty Candela, Anthony Culkar and Don Srnick. Their merry polka music made the SNPJ float one of the most popular in the parade, with many parade-goers singing along to the traditional Slovenian tunes.

Following behind the main SNPJ float was the Lodge 142 float featuring a six-foot-tall inflatable dragon holding a heart. This inflatable pays homage to Ljubljana’s dragon mascot and Slovenia’s gingerbread Lectar hearts (*lectovo srce*). Lodge 142 members passed out candy along the parade route.

The weather was fantastic, especially considering it was February in Cleveland, and the festival had a great turnout. In fact, the turnout was so great that all the krofi sold out within the first hour of the event! Luckily, there



[Left] The SNPJ Lodge 142 float featured a six-foot-tall dragon, the symbol of Ljubljana.

[Below] The main SNPJ float, organized by Region 3 Vice President Don Srnick, carried Miss SNPJ 2024 Morgan Sinan along the parade route.



was still plenty of Slovenian sausage and delicious pastry by Wojtila’s Bakery.

Next year’s Kurent festival

and parade will be held March 1, and we invite all of our SNPJ Brothers and Sisters to participate.

SNPJ Membership Anniversaries  
March 2024

70-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
6	John M. Klemencic	223	Beverly A. Ficco
34	Shirley M. Schwindaman	564	Maryann C. Masser
138	Luis A. Scariot	643	Louella Friend
218	Evelyn Matkins	677	Mary M. Hommer
218	Charles W. Kranker		

60-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Gail B. Jones	559	David J. Plahuta
6	Patricia A. George	581	Shirley H. Bizzak
41	Kenneth M. Kukovich	584	John R. Schwab
87	Mary A. Bernath	584	Amalie Smole
138	Marianne Povich	643	Janice Niemczura
174	Donna L. Kelly	770	Eunice K. Randolph
174	Donna J. Thomas	770	Louisa A. Boyer
257	Rosemary Slusarczyk	A02	Barbara A. Babcock
559	Frances C. Rambow		

50-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Mark A. Plantan	257	Patrick F. Nicholson
2	Kathleen Mathias	274	Rex T. Magagnotti
3	Diane Felton	274	Cynthia M. Krancyc
3	Frank J. August	304	Jefrie J. Marcacci
3	Thomas E. Rován	304	Rebecca J. Jorden
5	Michelle A. Fuller	358	Sandra L. Chuck
6	Andrea A. Fedela	449	Robert H. Gregory
6	Sallie J. D’Ambrosio	449	Patricia A. Walker
6	Linda DePersis	559	Thom J. Culkar
6	Andrew J. Ferlic	564	Phillip M. Masser
6	Trudy L. Cassidy	584	Richard A. Novak
34	Carol M. Lamke	584	Julann Gebbie
41	John T. Smathers	584	Susan J. Kobeski
87	Cheryl A. De Paolis	603	Ronald G. Latin
87	Gina D. Gradisek	603	Paul J. Makarovich
89	Antoinette O. Domingue	604	David M. Hirsch
106	Amy F. Hartman	643	Linda L. Ciabrone
106	Robert R. Andresky	665	Linda M. Plesic
106	Michael L. Gruno	677	Judith A. Plesivec
120	Mariellen Plese	715	Janet M. Valasek
126	Patricia M. Perko	715	Dorothy J. Stevens
158	Joyce White	715	Ralph J. Belin
158	Andrew D. Martincic	749	Sharon J. O’Connor
158	Donald G. Wojtila	749	Dennis R. Bozic
158	Sandra J. Williams	770	William L. Gwin
158	Cynthia A. Moreiras	782	Timothy P. Jergel
174	Dennis M. Katawczik	782	Mary K. Abdulovic
218	Darlene B. Anderson		

National Athletic Board elections slated in March

SNPJ ATHLETIC BOARD  
FROM PAGE 1

**DISTRICT 6:** The states of Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin SNPJ National Athletic Board members receive \$325 per year for their services.

Candidates to the National Athletic Board can be nominated by any Lodge or Federation. The candidate need not be a member of the nominating Lodge, but they must be a member of a Lodge in the district they will be representing. Each Lodge or Federation may nominate only

one candidate.

To nominate a candidate for the SNPJ National Athletic Board, the Lodge or Federation must submit the candidate’s name, address and Lodge number to SNPJ Fraternal Director Courtney Koenig either via letter or e-mail to [ckoenig@snpj.com](mailto:ckoenig@snpj.com) by March 15. The athletic directors will be elected by the National Board at the March 22 meeting.

If you have any questions, please call the Home Office at 1-800-843-7675 or e-mail [ckoenig@snpj.com](mailto:ckoenig@snpj.com).

Heritage Center prepares for 2024 season opening

HERITAGE CENTER  
FROM PAGE 1

afternoon with our annual dance in the Heritage Pavilion featuring music by the Frank Stanger Orchestra alternating with the Western Pa. Button Box Club.

And let’s not forget Slovenefest, scheduled the week-

end of July 12-14... just a little over four months away now! Help spread the word about Slovenefest, the greatest Slovenian polka festival.

More information on plans for the Heritage Center Marketplace on the patio outside the museum will appear in upcoming articles.

April Button Box Bash offers a Circle 2 reunion

BUTTON BOX BASH  
FROM PAGE 1

National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame welcomes you to Cleveland’s biggest squeeze box event – featuring 50 accordionists, nationality dining and a polka pop-up shop – from 1 to 7 p.m.

The American Croatian Lodge is located at 34900 Lake Shore Boulevard in Eastlake, Ohio, just west of Rt. 91 (SOM Center Road). Admission is

\$15 the day of the event. Save \$3 with the purchase of a \$12 advance ticket through the Polka Hall of Fame. Guests age 18 and under admitted free of charge.

Contact the Polka Hall of Fame, 605 East 222nd Street in Euclid, Ohio, by phone at (216) 261-3263 or by e-mail to [PolkaShop@aol.com](mailto:PolkaShop@aol.com). The Polka Hall of Fame is open Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.

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82%... people who are under-insured

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# CAL Gorjup Open launches the SNPJ golf season

by RICK GORJUP (158)  
Cleveland Athletic League President

**CLEVELAND** — This year marks the 58th year of the Cleveland Athletic League (CAL) hosting a golf tournament, so don't miss out on a great day of fun and fraternalism!

We always have a great bunch of golfers, and with our CAL representatives, friends and volunteers, this year's outing should be among the best. The tournament is about 86 or so days away now, and we hope to have a big crowd. The winter has been very cold,

but with hardly any snow, so hopefully spring is right around the corner!

This year's CAL Don Gorjup Open Golf Tournament will be played at Rolling Green Golf Course in Huntsburg, Ohio, on Saturday, May 25. With a 9 a.m. shotgun start, we ask that you arrive at the course by 8:15 a.m. for check-in at the pavilion. Here's where you'll pick up your goodie bags and scorecards before heading out on the links. Hot dogs and pivo will be available at the turn, and a great dinner awaits at the 19th hole.

This is always a fun day, meeting old friends and making new ones. And remember, this year the beer, pop and bottled water are free – all day long!

The entry fee of \$90 for adults (\$80 for youth golfers) includes green fees, cart rental, prizes, a goodie bag, dinner, and a sandwich and beverage at the turn. Your friendly hostesses will again be stationed on the course to provide some libation and a toast to Don.

Since 2024 is our 58th year hosting the tournament, we'll have some extras to commemorate the anniversary. We hope

to see you this year, with all expectations of a great time for all.

The tournament entry form is published below. Please be sure to include your phone number and e-mail address on all entries in case we need to contact you.

Donations are coming in for our drawings, and we're planning a few surprises this year. So contact your golf buddies and enter early. As always, guests are welcome.

We hope to see you on a beautiful, sunny and warm Saturday, May 25.



The Easy Pick Ups team: [from left] Jamie Lee, Jeff Meyer, Sandi Donovan, Mary Donovan and Chris Meyer.

# Milwaukee area bowlers take to the lanes for the annual Verbick outing

by MARY DONOVAN (584)  
SNPJ District 6 Athletic Director

**MILWAUKEE** — The Verbick Fraternal Bowling Outing was held Jan. 20, and what an exciting day it was! A total of 12 teams competed this year, and so many people came out to cheer the bowlers on.

The teams included members of SNPJ, KSKJ, CFU and Sloga division of CFU. This continues to be a popular event for this fine group of fraternalists since all proceeds go toward the fraternal's scholarship funds. We held a 50/50 and prize drawings that were supported by so many.

Kudos to our volunteers, Eric Donovan, Jean Wucinski, Chris Carrol and Mike Carrol, for help selling the many drawing tickets. We kept them quite busy, and everyone was anxious to have an opportunity to participate and

share in the winnings. Thank you to all of the individuals and businesses that provided the fine drawing prizes.

There were many high scores notched, but none matched the 300 game rolled by Gordie Gunderson. All eyes were on him, but he didn't cave to the pressure. Congratulations to Gordie on a fine game!

It was great to see the many friends and former bowlers who came out. The jokes, the stories and, of course, the reminiscing were truly entertaining. As spoken by John Poklar, a fraternal friend who has passed, "A good time was had by all!"

Our thanks to everyone who participated. The outing is inked in for next year on the third weekend of January, again at Lucky Lanes. Thank you again – it truly was a wonderful time to see all!

# Help SNPJ save by reading PROSVETA online

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — In an effort to curb continually escalating postage rates, *PROSVETA* is asking all SNPJ members to evaluate the need of receiving the newspaper in its printed format. We're also asking all members to provide us with an active e-mail address, and to consider receiving an e-mail link to the online *PROSVETA* issues.

There are numerous benefits to receiving *PROSVETA* online. First of all, the issues are posted to the SNPJ website, *snpj.org*, a week or so prior to the publication date – no more waiting around for delivery.

Secondly, archived issues are also available on the website. Click on the *PROSVETA* archive link and you'll have

years worth of *PROSVETA* issues at your fingertips.

Third, and most importantly, by selecting to receive a *PROSVETA* e-mail reminder, you can help SNPJ save thousands of dollars in postage and printing expenses each year.

So what's your first step to helping *PROSVETA* whittle away at mounting expenses? Send us your e-mail address.

Simply e-mail [ksanders@snpj.com](mailto:ksanders@snpj.com) and include your name and the e-mail address at which you would like to receive the online issue reminder.

Still not sure? Do yourself a favor: Pay a visit to <https://snpj.org/membership/prosveta-publication/> and see for yourself the conveniences offered by the online *PROSVETA* issues.

# Tamburitzans concert coming to Ellwood City in March

submitted by  
PETER KUCAN (776)

**ELLWOOD CITY, Pa.** — The Tamburitzans (formerly, the Duquesne University Tamburitzans) will perform their new production, "Reflections," at 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 17, at Lincoln Junior-Senior High School, 501 Crescent Ave. in Ellwood City.

The concert is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ellwood

City Scholarship Fund. Tickets may be purchased online at [ellwoodtams.eventbrite.com](http://ellwoodtams.eventbrite.com) for \$30 (adult advanced reserved); tickets purchased at the door on the day of the performance will be \$35. Student tickets are priced at \$20.

Additionally, face to face ticket sales will be conducted at the Ellwood City Library, 415 Lawrence Ave., on Friday March 1, and on Saturday,



The Tamburitzans will perform their new production, "Reflections," on March 17 at Lincoln Junior-Senior High School in Ellwood City, Pa.

March 9, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Now in their 87th season, the Tamburitzans weave a tapestry of music, songs and dances from Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia and the

Ukraine, along with dances from the Alpine region and the Jewish culture. Audiences will be transported to folk celebrations during the two-hour production through intricate choreography, mesmerizing music and unique voices.

58<sup>th</sup> CAL Don Gorjup Open Golf Tournament  
May 25, 2024  
at Rolling Green Golf Club, Huntsburg, Ohio  
9 a.m. Shotgun Start

Check Entry:

Men ☐ Ladies ☐ Youth ☐

	Name	Lodge	Phone	Hdcp.
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The \$90 entry fee covers greens fees, cart, prizes, dinner, and sandwich and beverage at the turn. Youth entry fee is \$80.  
Return this form, along with entry fees, to:  
**Rick Gorjup**  
7180 Kory Ct., Concord, OH 44077-2221  
Phone: (440) 354-5001 [Home] or (440) 773-3233 [Cell]  
Make checks payable to  
**SNPJ Cleveland Athletic League (CAL)**  
ENTRY DEADLINE IS MAY 19, 2024  
The Home Office will verify all memberships. Complete tournament rules are available by contacting the SNPJ Fraternal Department, 247 West Allegheny Rd., Imperial, PA 15126

# PROSVETA Crossword VALENTINE'S DAY (#0224) solution

A	D	O	S		C	A	R			G	H	A	T		
S	A	V	E		H	U	G	E		T	R	E	F	A	
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F	E	R	T	I	L	I	T	I	T	Y		R	E	D	O
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O	N	Y	X	E	S				H	O	M	I	E	S	T
S	A	E			U	M	L	A	U	T		N	A	T	O
A	P	S	E	S		E	G	G		E	G	G	O	N	
K	E	E	P		C	A	E	S	A	R		L	A	G	
A	S	S	I	Z	E	S			V	A	L	E	T	S	
				L	O	P			P	H	O	T	O		
	A	D	E	N			C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E
S	C	O	P	E		A	O	N	E		L	I	A	R	
P	R	E	S	S		K	N	O	T		E	N	D	S	
A	E	R	Y			E	E	R			D	U	S	T	

The Smole family turned out en masse to enjoy the festivities of the Verbick Fraternal Bowling Outing.

[From left] Tim Donovan, Cary Donovan and Eric Donovan wind down after bowling.

# PROSVETA Crossword U.S. States (#0324) by StatePoint Media

## ACROSS

- Attired
- \*Alabama, for short
- Type of pit, at a concert
- \*Nevada's "biggest little city in the world"
- October birthstone
- Don't do this to words?
- Elusive Himalayan
- Poet Sandburg
- Come to pass
- \*Home of the Bourbon Trail
- Not us
- Winds to a ship captain
- \*Dish popular in the 50th state
- \*Largest state, by area
- Dick \_\_\_\_ of "Bewitched"
- Tombstone acronym
- Spews
- Succulent medicinal plant
- Cast member
- Greek "t"
- Gibson garnish
- Evade payment
- Like certain pentameter
- Lennon's wife
- Fashionable
- Barely audible words
- Casino's pull

- Bear down under
- Sound bounce-back
- \*a.k.a. Commonwealth
- Sing like Sinatra
- Not working
- Lymphatic swelling
- Flourishing
- Commotions
- Type of pitcher
- Not in port
- Chop off
- What the phone did

## DOWN

- Have a bawl
- Potato's soup partner
- Initial stake
- Happenings
- Lickety-split
- Shenanigans
- Friend in war
- \*State with longest freshwater shoreline
- It's enough?
- Pond gunk
- Joaquin Phoenix 2013 movie
- Relating to eye
- \*Michigan's "\_\_\_\_ City"
- Selfish one

- Pavlova's step
- Middle East natives
- Permissible
- In a fitting way
- Half a ticket
- Sober Ness
- Not a soul (2 words)
- Operatic voice
- \*Home to Arches National Park
- Tucker of "Modern Family"
- \*State with panhandle
- Round openings
- School of thought suffix
- Google search category
- Often-missed humor
- Hide craftsman
- Little one
- Lowest deck on a ship
- Timeline divisions
- His was a merry old soul
- Tiny bottle
- \*"Field of Dreams" movie setting
- Port in Yemen
- Tax pro
- Bit of work

The solution to puzzle #0324 will run in the April 1 issue.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
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59						60				61		
62						63				64		

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