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YEAR CXVII  
 ISSUE 5

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2024

USPS: 448-080  
 ISSN: 1080-0263

Save the dates and join in the excitement of

# 41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL Slovenefest

## July 12-14, 2024

hosted by the  
**SNPJ Recreation Center**  
 270 Martin Road • Enon Valley, PA 16120  
 Phone: 724-336-5180 • Toll-Free: 1-877-767-5732  
 e-mail: [snpj@snjrec.com](mailto:snpj@snjrec.com) • online schedule: [www.slovenefest.com](http://www.slovenefest.com)

Non-stop polka entertainment starting at 4 p.m. on Friday; noon on Saturday & Sunday  
**Food Trucks • Crafters Bazaar • Live Music** and featuring the  
**66<sup>th</sup> Miss SNPJ Pageant**

FEATURED IN  
**Pittsburgh Magazine**  
 AS ONE OF THE  
**"TOP 10 THINGS TO DO IN JULY"**

## And the winner is...

The \$100 winner of the first quarter drawing in the 2024 SNPJ Recommender Program:

**Claire Schmidt**  
 Lodge 225, Girard, Kan.

Congratulations, and thank you for participating!

## briefly

### New date, venue for the Nat'l. Bowling Tourney

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — As a reminder, there will be a change to the date and venue for this year's National Bowling Tournament. SNPJ has scheduled the 2024 National Bowling Tournament the weekend of Oct. 11-13. The tournament will be co-hosted by SNPJ Lodges 6 and 138. Stay tuned for more details. The entry form will be available in future *PROSVETA* issues and online.

I hope to see some familiar faces, and maybe even catch the attention of members who would like to bowl but haven't been able to participate in the past.

**COURTNEY KOENIG**  
 Fraternal Director

### Policy owners, register for the new SNPJ Portal

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — The Home Office staff encourages all SNPJ members and agents to register for access to the new online SNPJ Portal. The portal can be used by policy owners to review information about their SNPJ life insurance policies and annuities. Agents can use the portal to check on their existing business, pending policies and updates.

To register for the SNPJ Portal, you must access the SNPJ website, [snpj.org](http://snpj.org), and click on any of the "SNPJ Portal" links. You must be a policy owner or an agent to access the portal. Once enrolled for the SNPJ Portal, members can access policy information that Home Office staff cannot provide over the phone.

We hope you enjoy your new SNPJ Portal experience!

## THE DEADLINE

The next two *PROSVETA* issue dates are June 3 and July 1. All material must be received by noon on Monday, May 6, for the June 3 issue, and by Monday, June 17, for the July 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).

PERIODICAL MATERIAL



Photo submitted by JOANN KRANCE (729)

### Brushing Up On Those Driving Skills

SNPJ Silverstars Lodge 729 recently hosted an AARP Safe Driver Course at the Yukon (Pa.) Slovenian Hall. The Lodge had hosted a course in the past, and members had requested another. Besides providing a refresher course on state motor vehicle laws, the instructor reviewed new construction (such as roundabouts), driving skills, and new vehicle safety equipment. As a perk, course attendees can also receive a discount of at least five percent on their car insurance premiums.

## Catch some baseball action in June with SNPJ Region 3

by KEN ANDERSON (677)  
 SNPJ District 5 Athletic Director

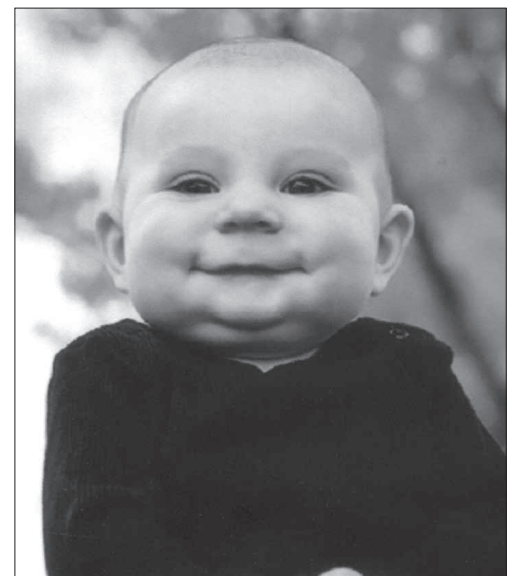
**DETROIT** — We invite all SNPJ members and guests to join us for a baseball double-header at Jimmy John's Field in Utica, Mich., on Saturday, June 29.

The gates open at 4:30 p.m. and the ballgame starts at 5:30. Everyone in attendance will enjoy a night of fun, entertainment and baseball, along with a visit from our special guests from Pennsylvania, Miss SNPJ 2024 Morgan Sinan and her parents, SNPJ Region 1 Vice President Maury Sinan and his wife, Kathleen.

You'll start your day with an all-American BBQ buffet that includes premium hot dogs, slow-roasted pulled chicken, pasta salad, coleslaw, baked beans, potato chips and cookies. The meal will be served from 4:30 to 6. Each guest will receive unlimited soft drinks, lemonade, iced tea and water.

Game perks include free parking in Lot A, seating in the party patio area, and a welcome message on the scoreboard. Kids

SEE REGION 3 BASEBALL  
 ON PAGE 13



### Raedan A. Larsen

Born June 15, 2023  
 Helper, Utah, Lodge 689

Lodge 689 welcomes Raedan Albert Larsen as the newest addition to the Lodge. Raedan is the son of Tasia Anne (689) and Mark Larsen, grandson of Tamara Anne Gray (689), and great-grandson of Sharon Klarich (689) and the late Albert Klarich. We welcome Raedan to the Society and extend our best wishes to his entire family.

## Polka Music Festival & Craft Show opens the season at the SNPJ Farm

by DON SRNICK (158)  
 SNPJ Region 3 Vice President  
 SNPJ Farm Board Vice President

**KIRTLAND, Ohio** — Fraternal greetings, Brothers and Sisters of the SNPJ. Please join us at the SNPJ Farm, 10946 Heath Road in Kirtland, for our fourth annual Polka Music Festival & Craft Show on Saturday, May 18, sponsored by Monreal Srnick Funeral Home. The gates will open at 11 a.m., the craft show

runs from 11 until 5 p.m., and the music will be performed from noon until 9 p.m. We have 13 polka bands and two specialty bands performing this year (check out my Facebook page, Sue and Don Srnick, for the band schedule), and more than 30 craft vendors.

The ticket price is \$10 in advance, \$15 at the gate. Guests age 10 and under admitted free. The

SEE SNPJ FARM FESTIVAL  
 ON PAGE 10

## A busy summer ahead for the SNPJ Heritage Center

by KATHY PAULENICH (776)  
 SNPJ Heritage Center Director

**BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa.** — Summer is just around the corner, and the SNPJ Recreation Center is waking up from the winter season.

You'll want to take a ride down the entrance road, Martin Road, to view the cabins on the left side of the road and the remodeling being done. It's looking good!

Also take note of the new fire pit in the former fire pit location near the lake. The SNPJ Heritage Center hired a landscaping company to install the brick fire pit in memory of the late Kevin Richards. As many of you know, Kevin would play his guitar and sing around the fire

on many a night at the Rec Center during Young Adult Conference weekends, Family Weeks, and other special events. We sure do miss him!

Let's look at all the events to participate in this spring and summer that the Heritage Center will be involved in. One of our favorite events is the European Union (EU) open houses of the embassies in Washington, D.C. This takes place Saturday, May 11, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Our committee will be represented by Mary Jo Hartman, Kristina Hartman Lickert, Patty Candela and Ed Robich at the Slovenian Embassy. They will be displaying our traveling museum of Slovenian artifacts. Committee members enjoy talking about their love of

Slovenia since they have all traveled there, as well as their love of SNPJ, the SNPJ Recreation Center and Slovenefest.

The following Saturday, May 18, several committee members will be taking gift shop items to sell at the Polka Music & Craft Festival at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio. This has become a very big event with more than 30 crafters selling their wares and 15 different musical groups performing on two different stages. The doors open at noon. You don't want to miss this great event!

The Heritage Center museum and gift shop

SEE HERITAGE CENTER SUMMER  
 ON PAGE 8

follow SNPJ on Facebook!

Make [snpj.org](http://snpj.org) your first stop for SNPJ information on the go. Scan the code to get started.



# PROSVETA

ENLIGHTENMENT

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**NATIONAL SECRETARY/COO**  
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**NATIONAL TREASURER/CFO**  
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website: [www.snpjrec.com](http://www.snpjrec.com)  
e-mail: [snpj@snpjrec.com](mailto:snpj@snpjrec.com)

# Westmoreland Fed Pretty in Pink benefit enters its 13<sup>th</sup> year

by LOIS DENNING (41)  
Westmoreland Fed Treasurer

**YUKON, Pa.** — The Westmoreland County Federation of SNPJ Lodges is pleased to announce the 13th year of our Pretty in Pink fundraiser. This benefit will be held Sunday, June 23, at our beautiful Yukon Slovenian Hall from 2 to 6 p.m.

Back by popular demand, Polka Classics will be providing the music. These talented individuals have been entertaining us for more than 40 years, performing with numerous other musicians. You can listen to polkas, waltzes, slow songs and oldies, or sing along to all the old and new selections.

They do take requests!

Our Slovenian kitchen will be brimming with the flavors and aromas of our cuisine, serving all the traditional dishes: Slovenian klobase, pierogies, Slovenian beans, roast beef, potica and Kremšnita (Lake Bled Cake). Join us at the bar as we lift our glasses of wine and beer to toast this event.

Last but not least, we will also be holding our basket drawings and a 50/50 drawing. More than 40 gift baskets were donated last year, along with numerous door prizes. These baskets included a car detailing package from Smail Auto Group,

lottery tickets, golf packages from Madison Golf Club, wine baskets and gift cards.

If you would like to donate a basket or provide a monetary donation, please contact me at (412) 554-7404 or mail your check to 40 Peters Rd., Greensburg, PA 15601.

Our mission began 13 years ago following my second cancer diagnosis. A few Lodge members had been on the same pathway of receiving chemo, having surgery and not being able to work. While fighting this battle, you worry about paying your bills and getting back to a normal life again.

Many helping hands were working behind the scenes to provide gift cards for necessary items such as gas, groceries and essentials. This assistance was provided anonymously. Thank you to those individuals for their generosity!

One foundation, the Karla Nease Foundation, was a huge lifesaver for me, helping with utilities. To this day, they still aid local cancer patients – as we do, anonymously – to help them maintain their lives as they fight to get back on their feet.

Please bring a friend to this well-deserved fundraiser and make a difference in the life of a cancer patient!

# August picnic date next on the Lodge 786 event calendar

by TERESA KOCI  
Lodge 786 Secretary/Treasurer

**ORANGE COUNTY, Calif.** — We are not Slovakian; we are Slovenians!

We educated the patrons at a new Orange County restaurant, Copenhagen Corner, owned and operated by Mona and Fred, immigrants from Denmark, which was the setting for the April 6 Lodge 786 meeting. If you are in the Laguna Niguel, Calif., area, stop in for a meal as they serve their delicious and authentic Danish and German flavors.

Orange Coast Lodge 786 held their meeting at Copenhagen Corner speckled with music from our very own president, Fred Mlakar. We met at 2 p.m., thinking this wouldn't be a busy time for the restaurant, but the owners' guess was wrong – the place was packed! Once Fred pulled out his button box, the patrons howled, enjoying the traditional Slovenian tunes. The owners were dancing in the kitchen and from table to table. A good time was had by everyone in the restaurant.

Our next Lodge meeting and social event will be held Sunday, Aug. 11, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at The Duck Club of Irvine's San Joaquin Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary. We have the clubhouse, barbeque, and outdoor picnic areas reserved this year.

This is an event for all ages! This beautiful wildlife sanctuary includes the rustic Duck House, where our meeting will be held. Amenities include a covered picnic/barbeque area, a large grass area for the kids to play, the Audubon house, and 12 miles of walking trails where visi-



Lodge 786 President **FRED MLAKAR** played his accordion at Copenhagen Corner restaurant, much to the delight of the patrons.

tors can see more than 200 bird species. Parking, restrooms and a picnic area are all close and easily accessible.

Attendees are encouraged to take a look at the website for sanctuary details and directions: <https://www.irwd.com/san-joaquin-marsh/the-duck-club>.

We will have a brunch potluck starting at 10 a.m. and hold the meeting at 11. The Lodge will provide the meat, beverages and paper supplies. The sanctuary opens early, so consider coming for a morning walk around the sanctuary trails as early as 8 a.m. to work up a brunch appetite and beat the heat. Musicians are welcome to bring their instruments to provide entertainment inside the clubhouse.

In addition, save the date of Sunday, Nov. 24, at 11:30 a.m. for an early Lodge Christmas party at Laguna Village Clubhouse in Laguna Hills, Calif. We will hold a meeting, then enjoy lunch, music, a visit from Santa, and more fun. This clubhouse is a newly selected venue with ample, easy-to-access parking. Thanks to Cathy Udovch for arranging our use of this clubhouse. More details will be forthcoming later this year, so stay tuned!

Be sure to RSVP prior to these events to Lodge Secretary Teresa Koci by e-mail to [teresamkoci@gmail.com](mailto:teresamkoci@gmail.com), or by calling/texting (949) 246-1983.



Lodge 786 members at Copenhagen Corner restaurant: [rear table, from left] **FRED MLAKAR, KEN KOCI, ARNIE KOCI, JEAN KOCI, MARCIA LEATHERS, DESIREE HOLLAND, CHRISTI GOTTDANK, ADAM GOTTDANK, MIKE BAJC**, [front table, from left] **DON MILEK, ARCELIA ZEPEDA**, and Lodge recording secretary **MARIE BAJC**.

# Something wild promised for second annual Family Fun Day at the SNPJ Farm

by KARA MARUSZAK (142)  
Miss SNPJ Pageant Commission

**KIRTLAND, Ohio** — Calling all adventurers... The Miss SNPJ Pageant Commission invites you to its second annual Family Fun Day on Sunday, June 9, at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland. This year's theme is "Welcome to the Jungle" and we will certainly have the fun and games!

The doors open at noon and the renowned Chardon Polka Band will entertain the crowd with their high-energy polkas from 1 to 5 p.m. Our younger guests will enjoy jungle-themed crafts from 1 to 3 p.m., followed by Jungle Terry and his assortment of interesting and exotic critters at 3 p.m.

For those feeling lucky, sideboards and drawings will be available throughout the day. And we can't forget about the food! The fantastic Farm Kitchen Crew is providing our favorite Slovenian and American foods

starting at noon, so get there early to enjoy klobase, krofe and haluski. The food menu will also include chicken tenders, hot dogs, and coleslaw. The picnic will conclude at 6 p.m.

Family Fun Day has turned into a wonderful family event with all proceeds benefiting the Miss SNPJ Booster Fund. We are excited that Miss SNPJ 2024 Morgan Sinan will be in attendance. All former Miss SNPJs are invited to attend and will receive free admission.

It was wonderful seeing so many youth enjoying the SNPJ Farm last year, and we encourage you to bring your family and friends. Admission is \$8, and all kids age 16 and under are admitted free of charge. As a reminder, the SNPJ Farm is a cash-only venue.

Be sure to follow "Miss SNPJ" on Facebook to stay updated on the event. We look forward to seeing you there!

# You can 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](http://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.

## 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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247 W. Allegheny Road  
Imperial, PA 15126-9774  
e-mail: [prosveta@snpj.com](mailto:prosveta@snpj.com)

# Up-and-Coming...

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

- MAY 18 .....Fourth annual Music Festival & Craft Show at the SNPJ Farm, Kirtland, Ohio. Features 15 polka bands and more than 30 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 9 .....SNPJ Silverstars Lodge 729 Indoor Picnic at the Yukon, Pa., Slovenian Hall. Music by Garrett Tatano, 2-6 p.m. Admission \$10.
- 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.
- JUNE 29 .....SNPJ Region 3 doubleheader baseball game and picnic dinner at Jimmy John's Field, Utica, Mich. Game time is 5:30 p.m.; tickets are \$32 per person. Contact Ken Anderson at (248) 808-2185 for tickets.
- JULY 6 .....SNPJ Lodge 643 picnic at Tod Park, Lawrence Ave. in Girard, Ohio. Music by the Anthony Culkar-Wayne Golob Band, noon-3 p.m. Admission \$5. For information contact Ray Kovac at (330) 824-2154 or e-mail [raykov29@aol.com](mailto:raykov29@aol.com).
- JULY 12-14..... The 41st Slovenefest and the 66th Miss SNPJ Pageant at the SNPJ Recreation Center. For additional information phone the Recreation Center toll-free at 1-877-767-5732.

# Slovene National Benefit Society National Board Minutes

## Meeting held March 22, 2024, at the SNPJ Home Office, Imperial, Pa.

### Friday, March 22: Morning Session

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. by President Joseph EVANISH with 14 National Board members present and one Young Adult Representative present by phone.

The Board stood to extend their fraternal greetings.

With no objections, the Chair appointed Vice Chairmen Bro. Fred Mlakar and Bro. Maury Sinan.

The Time of Sessions are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with lunch from 12:15 p.m. to 1 p.m. Approved on a motion made by Sis. Tina RIGLER, second by Sis. Joanna BAKER.

Bro. Richard HERVOL motioned, second by Bro. Roger CLIFFORD, to approve the Order of Business. Motion approved.

A motion was made by Bro. CLIFFORD, second by Bro. HERVOL, to ratify the minutes of the semiannual meeting of the National Board on Sept. 22, 2023. Motion approved.

President EVANISH welcomed Bro. Terry Champ, CIO, to the National Board meeting upon approval by the Board with a voice and no vote.

### National President's Report March 2024

Fraternal greetings, Brothers and Sisters. Welcome to our semiannual National Board meeting as we report and discuss the operation of our fraternal organization. We look forward to a positive and informative meeting with a valuable exchange of ideas for the benefit of the Society.

#### Marketing

For the year 2023 the Society issued a total of 316 policies. The life insurance face amount for the year totaled \$6,166,891. The life insurance in force is now \$248,070,232. There were 203 new members enrolled during the year, compared to 222 the previous year. Annuity premium increased to \$8,564,328 for 2023, compared to \$5,437,038 in 2022.

The Sales Department is managed by Marketing Manager Gina Wise. Sales and Marketing Associate Kayla Rennie provides support to agents, members and potential members, reporting to Gina. In August, the first-year rates for SNPJ annuities were increased in response to the sustained higher yields being experienced in the market.

Gina continues to write the monthly PROSVETA insurance column "We've Got You Covered." There is a consistent flow of insurance and annuity information and promotion posted online and communicated by other means. The department regularly communicates with our agents and continues to promote SNPJ through social media, enhancing the Society's image and presence.

The Home Office converted to the new policy administration system on Sept. 1. This was a successful transition which encompassed much work and preparation with the staff. The process was led by COO Karen Pintar and CIO Terry Champ.

Complementing the new system was the introduction of a new policy view portal which was made available in late September. This is a more robust portal which agents and members are now utilizing.

#### Fraternal Department

Fraternal Director Courtney Koenig successfully completed a full cycle of fraternal events during this period, having started in early February 2023.

The activity portion of the Lodge Bonus Program continued in 2023. Lodges that sponsor and report on at least four activities, one of which is a community service or charitable benefit project, are designated as a Gold Activity Lodge and receive a \$300 reward. Lodges that sponsor and report on at least two activities are designated as a Silver Activity Lodge and receive a \$200 reward.

Congratulations to the following Lodges for earning the Gold Level for Activity in 2023, thus earning a reward of \$300: Lodge 1, Chicago; Lodge 2, La Salle, Ill.; Lodge 6, Sygan, Pa.; Lodge 8, Chicago; Lodge 34, Indianapolis; Lodge 106, Imperial, Pa.; Lodge 138, Strabane, Pa.; Lodge 158, Euclid, Ohio; Lodge 218, Denver; Lodge 223, Greensburg, Pa.; Lodge 225, Girard, Kan.; Lodge 304, San Francisco; Lodge 449, Cicero, Ill.; Lodge 518, Melvindale, Mich.; Lodge 559, Chicago; Lodge 576, Cleveland; Lodge 581, St. Marys, Pa.; Lodge 603, Samsula, Fla.; Lodge 677, Detroit; Lodge 715, Universal, Pa.; Lodge 721, Aliquippa, Pa.; Lodge 723, Fontana, Calif.; Lodge 729, Yukon, Pa.; Lodge 745, Grass Valley, Calif.; Lodge 776, Borough of SNPJ, Pa.; Lodge 782, Glenshaw, Pa.; Lodge 786, Orange County, Calif.; and Lodge A01, Sewickley, Pa.

Congratulations to the following Lodges for earning the Silver Level for Activity in 2023, thus earning a reward of \$200: Lodge 564, Detroit; Lodge 689, Helper, Utah; and Lodge 771, Hillsville, Pa.

All Lodges will receive a Lodge Activity Reporting Form in the Fall of 2024, to be completed and returned by Jan. 15, 2025.

The Miss SNPJ Pageant Commission did a great job hosting the Miss SNPJ Pageant during Slovenefest this past July. Fraternal Director Courtney Koenig managed the program very efficiently. There were five contestants, with Morgan Sinan, a member of Lodge 782 in Glenshaw, Pa., being crowned Miss SNPJ. Morgan was also named Miss Activity. Miss Talent was Anna Mack (138); Cara Fabian (218) was named Miss Fraternalism.

SNPJ Family Week was also successful this past summer. The SNPJ Recreation Center staff did great job managing a fun weekend for all of the families that participated.

National SNPJ Days held Labor Day weekend saw good participation in the National Balina Tournament and National Bags Tournament. The National Golf Tournament also took place. The Athletic Board members, tournament leaders and volunteers made these tournaments successful.

For the 2023 National Golf Tournament, played at Bedford Trails Golf Course, there were six men's teams, 31 individual men, and four individual women competing, resulting in a Society remuneration of \$413.

The National Balina Tournament hosted 15 men's teams and 11 women's teams, resulting in a remuneration of \$728. The National Beanbag Toss Tournament had 22 co-ed teams and seven women's teams competing, resulting in a remuneration of \$406.

Based on limited participation, the SNPJ Athletic Board decided to move the National Bowling Tournament from the early May date, which has been held in recent years near the Recreation Center,

to October and be hosted at the Lodge 138 and Lodge 6 bowling alleys. It is felt that there would be more participation with it being held during the bowling season. This change will take place in 2024.

The Fraternal Department is very grateful for the hard work and dedication of the many members who volunteer and participate in our programs. It is through this commitment that our fraternal programs are so successful. We also thank the SNPJ Recreation Center management and staff for helping to make some of these programs so beneficial to our members.

#### Publications

The SNPJ news source, the PROSVETA publication, is designed and managed by Editor Jay Sedmak. PROSVETA, which remains a monthly publication, is also available online. At present, approximately 975 members receive e-mail notifications that the current PROSVETA issue is available online. We certainly appreciate the contributions from our scribes who promote and report on SNPJ activities and events in their respective areas.

Jay completed the 2024 Miss SNPJ calendar during this period. Along with the calendar, he also designed the Miss SNPJ Pageant brochures that will be mailed to all eligible female members (ages 18 to 28) in March/April 2024.

Throughout the period, Jay started the preliminary promotional work for Slovenefest, updating the flyers, the sponsor invitations and the online Slovenefest performance schedule, as well as the flyers and forms required for the "Make It, Bake It, Grow It" Crafters Bazaar.

The five SNPJ websites (snpj.org, snpjrec.com, alpineroom.com, slovenefest.com and snpjheritage.org) continue to be hosted and supported by 3Seed Marketing, Design & Interactive. Jay updates and revises the websites on a regular basis.

#### Industry

SNPJ keeps involved and updated with the fraternal industry through the network of local, state and national trade association affiliates. The Executive Committee participates with the Fraternal Societies of Greater Pittsburgh (FSGP), the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance (PFA), and the American Fraternal Alliance (the Alliance).

I regularly attend the FSGP luncheon meetings which are held throughout the fall, winter and spring. These meetings include officers and representatives from several fraternal headquarters or having a presence in Western Pennsylvania.

In October I attended the PFA Annual Meeting. Pennsylvania has the largest and most active state alliance because of it being the largest fraternal benefit society locale. Presentations included topics of volunteerism, actuarial, insurtech, economy, asset management, employment law trends, and insurance regulation updates.

The Alliance Executive Summit meeting took place in person in September, which I attended with the Executive Committee. This meeting gives us the opportunity to network with our fraternal benefit society peers, receiving valuable industry information. We received an Alliance industry and advocacy update, along with presentations from LIMRA on insurance and annuity trends. Other topics included innovation, rebranding, governance, Covid mortality, and economic update.

The Alliance hosted a Pittsburgh Lunch and Learn event in July, which I attended. This involves updates from the Alliance, as well as several roundtable discussions with those participating.

SNPJ is a member of the Life Insurance Council (LIC), which is part of LOMA, serving the small to midsize sector. I attended the LIC CEO Forum in August. This forum provides valuable information and an opportunity to network with peers. The Alliance supports the LIC with registration discounts. I will be joining the LIC Advisory Board in 2024.

#### Slovenia

SNPJ maintains a good relationship with our Slovenian dignitaries. This includes the Consul General's Office in Cleveland (Consul General Alenka Jerak) and the Embassy in Washington, D.C. We also work closely with the Pennsylvania Honorary Consul in Pittsburgh, Petra Mitchell. Both attended Slovenefest.

Dignitaries from the embassy came to Slovenefest in July. We were honored to receive Minister Plenipotentiary of Economic Affairs Bojan Skoda, and Minister Counselor of Counselor Affairs Marko Rancigaj.

On Sept. 23 I was honored to meet Mr. Matej Arčon, Minister for Slovenians Abroad, who was visiting Cleveland from Slovenia. This visit and meeting was hosted by Consul General Alenka Jerak.

Slovenia experienced severe flooding in August 2023. SNPJ decided to make a \$5,000 donation for flood relief through the Slovenian Red Cross.

#### Conclusion

The Home Office management and staff are a dedicated group of people who work hard for the Society, supporting our membership on both the business and fraternal sides. We also appreciate the dedication of our Lodge officers for their contribution to the success of the Society.

The Society is fortunate to have an experienced COO and CFO. National Secretary/COO Karen Pintar and National Treasurer/CFO Robert Lawrence continue to do an excellent job for the SNPJ.

Executive Assistant Peggy Cushman continues to do a good job supporting the Executive Committee, handling regular projects and duties. She has been exceptional in taking on additional duties as necessary.

We greatly appreciate the dedication of our National Board. This dedication is always important in contributing to the success of the Society. Maintaining a spirit of fraternalism while taking a professional approach gives the SNPJ a positive image while providing great service to our members.

Fraternally,

JOSEPH C. EVANISH, FLMI  
National President/CEO

#### National President's Report

President EVANISH remarked on his report regarding the closing of the sale on the Lodge 245 property on March 1, 2024; stated that there is a lot of communication from the Marketing Department going out to members and agents, and an increase in social media activity; and reported on the Fraternal Director activities and the Athletic Board decision to move the National Bowling Tournament to be held in October and co-sponsored by Lodges 6 and 138.

Questions on the report by Bro. Maury SINAN, Sis. Tracey ANDER-

SON and Sis. RIGLER. A motion was made by Bro. HERVOL, second by Bro. Jason CADEZ, to approve the report. Motion approved.

### National Secretary's Report for the period July 1 through Dec. 31, 2023

Fraternal greetings, Brothers and Sisters, and welcome to the semi-annual meeting of the SNPJ National Board.

The following report relates to the activities and business conducted through the office of the National Secretary for the period shown above. Additional information is included, where appropriate, for the entire year 2023.

#### Personnel

At the end of December 2023, the Home Office employs 14 full-time employees, including the Executive Committee, and one part-time employee as the Fraternal Director.

#### Insurance Administration

We were fortunate during this past year to add two full-time employees to the Insurance Administration area. One individual was hired for processing cash surrenders and other policy services related duties, and the other was hired for the processing of death claims and other policy services related duties. Both are doing very well in their assigned positions, and we look forward to working with them in the years ahead.

Insurance Administration was kept very busy during this six-month period preparing for, testing and verifying the upgraded insurance administration system. It required the efforts of every member of the group to ensure that a smooth and accurate transition of data was completed on schedule.

They also tested the new SNPJ Portal that allows our members and agents to access their policy/annuity information. The portal became operational in September, and we have the ability to work with the Marketing Department to provide a variety of information in the portal.

#### Information Technology

We were very pleased that a little less than one year after we signed a contract with our insurance software provider to upgrade our insurance administration system, the system went live on Sept. 1, 2023, and was fully operational when we opened for business after Labor Day weekend.

It certainly took a lot of time, work and effort by a number of individuals to make this happen, and we are grateful to our managers and employees, as well as the project team from our software provider, who allowed this to come to fruition.

After the verification of data by CIO Terry Champ, myself, and National Treasurer/CFO Bob Lawrence, we were confident that the cutover from the old to the new system was a success. We had part of the project team from our software provider in our office, as well as our CIO the week following the cutover, to be available to our Insurance Administration staff for any questions regarding the processes and/or results on the new system. There were no major issues reported during this time.

In addition to the packaged programs that are part of the new administration system, there were a number of custom projects completed by CIO Terry Champ during this period. He developed these programs over the years to provide information that is used by a fraternal benefit society, but not necessarily in the insurance world, such as member awards, Lodge and member listings, PROSVETA mailing files, just to name a few. A number of these programs had to be redone to work within the new system and custom code handed over to the software provider.

As we move forward, the contributions from the CIO have been very valuable in providing guidance and information regarding the processes in the new system. As Terry Champ is a programmer, he can determine if there are issues with the system or the user prior to having to reach out to the software provider for guidance. This has saved valuable time, resources and cost associated with troubleshooting.

#### Lodges and Lodge Secretaries

As of Dec. 31, 2023, there are 68 Lodges. During this last six-month period there were two mergers that occurred: SNPJ Lodge 254, Bon Air, Pa., merged into SNPJ Lodge 174, Kraysn, Pa.; and SNPJ Lodge 245, Lawrence, Pa., merged into SNPJ Lodge 6, Sygan, Pa. We thank the officers and members of all Lodges involved in these transfers for their assistance with a smooth transition of membership.

The top five Lodges in New Members for the year 2023 are:

Lodge	City/State	New Members
6	Sygan, Pa.	30
106	Imperial, Pa.	28
31	Sharon, Pa.	19
158	Euclid, Ohio	19
715	Universal, Pa.	18

The top five Lodges in Membership are:

Lodge	City/State	Total Members	Ins. in Force
138	Strabane, Pa.	2,139	\$20,488,264
6	Sygan, Pa.	1,852	\$21,970,732
584	Milwaukee	1,335	\$20,067,217
158	Euclid, Ohio	1,291	\$11,072,223
106	Imperial, Pa.	1,181	\$12,908,240

#### Membership

On Dec. 31, 2023, the active membership of the Society is:

Adult	26,511
Youth	1,600
Total Members	28,111

This is a decline of 653 members for the year 2023.

#### Membership Statistics

Members as of Jan. 1, 2023	28,764
Increase by:	
New members	203
Reinstated	11
Total Increase	214
Decrease by:	
Deaths	400
Cash Surrenders	252

**NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT**  
CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Expired .....	77
Lapsed .....	19
Canceled .....	52
Matured .....	34
Suspended - Maturity .....	28
Suspended - Death .....	5
Total Decrease .....	867
Members as of Dec. 31, 2023 .....	28,111

**Insurance in Force**

**Life Insurance**

As of Dec. 31, 2023, we have 30,823 life insurance policies representing \$242,138,596 of insurance in force.

Life Policies on Jan. 1, 2023 .....	31,564
Increase by:	
Issued and Paid .....	170
Reinstatement .....	8
Total Increase .....	178
Decrease by:	
Cancel After issue .....	23
Death .....	472
Cash Surrender .....	240
Lapse .....	32
Matured .....	70
Expired .....	82
Total Decrease .....	919
Life Policies as of Dec. 31, 2023 .....	30,823

**Annuities**

Annuity contracts as of Jan. 1, 2023 .....	3,817
Increase by:	
Issued and Paid .....	149
Total Increase .....	149
Decrease by:	
Cancel After Issue .....	3
Matured .....	4
Surrender .....	188
Death Claims .....	156
Total Decrease .....	351
Annuity contracts as of Dec. 31, 2023 .....	3,615

**A&H Policies**

A&H Policies on Jan. 1, 2023 .....	2,329
Increase by:	
Reinstatement .....	6
Total Increase .....	6
Decrease by:	
Expired .....	127
Death Claims .....	106
Total Decrease .....	233
A&H Policies on Dec. 31, 2023 .....	2,102

**Fraternal Activities**

I continue to serve as president of SNPJ Lodge 6.

In July I once again handled the passes for Slovenefest and assisted in various areas for the weekend.

In September, our Executive Committee attended the Alliance Executive Summit held in Oakbrook, Ill. There were a number of interesting workshops and a variety of speakers and topics related to the industry. At the end of the month I assisted with the first Jim Curl Memorial No-Tap Tournament held at the Sygan Bowling Center. This event was put together by Bro. Greg Curl and family, and Bro. John Baselj and family as a tribute to the late Bro. Jim Curl and to raise money for the Bowling Center equipment.

In October I attended the Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance annual meeting with fellow executives Joe Evanish and Bob Lawrence. The meeting was held in Erie, Pa., and there were a number of good speakers on topics related to insurance, fraternalism and regulation.

I continue to attend the FSGP luncheons when possible and participate in Pennsylvania Fraternal Alliance phone meetings and committees.

**Conclusion**

I was very glad to bring our computer upgrade process to its conclusion during this past year. All of this would have been much, much more difficult without the expert advice and hard work of CIO Terry Champ. A great effort was put forth by him and by our entire team from Insurance Administration to make this a successful project.

Thanks to our Home Office staff and managers for the excellent work they provide for our members and secretaries.

This past November marked 30 years for me as National Secretary of our wonderful Society. I have been very glad to work along with such dedicated professionals and fraternalists as Brothers Evanish and Lawrence over these many years.

I look forward to a productive National Board meeting. Best wishes. Fraternaly,

**KAREN A. PINTAR**, FLMI, CCP, AIAA  
National Secretary/COO

**National Secretary's Report**

Sis. Karen PINTAR reported on the successful upgrade to a new insurance administration system in September, remarked on the ongoing work that she and the CIO continue to do with a team at the software provider, and remarked on the custom programs that Bro. Champ had written over the years and converted to be used on the upgraded system.

The motion was made by Bro. Fred MLAKAR, seconded by Sis. RIGLER, to approve the report. Motion approved.

**National Treasurer's Report  
March 2024**

Fraternal greetings, Brothers and Sisters.

The year 2023 was an eventful year for the business operations of the Society. First was the migration of the insurance administration software to a new software system. Second, the National Board approved the termination of the employees retirement pension plan. Due to the spike in market yields over the past 18 months, the timing was beneficial to divest from that liability. Additionally, several plans were approved for cabin and other facility upgrades at the Society-owned Recreation Center, and for a project designed to enable future cost savings. The year 2023 also brought on challenges as short-term market yields made short maturity investment

vehicles very attractive to members and potential investors. This caused cash flow issues as members were moving funds to chase after the attractive short-term rates.

All the above-mentioned items affected the financial statements. The computer and Recreation Center projects had to be paid for, the pension termination had to be funded, and increased member surrenders and death claims had to be paid out. Due to all these items, assets decreased for the year. The Society's assets decreased \$4.7 million, or 3.7%, from year end 2022 to total \$124,025,216 as of Dec. 31, 2023. There were no significant changes to the Society's asset allocations from year end 2022. Fixed income securities and cash, totaling \$117,459,690, represent 96.6% of the Society's invested assets. Real estate holdings, which include the Home Office and the SNPJ Recreation Center, total \$1,814,992, representing 1.5% of invested assets. The remaining 1.9% of invested assets is comprised of common stock, certificate loans, mortgages, and other invested assets.

Gross income for 2023 totaled \$16,243,234. The Society experienced a 58 percent increase in annuity premium from the prior year. Annuity first-year guarantee crediting rates were increased to keep up with the dramatic increase in short-term market rates. This helped to increase the amount of first-year annuity consideration compared with 2022. Life insurance premiums increased slightly, 2.7%, from 2022 to 2023. Gross investment income increased \$230,022, or four percent, from the prior year. The increase was due to a dramatic increase in interest earned from high crediting rates on cash held in the bank, and also on income earned on a selective timber harvesting project at the Society-held Recreation Center.

Insurance and annuity benefit claims increased 78 percent from \$7.1 million in 2022 to \$14.7 million in 2023. The increase was due to the significant increase in annuity payments over 2022. Annuity benefit payments include pension benefit payments paid to former employees. Due to the termination of the pension plan, the amount of pension payments increased from \$205,451 in 2022 to \$5,149,156 in 2023. The retained annuity member benefit claims for death and cash surrenders increased from \$6.7 million in 2022 to \$9.5 million in 2023, with the full amount of increase due to surrenders; whereas death benefit payments on life insurance decreased \$372,914, or 18 percent, from 2022 to total \$1,640,694.

General and fraternal expenses increased \$455,637, or 20 percent, from 2022 to 2023. Costs associated with the conversion of the insurance administration software system, expenses related to project and facility upgrades at the Society-owned Recreation Center, and an increase in employee payroll due to the hiring of several new employees to fill vacancies account for the general expense increase. Insurance taxes, licenses and fees decreased \$50,658, or 22 percent, from 2022 due to the absence of the 2022 additional expense of the Pennsylvania Insurance Department five-year examination cost.

The Society experienced a \$223,572 loss from operations before refunds and capital gains and losses in 2023. Net income for the year after refunds and after realized capital gains and losses was a loss of \$317,042. The Society's surplus position decreased slightly, \$120,528, or one percent, from year end 2022, totaling \$11,934,195 as of Dec. 31, 2023. Affecting surplus is the transition of the Asset Valuation Reserve (AVR) to more granular reserve factors which is acting to increase the ultimate reserve to be carried on the Society's balance sheet. As of Dec. 31, 2023, the Society's asset-to-liability ratio is 110.6%.

Following are financial statements and a summary of the investment transactions for the period.

Respectfully submitted,

**ROBERT J. LAWRENCE**  
National Treasurer/CFO

**Summary of Investments Purchased:**

**July 1-Dec. 31, 2023:**

Name & Description	Cost	Par Value
Bond Purchases: US Special Revenue	\$1,037,267	\$1,455,000
Bond Purchases: Industrial	3,179,514	3,355,000
Total Purchases 7-1-23 through 12-31-23	\$4,216,781	\$4,810,000

**Summary of Investments Disposed Of:**

**July 1-Dec. 31, 2023:**

Name & Description	Consideration	Par Value	Book Value
Bond Disposals: US Governments	\$185,953	\$185,952	\$185,953
Bond Disposals: US Special Revenue	2,294,852	2,289,572	2,295,449
Bond Disposals: Industrial	2,912,717	2,911,089	2,885,258
Mortgage Payments	11,406	11,406	11,406
Total Disposals 7-1-23 through 12-31-23	\$5,404,928	\$5,398,018	\$5,378,065

**SEE FINANCIAL SUMMARIES**  
ON PAGE 6

**National Treasurer's Report**

Bro. Robert LAWRENCE commented on his report that assets had decreased \$4.7 million primarily due to the termination of the Employees Defined Benefit Pension Plan; reported on cost associated with the payout of the pension plan and how the rise in short-term interest rates affected the cash-out of annuities; and reported on the expenses incurred at the SNPJ Recreation Center for the well, waste treatment plant and road, and that these were offset to an extent by the timber project.

Questions by Sis. ANDERSON, Sis. RIGLER, Bro. SINAN and Bro. CADEZ.

Motion by Bro. CADEZ, second by Sis. ANDERSON, to approve the report. Motion approved.

**Finance Committee Report  
July 1 through Dec. 31, 2023**

Fraternal greetings and welcome to the semiannual National Board meeting, Brothers and Sisters of the Slovene National Benefit Society.

The Finance Committee continues to follow the Rules of Procedure approved by this Board to promote an efficient investment and monitoring of our Society's funds. Our bond maturity distribution at Dec. 31, 2023, compared to Dec. 31, 2022, was as follows, along with a listing of the SNPJ portfolio by investment category:

**As of Dec. 31, 2023**

	Dec. 31, 2023		Dec. 31, 2022	
Less than 1 Year	\$5,267,584	4.5%	\$9,660,999	8.0%
1 to 10 years	35,488,126	30.6%	35,217,645	29.0%
10 to 20 years	47,646,370	41.1%	45,969,075	37.9%
Over 20 years	27,477,332	23.7%	30,417,327	25.1%
Total Bonds	\$115,879,412	100.0%	\$121,265,046	100.0%

	Market Value	Statement Value	Allocation	Yield
Corporate Bonds	\$74,843,084	\$81,313,936	66.85%	4.60%
Taxable Municipal	26,651,730	28,131,189	23.13%	4.75%
Asset Backed Securities	2,813,735	2,931,785	2.41%	4.51%
Agency CMOs	1,314,406	1,362,020	0.50%	4.59%
Agency CMBS	602,453	613,555	1.12%	4.43%
Commercial MBS	587,685	726,572	0.60%	3.49%
Non-Agency CMOs	436,624	485,351	0.40%	6.22%
Agency Passthroughs	308,023	315,005	0.26%	3.89%
Total Bonds	107,557,741	115,879,412	95.27%	4.64%
Common Stock	952,731	952,731	0.78%	7.82%
Other Assets	561,000	565,932	0.47%	6.45%
Mortgages	177,799	177,799	0.15%	2.75%
Real Estate	1,814,992	1,814,992	1.49%	4.96%
Cash & Certificate Loans	2,247,965	2,247,965	1.85%	4.90%
Total Invested Assets	\$113,312,229	\$121,638,831	100.00%	4.68%

\*Any difference in totals is due to rounding.

**Portfolio Risk Analysis**

Date	Duration	Avg. Rating	Book Yield	Market Yield
Dec. 2017	8.48	A	4.75	3.51
Dec. 2018	8.11	A	4.64	4.18
Dec. 2019	8.66	A	4.51	3.11
Dec. 2020	9.44	A	4.74	2.19
Dec. 2021	9.37	A	4.52	2.56
Dec. 2022	8.14	A	4.58	5.58
Dec. 2023	8.25	A	4.64	5.23

Wellington Management Company, LLP, continues to monitor the portfolio and manage the assets within the guidelines set forth by the Finance Committee and approved by the National Board. The Finance Committee works with the asset manager to determine appropriate risk measures for the portfolio with the goal of optimizing the portfolio yield while maintaining a high quality portfolio and matching the Society's liability cash flow needs.

The new guideline parameters which were approved by this Board at the September 2023 meeting were implemented and are now in effect.

During 2023, short-duration Treasury yields continued to increase, while Treasury yields for the three-year and longer constant maturities were flat or decreased slightly from the beginning of 2023. The benchmark 10-year Treasury rate, which was at 3.96% at the end of 2022, decreased to 3.88% on Dec. 31, 2023, while the one-year Treasury yield increased from 4.76% at year end 2022 to 5.26% as of Dec. 31, 2023.

During the six-month period, the book yield on the portfolio increased from 4.58% as of June 30 to 4.64% as of Dec. 31, 2023, while maintaining an S&P weighted average quality rating of A. The effective duration of the portfolio as of year end is 8.2 years.

Investment yields on purchases made in the second half of 2023 averaged 6.30%. Investment purchases for the six months had a 15-year average life with an average S&P credit quality of A. Several bonds were sold to raise the required cash to fund the pension termination annuity purchase and a large amount of annuity claims at year end.

Below is a summary of transactions for the period of July 1 to Dec. 31, 2023:

	Par	Cost	Rating
<b>Purchases: 7/1-12/31</b>	\$4,810,000	\$4,216,781	A
	Par	Consideration	Gain/(Loss)
<b>Disposals: 7/1-12/31</b>	\$1,565,000	\$1,554,393	(\$10,521)

**SNPJ FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**RICHARD HERVOL**, Committee Chairman  
**ROGER C. CLIFFORD**, Committee Member  
**TRACEY ANDERSON**, Committee Member  
**JOSEPH C. EVANISH**, Committee Member  
**ROBERT J. LAWRENCE**, Committee Member

**Finance Committee Report**

Bro. HERVOL presented the report and stated that the Finance Committee recommended 3.0% as a discretionary contribution to the 401(k) Plan. Motion made by Bro. SINAN, second by Bro. CADEZ, to approve a 3.0% discretionary contribution to the 401(k) Plan. Motion approved.

Motion made by Sis. BAKER, second by Bro. Ken ZAKRAYSEK, to approve the report. Motion approved.

**SNPJ Audit Committee Report**

**July-December 2023 (Date of Report: 03/21/2024)**

Fraternal greetings, SNPJ Executive Committee, National Board.

The Audit Committee met in the Home Office March 20-21 for their semiannual meetings.

The semiannual review consisted of routine documentation review, and interviews with the Executive Committee and with Leo Hannah of H2R.

**Routine Oversight Report Reviews:**

The following were reviewed for the period July 2023 through December 2023:

- Review of necessary invoices
- Expense receipt review of Executive Committee and National Board members
- Review of checks over \$20,000
- Review of new agent files
- Review of the Audit Committee Charter. No recommendations made
- Review of the National Board Lodge Meeting Attendance Report: All Board members are in compliance with the Bylaws

All was found to be in order.

**SNPJ Financials:**

The Audit Committee met with Leo Hannah, CPA, independent auditor and partner with H2R. The financial report came in clean with no significant audit findings. The RBC increased slightly. The termination of the defined benefit plan came at a good time. The interest rate environment of the last year did not make it easy for fraternalism, and SNPJ weathered it fairly well. While the Society experienced a net loss, the solvency and RBC were strengthened.

**Executive Committee Meeting:**

The Audit Committee met with the Executive Committee to discuss any common issues, including the marketing plan, the Recreation Center issues concerning revenue versus expenses, the solar project,

**AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**  
CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

cabin renovations, the timber project, and the strategic planning session coming up in May.

**Lodges and Membership:**

Membership continues to be a challenge. A new incentive campaign has been introduced in the hope that it will bring in more business. Training materials are communicated digitally and through personal training. We have a marketing plan integrated into the strategic business plan for 2023 that includes an outline of all the products offered, distribution methods, and incentives including the Recommender Program and the Lodge Bonus Program. All was in order with new agent files.

**SNPJ Recreation Center:**

Total Recreation Center revenues for 2023 increased over 2022 revenues; however, total expenses increased as well, primarily in the overhead expense category. Reference the Recreation Center Committee report.

**Conclusion:**

The Audit Committee thanks the executives and Home Office staff for their assistance during our meetings. Their contribution is invaluable, and all needed information and documentation was obtained.

\*All items in this report are fully explained in the individual executive reports

\*\*All committee members approved this report.

Fraternally,

**SNPJ AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
**JOANNA BAKER**, Chairperson  
**VINCENT BASELJ**  
**KEN ZAKRAYSEK**

**Audit Committee Report**

Sis. BAKER presented the report and stated that the committee met independently with the Society's auditor during the week, reported on work that they accomplished, and stated that the auditor would present to the Board later in the meeting.

Question by Sis. RIGLER. The motion was made by Bro. CLIFFORD, second by Sis. ANDERSON, to approve the report. Motion approved.

**SNPJ Scholarship Committee Report**  
**March 2024**

The following report covers the period of July 1 through Dec. 31, 2023. Payment for the second installment of the 2022-2023 academic year included 30 awards. This group encompassed 30 Academic Scholarships.

Listed below are the names of the students who received awards during the last six months of 2023:

Name	Lodge	Name	Lodge
Caitlyn Conroy	1	Katarina Lidrbau	158
Michael Potter	1	Claire Schmidt	225
Calvin Norsworthy	6	William Dodson	274
Melanie Pendel	33	Phillip Yuhas	274
Blake Bebar	41	Danielle Norrito	518
Emily Patosky	106	Tyler Mouthey	584
Anna Pustover	106	Andrew Lynch	584
Matthew Pustover	106	Briahna Lynch	584
Jenni Zalnasky	106	Anthony Massucci	643
Benjamin Grkman	117	Naomi Fry	665
Jessica Cadez	138	Jack Anderson	677
Erin Lawrence	138	Michael Varlotta	715
Emily Cipriani	138	Andrew Atkinson	719
Lindsey Thomas	138	Madalyn Ankeny	749
Nicole Frantz	153	Morgan Sinan	782

**Scholarship Fund Donation & Award History**

Years	Donations	Awards
1960-1979	\$75,448.09	\$146,797.81
1980-1999	\$595,765.01	\$1,185,150.00
2000-2019	\$1,283,463.11	\$937,360.00
2020-Present	\$27,864.22	\$121,100.00
Totals	\$1,982,540.43	\$2,390,407.81

**Scholarship Fund Financial Report**

Beginning Balance (as of July 1, 2023)	\$532,358.42
Donations	\$2,840.00
Investment & Other Income	\$6,963.37
Total Income	\$9,803.37
Awards	\$16,550.00
Investment & Other Expense	\$10,983.11
Total Expenses	\$27,533.11
Ending Balance (as of Dec. 31, 2023)	\$514,628.68

We continue to receive donations from our members as honors and memorials to their loved ones. We are most appreciative for all contributions, and we extend our sincere thanks to all who contributed to this most worthy cause which benefits so many of our young adults.

**SNPJ SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**  
**JOSEPH C. EVANISH**, Chairman  
**KAREN A. PINTAR**  
**ROBERT J. LAWRENCE**

**Scholarship Committee Report**

President EVANISH presented the report. Discussion and comments from Bro. SINAN and Bro. CADEZ. The motion to approve the report was made by Bro. CLIFFORD, second by Sis. ANDERSON. Motion approved.

**SNPJ Heritage Center Committee Report**  
**March 2024**

Our 2023 season started with a teleconference call meeting on Jan. 14 with the planning of our spring and summer season of events. We continued meeting via teleconference call on March 11 and April 1 as Heritage Center Director Kathy Paulenich spends the winter months in Florida as a snowbird until the beginning of May. This method of meeting has worked for our committee.

The main point of discussion at our January and March meetings was to remind committee members to reapply for another four-year term. The notice was published in the Jan. 1 PROSVETA issue with a deadline of March 17, 2023, to send resumes to National President

Joe Evanish. The election would take place at the National Board meeting on March 24, 2023. The current committee would be in place until the election.

We are still working with the SNPJ Recreation Center staff on a fire pit location and possible seating in memory of the late Kevin Richards. The Sevic Landscaping Company will be doing the work. We hope to finish this project in the spring of 2024. Also on our agenda as an ongoing discussion is the update of technology at the Recreation Center. The internet connection for the Heritage Center hinders our growth in offering programs using the computer, and for gift shop sales with a credit card. We also need further discussion about the Windstream phone account.

Continuing on our teleconference calls, we discussed the EU Open House at the Slovenian Embassy in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, May 13. Patty Candela, Ed Robich and Sue Mals attended, representing our SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center. They set up our traveling museum. This is always a great event to showcase our Heritage Center, plus advertise SNPJ and Slovenefest. We received a thank you from the embassy staff and an invitation to return in 2024.

For our April 1 teleconference call, President Joe Evanish called the meeting to order as the newly-elected Heritage Center Committee met. The seven previous members reapplied and were re-elected: Tracey Belle, Patty Candela, Joan Gaspersic, Mary Jo Hartman, Sue Mals, Kathy Paulenich and Ed Robich. In addition, we welcomed three new members, Kristina Hartman Lickert, Sarah Loudon and Lynn Tasota Romeo. Election of officers for the next four years was held with the following elected: Director Kathy Paulenich, Secretary Joan Gaspersic, and Treasurer Ed Robich.

The meeting continued reviewing discussion at our previous two 2023 meetings so the new members could be enlightened as to the events planned thus far. Kathy contacted Don Srnick about setting up a sales table for the Music & Craft Festival at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio, on Saturday, May 20. Kathy Paulenich, Ed Robich, Patty Candela and Joan Gaspersic attended the event and took turns at the sales table.

We finished planning for our big event, the Heritage Center Weekend, held June 9-11. We kicked off the weekend with Patty C and The Guys playing in the Gostilna from 8 to 11 p.m. on Friday, June 9. Saturday was a fun-filled day with a balina tournament organized by Denny Brand in the morning and afternoon, with the winners receiving a T-shirt from the gift shop. We had a paint and sip led by Sarah Loudon in the late afternoon. Sarah provided signs with a stencil on the sign that participants painted. She made some extra signs to sell in the gift shop. Bingo in the Gostilna in the evening completed the day on Saturday. The annual picnic was held on Sunday in the Heritage Pavilion with the Frank Stanger Band alternating with the Western Pa. Button Box Club from 1 to 6 p.m. All committee members were present and assigned to one of the following: welcome table, 50/50 drawing, children's games, or gift shop sales table. This was a free-admission dance, but we did ask for a monetary donation at the door which was well received.

The Simply Slavic Festival was held in Youngstown, Ohio, the next weekend, June 16-17. We take our traveling museum to display in the ethnic tent and items from the gift shop to sell in the Marketplace. This is always a great local festival to advertise our SNPJ Recreation Center and, of course, Slovenefest. Kathy Paulenich, Ed Robich and Sarah Loudon worked the event, representing our Heritage Center.

We held our in-person meeting on Saturday, May 6, as we scheduled committee members to work during Heritage Center Weekend, Saturday gift shop days, and Slovenefest. We then finalized our speakers for the "Closer Look at Slovenia" program held on the patio during Slovenefest. Kathy Paulenich, Tracey Belle and Mary Jo Hartman contacted speakers and arranged the order of speakers for Saturday and Sunday. We also discussed supplies that needed to be ordered before opening the gift shop for the season. Kathy Paulenich, Sarah Loudon and Sue Mals would take care of this in the next few weeks. After the meeting, we stocked the shelves and did some cleaning for opening day on Memorial Day weekend.

Our summer activities continued with a wine and cheese reception during Family Week on Wednesday, Aug. 2. We also opened the gift shop for sales. Our Pittsburgh-area committee members – Tracey Belle, Joan Gaspersic, Mary Jo Hartman, Kristina Hartman Lickert and Sue Mals – took the traveling museum and gift shop items to the American Slovene Day Picnic in Yukon, Pa., on Sunday, Aug. 6. We are always appreciated at this event for spending the day with our fellow Slovenians.

The Heritage Center paid for the KTB Band to perform in the Gostilna on Friday of Labor Day weekend, and for the two bands, the Joe Grkman Orchestra and Klancnik & Friends, to perform in the Heritage Pavilion on Sunday. Both events were well attended. We also had a sales table of items from the gift shop at the Sunday picnic.

Our final event of 2023 was co-sponsoring the children's Christmas party with the Recreation Center. Kristina Hartman Lickert, Sarah Loudon and Ed Robich volunteered to work the arts and crafts table for this event.

The Heritage Center Committee met in person on Sept. 9 to finalize the fall events and begin planning for the 2024 season. We continue to generate sales via mail order throughout the year and in the gift shop during the summer months. We thank Sue Zarella and Sue Krispinsky for helping us during the off-season.

Facebook continues to be an important way of communicating to SNPJ members and Slovenians. Patty Candela handles this account. Tracey Belle keeps an eye on our Gmail account. Kathy Paulenich continues writing articles for PROSVETA to keep members informed about Heritage Center activities.

SNPJ Heritage Center Committee members should be commended for all the work and effort in the success of the gift shop and museum. The committee also continues to develop ideas and events that encourage participation by both youth and adult membership.

In closing, we thank SNPJ Recreation Center Director David Jones for working with our committee members in planning and implementing the various activities. Here's to a great 2024 season!

Respectfully submitted,

**SNPJ HERITAGE CENTER COMMITTEE**  
**KATHY PAULENICH**, Director  
**JOAN BARBISH GASPERSIC**, Secretary  
**ED ROBICH**, Treasurer  
**TRACEY BELLE**  
**PATTY CANDELA**  
**MARY JO GERMOVSEK HARTMAN**  
**KRISTINA HARTMAN LICKERT**  
**SARAH LOUDON**  
**SUE MALS**  
**LYNN TASOTA ROMEO**

**Heritage Center Committee Report**

President EVANISH presented the report. Comment by Sis. RIGLER. The motion was made by Bro. HERVOL, second by Sis. RIGLER, to approve the report. Motion approved.

**Region 1 Vice President's Report**  
**July 1 through Dec. 31, 2023**

Fraternal greetings, Brothers and Sisters of the SNPJ National Board. This report covers the period of July 1 through Dec. 31, 2023.

As of Dec. 31, 2023, there are 18 Lodges with 6,643 active members comprised of 6,260 adults and 383 youth members in Region 1. There were 42 new members added, 30 adult and 12 juvenile. Eleven Lodges produced at least one new member, with Lodge 715, Universal, Pa., adding 11 adult and seven juvenile members; Lodge 782, Glenshaw, Pa., with six adult members; and Lodge 729, Yukon, Pa., adding four adult members; being the most productive. Eleven Lodges added at least one new member.

Congratulations to the following for achieving Gold Lodge Activity, earning a \$300 bonus in 2023: Greensburg Lodge 223, St. Marys Lodge 581, Universal Lodge 715, Yukon Lodge 729, and Glenshaw Lodge 782.

Congratulations to Universal Lodge 715 for a new member enrollment of 18 total, 11 adult and seven juvenile, receiving a \$100 award.

We have had a decrease in members in 2023. My focus over the next year will be to continue supporting the Lodges with ideas and suggestions to add members. Our region goal is 84 for 2024. Working with the Marketing Department team and communication with Lodges will help achieve this.

The last six months of 2023 have been very busy with SNPJ fraternal events. From Slovenefest to Lodge Christmas parties, SNPJ fraternalism is alive and well.

My family and I attended Slovenefest. My wife Kathleen, our daughters and I volunteered covering the admission gates. I am proud to say our daughter Morgan participated in the Miss SNPJ Pageant and was crowned Miss SNPJ 2024 by her sister, Madison, Miss SNPJ 2023. This was a Miss SNPJ first, to have a sister crown a sister. It was a great weekend, seeing family and friends come together again, excited to attend Slovenefest.

We attended the Strabane Lodge 138 annual Duck Race on July 15. It was nice to see the event so well attended. Hats off to Lodge 138 for another great Duck Race.

I attended the July Westmoreland Federation of SNPJ Lodges meeting via Zoom.

We hosted our Lodge 782, Glenshaw, regular meeting on Aug. 5 with a new event, "Pizza Party." We cooked pizzas and enjoyed the company of members and family.

We attended the American Slovene Hour annual dance in Yukon, Pa., on Aug. 6. It was a super turnout. Thanks go out to the Yukon Slovenian Hall and the Westmoreland Federation of SNPJ Lodges for assisting with this wonderful event.

I attended National SNPJ Days Sept. 1-3. Glenshaw Lodge 782 served breakfast sandwiches, coffee and juice during the National Balina Tournament. This has become an annual event, starting in the barn with a full-blown breakfast buffet over eight years ago. Miss SNPJ Morgan Sinan (Lodge 782, Glenshaw) helped with the 50/50 and selling tickets in support of her Lodge. Our region had several winners in the men's and women's balina tournaments.

On Sept. 13 I accompanied Miss SNPJ 2024 Morgan Sinan to the Cleveland-Style National Polka Hall of Fame 19th Annual Slovenian Sausage Festival. We had a wonderful time seeing SNPJ friends from around the country. Miss SNPJ Morgan Sinan had the honor of being one of the judges.

My wife Kathleen and I attended the Westmoreland Federation of Lodges fall dance at the Slovenian Hall in Yukon. Once again, hats off to the Yukon Slovenian Hall and the Westmoreland Federation of Lodges for another great fraternal event.

On Nov. 26 I attended the Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame Annual Awards with my wife, Kathleen, and Miss SNPJ Morgan Sinan. We had a wonderful time. It was good to see Region 3 Vice President Don Srnick and Region 5 Vice President Fred Mlakar, along with many others from the SNPJ. It was specifically special to see SNPJ Region 5 Vice President Fred Mlakar's father, Joe Mlakar Sr., inducted into the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame - Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.

On Dec. 7, Kathleen and I were honored to be invited to the Yukon Lodge 729 annual Christmas party/dinner. What a wonderful time we had. Our sincere appreciation for the invite, dinner, and great conversation.

On Dec. 20 I attended the Glenshaw Lodge 782 Christmas party with my family. It was nice to see everyone, and as always we enjoyed their company. Special thanks for recognizing Miss SNPJ Morgan Sinan.

Over the last six months I have attended several National Board conference calls, had conversations with Lodge officers and members, attended several SNPJ activities, and met wonderful people.

It is a privilege to serve as the vice president of SNPJ Region 1. My best fraternal wishes to all.

Fraternally,

**MAURICE SINAN**  
Region 1 Vice President

**Region 1 Vice President's Report: Bro. Maury Sinan**

The motion was made by Sis. RIGLER, second by Bro. ZAKRAYSEK, to approve the report. Motion approved.

**Region 2 Vice President's Report**  
**July 1 through Dec. 31, 2023**

Dear Board members: I am writing to provide you with a report on the activities of Region 2 for the period of July 1 through Dec. 31, 2023.

As of Dec. 31, 2023, there are 8,269 total active members in Region 2, comprising 7,772 adult and 497 juvenile members.

In addition to serving as Region 2 Vice President on the SNPJ National Board, I am also currently serving as SNPJ District 1 Athletic Director, as president of SNPJ Lodge 138, and as a member of the House Committee for Lodge 138.

During this period, Lodge 138, where I serve as president, hosted several successful events. On July 1, Lodge 138 hosted my Region 2 event with Klancnik & Friends. This event drew a large crowd, and fun was had by all. Additionally, Lodge 138 hosted our annual Duck Race, pig roast, several breakfast buffets, and a throwback show with Joe Grushecky in the fall. These events helped to revive the Radioactive City Music Hall, and we are now planning another throwback show with Billy Price in the fall of 2024. Youth Circle 19 also hosted several events, including a Family Bingo and the Christmas program in December.

I had the privilege of serving as tournament secretary for the National Bean Bag Toss Tournament at the SNPJ Recreation Center

FINANCIAL SUMMARIES  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

**Slovene National Benefit Society**

Balance Sheet as of Dec. 31, 2023

	12/31/2023	12/31/2022	Change
<b>Assets:</b>			
Bonds	\$115,879,412	\$121,265,043	(\$5,385,631)
Common Stocks	952,731	945,494	7,237
Mortgage Loans	177,799	206,811	(29,012)
Real Estate	1,814,992	1,918,963	(103,971)
Cash and Short Term Investments	1,580,278	249,660	1,330,618
Certificate Loans	667,687	694,655	(26,969)
Other Invested Assets	565,932	571,229	(5,298)
Investment Income Due & Accrued	1,421,372	1,476,533	(55,160)
Premiums Due	26,387	26,790	(403)
Amounts Recoverable From Reinsurer	938,625	1,399,494	(460,869)
EDP Equipment and Software	0	0	0
Total Admitted Assets	\$124,025,216	\$128,754,673	(\$4,729,457)
<b>Liabilities:</b>			
Reserve for Life & Annuity	\$105,933,996	\$109,604,762	(\$3,670,766)
Reserve for Sick & Operation	101,824	116,203	(14,379)
Liability for Deposit-type Contracts	297,335	337,969	(40,634)
Life Claims	378,649	360,028	18,621
Accident & Health Claims	14,579	16,645	(2,066)
Refund Payable	93,756	90,041	3,715
Premiums Received in Advance	42,849	43,420	(572)
Amounts Payable on Reinsurance	11,168	13,650	(2,483)
Interest Maintenance Reserve (IMR)	276,134	383,421	(107,287)
Expenses Due & Accrued	374,174	237,344	136,829
Unearned Investment Income	13,328	13,618	(290)
Total Remittances & Items Not Allocated	3,424,517	3,975,044	(550,527)
Asset Valuation Reserve (AVR)	1,128,712	999,803	128,909
Write In for Liabilities	0	508,000	(508,000)
Total Liabilities	112,091,020	116,699,949	(4,608,929)
Surplus	11,934,195	12,054,723	(120,528)
Total Liabilities & Surplus	\$124,025,216	\$128,754,673	(\$4,729,457)
<b>Cash Flow:</b>			
12/31/2022			\$249,655
Premiums Collected Net of Reinsurance		10,238,285	
Net Investment Income		5,904,854	
Proceeds from Investments Sold, Matured or Repaid		9,394,693	
Miscellaneous Income & Other Cash Provided		420,725	25,958,557
			26,208,212
Benefit Payments		16,523,225	
Commissions & Expenses Paid		3,019,375	
Cost of Investments Acquired		4,216,781	
Refunds Paid		87,582	
Net Other Cash Applied		780,975	24,627,938
12/31/2023			\$1,580,274

**Slovene National Benefit Society**

Summary of Operations for the period ending Dec. 31, 2023

Description	2023	2022	Change
Life Premium	\$1,674,283	\$1,630,167	\$44,116
Annuity Considerations	8,547,379	5,410,620	3,136,760
Accident & Health Premiums	14,372	15,158	(786)
Total Premium & Annuity Considerations	10,236,035	7,055,945	3,180,090
Gross Investment Income	5,965,197	5,735,175	230,022
Investment Expense	(470,166)	(497,284)	27,117
Net Investment Income	5,495,030	5,237,891	257,139
Amortization of Interest Maintenance Reserve	118,414	117,686	727
Expense Allowances on Reinsurance Ceded	344,631	363,724	(19,093)
Miscellaneous Income	49,125	16,331	32,794
Total Income	16,243,234	12,791,577	3,451,658
Death Benefits	1,640,694	2,013,608	(372,914)
Matured Endowments	136,453	50,753	85,700
Annuity Benefits	14,733,818	7,059,957	7,673,861
Operation, Accident & Health Benefits	13,511	16,397	(2,886)
Surrender Benefits	464,140	421,871	42,269
Interest on Certificate Fund	7,654	8,827	(1,172)
Increase in Life Reserves	504,495	398,292	106,202
Increase in Annuity Reserves	(4,175,261)	347,047	(4,522,308)
Increase in Health Reserves	(14,379)	(10,700)	(3,679)
Commissions	275,836	159,586	116,250
General & Fraternal Expenses	2,731,068	2,275,431	455,637
Insurance Taxes, Licenses & Fees	149,299	190,922	(41,623)
Increase in Loading on Uncollected Premium	(522)	502	(1,023)
Total Expenses	16,466,806	12,932,493	3,534,314
Net Gain From Operations Before Refunds	(223,572)	(140,916)	(82,656)
Refunds to Members	91,297	88,384	2,912
Net Gain Before Realized Capital Gain/(Loss)	(314,869)	(229,300)	(85,568)
Net Realized Capital Gain (Loss)	(2,173)	0	(2,173)
Net Income	(\$317,042)	(\$229,300)	(\$87,742)

**Surplus Account:**

	12/31/2023	12/31/2022
Surplus, Dec. 31, previous year	\$12,054,723	\$12,998,213
Net Income From Operations	(317,042)	(229,300)
Change in Net Unrealized Gains/(Loss)	7,237	(72,949)
Change in Non-Admitted Assets	318,186	(529,041)
Change in Asset Valuation Reserve	(128,909)	(112,200)
Net Change in Surplus for the Year	(120,528)	(943,490)
Surplus as of Statement Date	\$11,934,195	\$12,054,723

**Slovene National Benefit Society**

Detailed Financial Report for the year ending Dec. 31, 2023

Description	2023	2022	Increase/ (Decrease)
<b>Life Premiums</b>			
Life Premiums			
First Year Premium	\$73,765	\$85,367	(\$11,602)
Renewal Premium	1,664,416	1,653,403	11,013
Single Premium	68,454	80,799	(12,345)
Refunds Applied to Paid-Up Additions	79,027	79,285	(258)
Less: Reinsurance Premiums Paid	(211,379)	(268,687)	57,308
Net Life Premiums	1,674,283	1,630,167	44,116
<b>A&amp;H Premiums</b>			
Sick Benefit Premium	5,863	6,326	(464)
Operation Premium	8,510	8,832	(322)
Total A&H Premiums	14,372	15,158	(786)
<b>Annuity Considerations</b>			
Annuity - First Year	7,913,159	3,911,322	4,001,837
Annuity - Renewal	651,169	1,425,716	(774,547)
Deposit Administration Contract	0	100,000	(100,000)
Less: Reinsurance Premium - Annuity	(16,948)	(26,418)	9,470
Total Annuity Considerations	8,547,379	5,410,620	3,136,760
Total Premiums & Annuity Considerations	10,236,035	7,055,945	3,180,090
<b>Gross Investment Income</b>			
Interest on Bonds	5,431,494	5,546,290	(114,796)
Dividends on Stock	74,556	41,018	33,538
Interest on Mortgage Loans	5,030	5,838	(808)
Interest on Cash and Short Term Investments	133,166	10,344	122,822
Income on Real Estate	292,498	102,770	189,727
Interest on Certificate Loans	28,453	28,914	(461)
Total Gross Investment Income	5,965,197	5,735,175	230,022
<b>Less Investment Expense</b>			
Home Office: Deprec., Insur., Tax, Utility & Other	124,133	156,272	(32,139)
Rec Center Depreciation & Real Estate Expenses	74,802	74,803	(0)
Management, Custodial, Banking & Other Fees	133,667	133,567	101
Salaries, Benefits & Board Travel - Investment	137,563	132,642	4,921
Total Investment Expense	470,166	497,284	(27,117)
Net Investment Income	5,495,030	5,237,891	257,139
Amortization of IMR	118,414	117,686	727
Expense Allowance for Reinsurance Ceded	344,631	363,724	(19,093)
Total Aggregate Write-In for Misc. Income	49,125	16,331	32,794
Total Income	16,243,234	12,791,577	3,451,658
<b>Death Benefits</b>			
Death Claims	1,765,743	2,168,636	(402,892)
Reinsurance Recovered	(125,050)	(155,028)	29,978
Total Death Benefits	1,640,694	2,013,608	(372,914)
Total Matured Endowments	136,453	50,753	85,700
<b>Annuity and Pension Benefits</b>			
Pensions Paid	5,149,156	205,451	4,943,705
Annuity Benefits	21,175,927	13,461,057	7,714,870
Reinsurance Recovered on Annuity	(11,591,265)	(6,606,551)	(4,984,714)
Total Annuity and Pension Benefits	14,733,818	7,059,957	7,673,861
<b>Operation, Accident &amp; Health</b>			
Sick Benefit Claims	4,121	7,539	(3,417)
Operation Claims	9,334	8,802	531
Waiver of Assessment	56	56	0
Total Operation, Accident & Health	13,511	16,397	(2,886)
Total Surrender Benefits	464,140	421,871	42,269

DETAILED FINANCIAL REPORT  
CONTINUES NEXT COLUMN

Description	2023	2022	Increase/ (Decrease)
Interest on Certificate or Contract Fund	\$7,654	\$8,827	(\$1,172)
<b>Increase in Reserve for Life, A&amp;H &amp; Annuities</b>			
Change in Reserves - Life	504,495	398,292	106,202
Change in Reserves - Annuities	(4,175,261)	347,047	(4,522,308)
Change in Reserves - Accident & Health	(14,379)	(10,700)	(3,679)
Total Increase(Decrease) in Reserves	(3,685,145)	734,640	(4,419,785)
<b>Commissions</b>			
Life Commissions	92,748	99,977	(7,229)
Annuity Commissions	172,618	53,704	118,914
Campaign Awards	10,470	5,905	4,565
Total Commissions	275,836	159,586	116,250
<b>General Insurance &amp; Fraternal Expenses</b>			
Rent	90,000	90,000	0
Salaries & Wages	800,076	691,330	108,745
Director/National Board Fees	33,600	28,800	4,800
Employee Benefits	163,678	276,076	(112,398)
Employee Education Expenses	420	748	(328)
Legal Fees and Expenses	38,559	38,759	(200)
Medical Examinations/Underwriting	7,348	7,862	(513)
Actuarial and Auditing Fees	188,459	159,134	29,325
Travel Expenses	56,021	37,052	18,969
Advertising/Promotional Items	8,625	17,709	(9,084)
Postage and Telephone	70,861	66,994	3,867
Office Supplies, Printing & Stationery	26,311	33,643	(7,332)
Computer Supplies, Equipment & Depreciation	678,345	430,191	248,154
Machine Service, Repairs & Rentals	11,488	8,887	2,601
Books and Periodicals	1,249	1,476	(228)
Bureau and Association Dues	5,745	10,908	(5,164)
Insurance and Surety Bonds	35,823	35,177	647
Sundry General	10,301	10,580	(279)
Donations - Charitable	8,623	8,017	606
Sales Department	3,143	2,700	443
Publication: PROSVETA	157,942	148,168	9,774
Quadrennial Convention	40,445	14,911	25,534
Athletics	16,936	13,406	3,529
Miss SNPJ Pageant and Travel	4,959	5,184	(225)
Youth/Young Adult Programming	14,599	14,133	466
Lodge and Secretary Awards	45,244	47,647	(2,403)
Fraternal Expense - Other	212,269	75,938	136,331
Total General and Fraternal Expenses	2,731,068	2,275,431	455,637
<b>Insurance Taxes, Licenses &amp; Fees</b>			
State Insurance Department Licenses and Fees	72,929	123,588	(50,658)
Employment Taxes	76,370	67,334	9,036
Total Insurance Taxes, Licenses and Fees	149,299	190,922	(41,623)
Aggregate Write-Ins for Deductions	(522)	502	(1,023)
Total Expenses	16,466,806	12,932,493	3,534,314
Net Gain From Operations Before Refunds	(223,572)	(140,916)	(82,656)
<b>Refunds to Members</b>			
Refunds Paid in Cash	7,384	7,343	41
Refunds Left to Accumulate at Interest	2,275	2,352	(77)
Refunds Applied to Paid-Up Additions	81,638	78,690	2,948
Total Refund to Members	91,297	88,384	2,912
Net Gain Before Realized Capital Gain/(Loss)	(314,869)	(229,300)	(85,568)
<b>Net Realized Capital Gains or (Losses)</b>			
Gain on Disposal of Investment	22,428	5,314	17,114
Loss on Disposal of Investment	(13,475)	(8,086)	(5,389)
Amortization of IMR (Transfer to IMR)	(11,127)	2,772	(13,898)
Total Net Realized Capital Gain or (Loss)	(2,173)	0	(2,173)
Net Income	(\$317,042)	(\$229,300)	(\$87,742)

NATIONAL BOARD REPORTS  
CONTINUE NEXT PAGE

**REGION 2 VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

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for National SNPJ Days. This tournament was a success, and my partner, John Wagner, and I were able to come away with the victory. We look forward to defending our title next year.

One of the highlights of the period was attending the inaugural Jim Curl Memorial No-Tap Bowling Tournament hosted by Sygan Lodge 6 in September. The tournament was a huge success, and it was clear that Greg Curl, John Baselj, and all the other volunteers did a wonderful job organizing the event. I look forward to attending this event again next year.

In addition to these activities, Sygan Lodge 6 hosted a member picnic in August, and the Youth Circle held the annual Trunk-or-Treat in conjunction with South Fayette in October, and the Circle Christmas party in December. Lodge 106 held a Purse Bingo, band performances, and completed a renovation of their Lodge hall. Lodge 776 held their annual fishing tournament and Lodge picnic, and also sponsored a member outing to a Scrappers game. Lodge 245 merged with Lodge 6 in December.

In December, after collaborating with the Athletic Board and Lodge 6, we are pleased to announce that Lodge 6 and Lodge 138 will co-host the SNPJ National Bowling Tournament Oct. 11-13, 2024. With the success of our annual Winter Classic Bowling Tournament, we're hoping that this will help revive participation in the National Bowling Tournament. We hope to see many of you there!

I am proud of the achievements of Region 2 during this period, and I look forward to a productive Board meeting.

Sincerely,

**JASON J. CADEZ**  
Region 2 Vice President**Region 2 Vice President's Report: Bro. Jason Cadez**

The motion was made by Sis. BAKER, second by Bro. ZAKRAYSEK, to approve the report. Motion approved.

**Region 3 Vice President's Report****July 1 – Dec. 31, 2023**

Fraternal greetings, Brothers and Sisters of the SNPJ National Board.

As of Dec. 31, 2023, there are 15 Lodges in Region 3 with a total membership of 6,591: 6,209 adults and 382 juveniles. We had 43 new members, 24 adults and 19 juveniles.

I attend all Lodge 158 meetings as president. Our meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, every month. I also attend all SNPJ Farm Board meetings as vice president. Our meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, every month, at 6 p.m., except when there is a Federation meeting; then it would be 6:30 p.m. I attend all Cleveland Federation meetings as a representative. Federation meetings are now held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, as scheduled, at 5:30 p.m. right before the Farm Board meeting.

Our season continued at the SNPJ Farm with the annual 4th of July picnic/dance hosted by radio personality Val Pawlowski. We had no picnic dance the weekend of July 7-9 because we all attended Slovenefest at the Campsite.

Once again, Sue and I had our annual canoe trip with fellow Loyalites and relatives Dan, Diane and Anna Horabik July 13-15. July 16 was the date of the Cleveland Federation of Lodges and SNPJ Farm combined picnic.

On July 18-19, Sue and I went on an overnight bus trip to Pittsburgh to gamble a little, but mostly to see Cleveland play Pittsburgh; we went to two games. The weekend of July 21 we enjoyed seeing many old friends at Sue's 50th high school reunion – what a great weekend.

Sue and I love to attend music concerts, plays, museums and tours. On July 26 we went to Akron, Ohio, to see Grand Funk Railroad, which was a fantastic show. We had two events on July 30, the Ladies Auxiliary picnic at the SNPJ Farm and the Celtic Club of Lake County picnic.

From Aug. 6-11, Sue and I attended Trailer Court Week at the Campsite. On Aug. 12 we attended a minor league baseball game in Detroit and got to meet quite a few members of my three newly-acquired Lodges in Michigan. Ken and Tracey Anderson were great hosts, and we had a really good time. We will be going back this year to see the Detroit Tigers.

Here comes the fun stuff: On Aug. 17 I underwent open heart surgery. I am happy to report that all went well and I'm doing very good. Thank you to all who sent cards and prayers my way. I would like to thank my good friend and fellow Hobo Phil Yan for his firsthand knowledge and coaching me through it. It really helps when you know what to expect. Also, of course, thank you to my wife, Sue, and my son, Dave, for taking great care of me for weeks after the surgery – love you!

Aug. 13 was the date of the Lodge 576 picnic and annual Lou Novak Balina Tournament at the SNPJ Farm. Aug. 20 rounded out the month at the SNPJ Farm with the Lodge 604 picnic.

The annual Labor Day dance was held at the SNPJ Farm on Sept. 4, hosted by radio personality Val Pawlowski. Val continues to host three dances a year at the Farm, and I thank her for keeping our Slovenian culture and Society alive and well.

On Sept. 6, Sue and I attended our first Cleveland Guardians game of the year, followed by our first Captains game of the year on Sept. 10. Love our Cleveland baseball!

Sept. 13 was the date of the annual Polka Hall of Fame Sausage Festival at the SNPJ Farm; always a great turnout. Sept. 24 was our annual Grape Festival at the SNPJ Farm.

Rounding out September, Sue and I attended our balina banquet. We play balina once a week from May to September at the Italian America Club in Wickliffe, Ohio. There are 18 teams, and we came in third (because I missed six weeks after surgery – LOL!).

My annual bus trip to Niagara Falls – two full buses, 100-plus people – was Oct. 1-2. Check Facebook to see us playing polkas in Burger King.

Our Euclid Slovenian Men's Club clambake was held Oct. 8. I have been a men's club member for 33 years now, and I've held just about every position on the board. Now I'm just a regular member with free dues as of the age of 70 – yahoo!

On Oct. 14, Sue and I attended one of our own Loyalites member's wedding. Congratulations to Nicholas and Jessica Verch. Nick is the son of Tony and Jan Verch. On Oct. 24 we attended the play "Dracula" at Playhouse Square in Cleveland.

The SNPJ Farm Halloween party was held Nov. 4, was and the turnout was very poor. This will be the last time for this event.

We started our traveling bar bowling league on Nov. 15. We bowl out of Steveson's bar in Euclid, Ohio. Every other week we host

another team from another bar, then on the opposite weeks we go to their bar. This is by far the best bowling league I have ever been in. Our team is made up of all Loyalites.

Nov. 18 was the date of Friendsgiving at the SNPJ Farm. Attendance was poor, so this is another event we will not be hosting anymore. On Nov. 25 we attended the Polka Hall of Fame Award Show, Polka Mass, and dance. Thank you, Polka Hall of Fame.

Lodge 158 held its annual Christmas party on Dec. 10. Once again, it was very well attended. All SNPJ Lodges were welcome to attend. Dec. 17 was another bus trip, this time with the Irish side of the family. Celtic Nations of Lake County hosted a bus trip to Playhouse Square in Cleveland to see "A Christmas Carol," and afterward we went to the HofbrauHaus for eats and drinks. We ended the year celebrating the holidays with my family.

I would like to thank my sister, Jane Monreal Srnick, and the Monreal Srnick Funeral Home for being the corporate sponsor for all the events that I host.

Once again, to all SNPJ Lodges in Region 3, I would love to attend one of your monthly meetings to discuss your Lodge and what we can do to keep our Slovenian Society going. Please call me at (440) 283-9373.

Please join us on May 18 at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio, for our fourth annual Music Festival & Craft Show – 16 bands and over 30 crafters. Contact Don Srnick for tickets at (440) 283-9373.

Fraternally submitted,

**DON (Srnick) SRNOVRSNIK**  
Region 3 Vice President**Region 3 Vice President's Report: Bro. Don Srnick**

The motion was made by Bro. HERVOL, second by Bro. SINAN, to approve the report. Motion approved. Remarks were made regarding Bro. Fred Mlakar's father, the late Bro. Joe Mlakar, being honored by the Polka Hall of Fame with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Region 4 Vice President's Report**

Brothers and Sisters of the Executive Committee and National Board: Fraternal greetings! The following is my report for the period of July 1 through Dec. 31, 2023.

I have attended Chicago District Federation meetings and all scheduled Lodge meetings.

On July 7-9, 2023, I attended the 65th Miss SNPJ Pageant and the 40th annual Slovenefest with family and friends from Lodge 449. It was a beautiful weekend and the weather was great. During Slovenefest, the SNPJ Heritage Center hosted several presentations on July 8-9 centered around the theme "A Closer Look at Slovenia." On Sunday I attended the bee demonstration that included an observation beehive and learned about the importance of bees. These presentations were very interesting and informative about different aspects, and focused on the Slovenian culture.

Congratulations to Miss SNPJ Morgan Sinan (782) who also won the title of Miss Activity, to Miss Talent Anna Mack (138), and to Cara Fabian (218) who won the title of Miss Fraternalism. During the program on Sunday, I had the honor of announcing the winner of first runner-up to Miss SNPJ. Also during Slovenefest, I had the pleasant surprise of meeting up with Ann Renee Koval Wakefield who I first met during the pageant over 44 years ago! Friendships do last a long time, and it was great seeing Ann Renee again.

On Aug. 12, Lodge 34 held a Slovenski Festival at the Slovenian National Home in Indianapolis. This is an annual event that is well attended by many members and friends enjoying delicious food, including krofe and potica.

The Chicago District Federation held its annual cultural event on Aug. 20. This event was to promote a gathering of members and friends from area Lodges 1, 8, 449 and 559. A delicious luncheon was served at the Slovenian Catholic Center, followed by a short program and then the viewing of the movie "Stories of Slovenian Women in America" that was introduced by Joe Valencic (5) of Cleveland. The movie was about several Slovenian women from different areas of the United States sharing their stories of family traditions carried on and taught to them by their ancestors.

We were also glad to have Miss SNPJ Morgan Sinan present for this year's event and presented her with a gift from the Chicago Federation. The day prior to the event, Chicago Federation President Edward Dabrowski, Tina Rigler, Robert Rigler and Jason Rigler took Morgan on a tour of Chicago and were able to visit many Chicago sites, including the Chicago lakefront, Buckingham Fountain and Navy Pier. Everyone also enjoyed Chicago-style pizza.

I attended, along with many other SNPJ members from several area Lodges, the annual Slovenian Catholic Center picnic held in Lemont, Ill., on Aug. 13. I also attended the annual Honey Picnic held on Aug. 27.

On Sept. 22 I attended the National Board meeting. All officers' and committee reports were given and approved. Young Adult Representative Daniella Volpe (158) was also present and reported for the young adults. She informed the Board of the service projects and activities the young adults participated in during the Young Adult Conference weekend, and what they discussed at their conference. She informed the Board of some ideas for next year's service project and will update the Board at the next meeting.

Samsula, Fla., Lodge 603 continued to be busy with cleanup from Hurricanes Ian and Nicole, and was able to complete many Lodge hall repairs over the summer months. In December, the Lodge also held the annual Christmas Tractor Parade in Samsula. Youth Circle 57 was also very busy, hosting the annual Halloween party and the annual Christmas party.

Many SNPJ members attended the Slovenian Catholic Center 28th anniversary on Nov. 12. The program featured the children from the Slomšek Slovenian School.

Congratulations to Lodges 1, 2, 8, 34, 225, 449, 559 and 603 who reached the Gold Level for Activity in the 2023 SNPJ Lodge Bonus Program. Some of the activities conducted were food drives, toy drives, and donations to the Ronald McDonald House. I enjoy seeing the many pictures and articles in PROSVETA informing us of the many different types of activities that are being done by all the Lodges.

In Region 4 we had a total of 12 new members for the year 2023, which is a slight increase from last year. Congratulations to Lodges 225, 449, 584 and 603 for attaining new members. I hope that more Lodges will be able to increase their membership this year.

This concludes my report for the past six months. I am looking forward to 2024 in anticipation of a great year with gaining new members.

Fraternally,

**JUSTINA M. RIGLER**  
Region 4 Vice President**Region 4 Vice President's Report: Sis. Tina Rigler**

The motion was made by Sis. BAKER, second by Bro. CADEZ, to approve the report. Motion approved.

**Region 5 Vice President's Report****July through December 2023**

Fraternal greetings from the Far West. This report presents highlights from Region 5 (California, Colorado, New Mexico, Montana, Utah and Washington) for the second half of 2023.

Congratulations to our activity award winners. Lodges 218, 304, 689, 723, 745 and 786 achieved gold status, and Lodge 689 won silver.

Region 5 was proud to be represented again in the 2023 Miss SNPJ Pageant by Michelle Jessica Von Merta-Sustarich, who is also Lodge 304 secretary, and Cara Fabian (218), who was crowned Miss Fraternalism.

Cle Elum, Wash., Lodge 371 dedicated a kiosk in the SNPJ section of the Cle Elum Cemetery to commemorate immigrants working in the local coal mines.

Utah SNPJ Lodges 113, 689 and 757 held their annual Utah Slovenian Day Picnic to raise funds for local charities.

Fontana Lodge 723 found a new meeting venue at the Ronald McDonald House in Loma Linda, Calif., which it continues to support with generous donations.

Lodge 745 enjoyed an afternoon at the Oakland/Alameda Coliseum to watch the Minnesota Twins play the Oakland Athletics.

Lodge 786 held a summer polka cruise in Newport Harbor and a Christmas party at which Arnold Koci was recognized for his 60 years of SNPJ membership that included 25 years as president of the former Los Angeles Lodge 615, followed by 20 more years as the founding president of Lodge 786. The success of our Lodge is largely due to his wise and steady fraternal leadership. I am the current Lodge 786 president.

I traveled with several family members to Cleveland to celebrate our late father, Joe Mlakar's, recognition by the Polka Hall of Fame and to accept his Lifetime Achievement Award at the Thanksgiving weekend polka fest. I was also pleased to see fellow National Board members Don Srnick and Maury Sinan there, and to meet and get acquainted with our charming and talented Miss SNPJ 2024 Morgan Sinan.

I extend sincere condolences to the family and friends of former Region 8 Vice President Jake Chesnic. During his 21 years in California, Jake was a popular and respected leader of Lodge 723, serving as vice president, president of the Fontana Slovene Hall Committee, and as Lodge president. He was also recognized as Adult Member of the Year and as the Fontana Slovene Hall Man of the Year. His exemplary service to our Society will long be remembered.

I look forward to a productive National Board meeting on March 22.

Fraternally,

**FREDRICK J. MLAKAR**  
Region 5 Vice President**Region 5 Vice President's Report: Bro. Fred Mlakar**

The motion is made by Bro. CADEZ, second by Sis. RIGLER, to approve the report. Motion approved.

**SNPJ Recreation Center Committee Report**  
**March 2024**

This report covers the second six months of 2023. Our key full-time staff members include Director David Jones, Operations Manager Sue Krispinsky, Maintenance Manager Gary Ehasalu, and secretary Susan Zarella. Director Jones, our key staff members, and the part-time and seasonal staff do a commendable job operating our facility.

Cabin rental income experienced an increase over the previous year by more than 10 percent. Family Week was successful, as were returning groups. Director Jones was also able to secure a new high school band camp during this period, which intends to return in 2024 based on their good experience.

Slovenefest was successful in July once again. The management, staff and numerous volunteers do a commendable job which is greatly appreciated. Kathy Paulenich does great putting together the entertainment/bands. Ruth Wright very efficiently organized the crafters for the weekend. Our director, managers and staff work very hard to make it work.

National SNPJ Days over the Labor Day weekend was successful and filled with activities, tournaments and entertainment. The SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center covers the cost of the bands for the weekend. The Sunday picnic/dance offers free admission.

In the Gostilna there was a variety of entertainment during the season on most Friday evenings, with bingo on Saturdays. The Gostilna and Tiki Bar showed an increase in profit over the previous year.

The cost to operate and maintain the pool was higher than average years due to increased maintenance and supply costs. Admissions were up slightly while food revenue was down.

The wedding business revenue was very good for 2023 and better than the previous year. However, our wedding bookings for 2024 are pacing behind the 2023 bookings. Therefore, we have decided to put together a Google search campaign working with 3Seed Marketing, our website support company. They have conducted these campaigns in the past for us. The campaign began in November and is designed to elevate our presence for those searching for a wedding venue. We will analyze the results each month and make adjustments if needed.

During this period, the Cabin Renovation Plan was revisited and updated. Committee member Dave Skrajner and others gathered information and options for consideration. A plan was approved to complete one cabin and evaluate the result. It was reported in December that the contractor, Simplistic Interiors, LLC, completed the renovation of Cabin 15. The Rec Center management and maintenance staff are happy with the job they did.

We have the funds to complete five more cabins and scheduled the contractor for mid-March through April. The cost of Cabin 15 was within budget. In addition, the cost of two in-wall air conditioning units will be added and still be within budget. These will be installed in the spring. These units can also provide some heat. The National Board has approved this plan. Dave Skrajner has written an article about the project for PROSVETA.

An electrical upgrade service was needed and completed at a cost of \$9,425 for the North Pavilion and transient RV service in September. The Heritage Pavilion restroom concrete walkway was completed at a cost of \$5,690.

The waste treatment plant engineering work and reports required

**RECREATION CENTER COMMITTEE REPORT**  
CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

to satisfy the DEP totaled \$13,449.30 by year end. Work completed at the plant during this period includes installation of a displacement blower, circuit conductors and filters at a cost of \$4,951, as well as \$500 for the permit fee amendment. The final portion of the work is the comminutor which was not delivered for installation by year end.

The National Board approved a solar project to be built in an undeveloped area beyond a tree line which would provide enough power to cover the electric usage of the Recreation Center. There are significant federal incentives that SNPJ can take advantage of for this project which will be a cost savings to both the Society and the Recreation Center. It is understood that the trailer pad renters will still need to pay for electric usage; however, it can be at a discounted rate.

The committee conducted a review of the internal control procedures at the SNPJ Recreation Center. This continues to be a normal business practice by the committee to ensure that proper procedures are being followed.

The following is a summary of the year-end financial report for the year 2023:

Total Revenue .....	\$1,074,985
Total Expense.....	(\$1,267,852)
Net Loss .....	(\$192,868)

A detailed financial report is attached. It is noted that \$29,941 of miscellaneous income was received due to the employee retention credit (ERC) which was part of the CARES Act. This reduces the net loss above and is shown in the profit and loss statement. SNPJ's CPA auditing firm, H2R, was helpful in applying for this funding. The 2024 budget is also included as an attachment.

We are very proud of our facility and property. Everyone is encouraged to take advantage of our beautiful SNPJ Recreation Center as we continue promoting our fraternal activities and programs.

- SNPJ RECREATION CENTER COMMITTEE**  
**JOSEPH C. EVANISH**, Chairman  
**DAVID CUSHMAN**  
**JERRY R. HLEBAK**  
**CATHY KALENITS**  
**RONALD CADEZ**  
**JOHN BASELJ**  
**DAVID SKRAJNER**  
**VINCENT BASELJ**, Honorary Member

**SNPJ Recreation Center Financial Report as of Dec. 31, 2023**

	Revenue	Expense	Profit/(Loss)
Cabins	\$107,817	\$49,330	\$58,487
Events	\$82,874	\$48,069	\$34,805
Gostilna Dining	\$25,026	\$35,470	(\$10,444)
Gostilna	\$62,305	\$41,837	\$20,468
Tiki Bar	\$44,912	\$22,208	\$22,704
Pool	\$15,575	\$34,422	(\$18,847)
Slovenefest	\$96,969	\$66,952	\$30,017
Trailer Court	\$152,532	\$12,146	\$140,385
Wedding/Banquet	\$459,486	\$243,261	\$216,225
Misc. Revenue	\$27,489	\$996	\$26,493
<b>Overhead Expenses</b>			
Salary & Wages		\$266,709	
Utilities		\$96,739	
Real Estate Taxes		\$85,086	
Insurance		\$127,336	
Depreciation		\$938	
Maintenance		\$57,166	
Office & Administration		\$46,492	
Major Maintenance Projects		\$32,695	
Total Overhead Expenses			(\$713,161)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$1,074,985</b>	<b>\$1,267,852</b>	<b>(\$192,868)</b>

**SNPJ Recreation Center 2024 Budget**

	Revenue	Expense	Profit/(Loss)
Cabins	\$120,000	(\$50,000)	\$70,000
Events	\$60,000	(\$30,000)	\$30,000
Gostilna Dining	\$35,000	(\$35,000)	0
Gostilna	\$65,000	(\$45,000)	\$20,000
Tiki Bar	\$45,000	(\$20,000)	\$25,000
Pool	\$20,000	(\$35,000)	(\$15,000)
Slovenefest	\$100,000	(\$60,000)	\$40,000
Trailer Court	\$165,000	(\$15,000)	\$150,000
Wedding/Banquet	\$360,000	(\$190,000)	\$170,000
Misc. Revenue	\$30,000	(\$1,000)	\$29,000
<b>Overhead Expenses</b>			
Salary & Wages		(\$270,000)	
Utilities		(\$95,000)	
Real Estate Taxes		(\$85,000)	
Insurance		(\$130,000)	

**NATIONAL BOARD MINUTES**  
CONTINUE NEXT COLUMN

Depreciation		(\$1,000)
Maintenance		(\$50,000)
Office & Administration		(\$45,000)
Major Maintenance Projects		(\$30,000)
Total Overhead Expenses		(\$706,000)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>(\$1,187,000)</b>
		<b>(\$187,000)</b>

**Recreation Center Committee Report**

The motion is made by Sis. ANDERSON, second by Bro. CLIFFORD, to recess as the SNPJ National Board and reconvene as the SNPJ Recreation Center Committee. Motion approved.

President EVANISH presented the report and remarked on the cabin renovation that was completed and those that are currently taking place, reported on the forest management project, stated that they are researching costs associated with adding new trailer pads, and reported on the Google ad search campaign to help boost weddings at the Alpine Room. He also reported on the solar project and some extra expenses associated with it that are covered under the contingency, as well as additional revenue that will come from incentive programs.

President EVANISH reported that we will soon be installing Starlink for a satellite internet connection at the main building which is expected to increase the internet capability for the main building, including the office and the area surrounding the main building.

Questions by Bros. MLAKAR and SINAN.

Motion to recess as the SNPJ Recreation Center Committee and reconvene as the SNPJ National Board was made by Sis. ANDERSON, second by Bro. HERVOL. Motion approved.

The motion was made by Bro. CLIFFORD, second by Sis. BAKER, to approve the Recreation Center Committee Report. Motion approved.

**Young Adult Representative's Report**

Sis. Daniella Volpe presented a report, stating that she will send in the flyer for the Young Adult Conference project for this year to be included in the secretary mailing. The project is to raise funds for music programs and instruments for schools in low-income areas where many music programs are no longer being funded. She requested a list of projects from the Recreation Center in advance of the Young Adult Conference so that they can make plans for supplies and workers needed. President EVANISH stated that he will coordinate this with the Recreation Center.

**Consultants**

Leo Hannah from H2R, the Society's independent auditor, presented to the Board. He reviewed the management report with the Board and stated that it was a clean opinion, and no internal control issues were noted. He talked about the decrease in assets related to the payout to retirees from the Defined Benefit Pension Plan and noted that it was a good time to terminate the plan as the interest rates were up.

He reviewed how many fraternal, including SNPJ, were affected by the interest rate environment, causing annuity money to leave for higher short-term yields. He recommended that the Board work to get the Recreation Center back on the path to a break-even point, and then highlighted some of the Notes to the Financial Statements that the Board received.

Joseph Steimla from Steimla & Associates, the Society actuary, presented to the Board. He reviewed how the CARVM method of reserving works, and reviewed how guaranteed crediting rates are higher than the valuation interest rates and the effect this has on reserves. He also reviewed the Regulatory Asset Adequacy Issues Summary with the Board.

**Unfinished Business**

**Dividends**

The motion was made by Bro. HERVOL, second by Bro. CLIFFORD, to maintain the current dividend rates as they are currently on life insurance plans that receive them. Motion approved.

**CGAD**

The motion was made by Bro. CLIFFORD, second by Bro. SINAN, to approve the CGAD report to the Pennsylvania Insurance Department. Motion approved.

**Appointment of Outside Consultants**

The motion was made by Bro. HERVOL, second by Bro. ZAKRAYSEK, to appoint Steimla & Associates as the Society actuary and H2R as the independent auditor for the Society. Motion approved.

**Youth Circle Bylaws**

The Youth Circle Bylaws were reviewed regarding the changes that were made to them. There were comments and discussion by Sisters RIGLER, ANDERSON and PINTAR, and Bro. CADEZ. A motion was made by Sis. RIGLER, second by Bro. CADEZ, to approve the Youth Circle Bylaws with the National Board corrections. Motion approved.

**NATIONAL BOARD MINUTES**  
CONTINUE NEXT COLUMN

**Athletic Board Elections**

The following individuals were nominated for election to the Athletic Board:

- District 1 – Jason Cadez
- District 2 – Den Brand
- District 3 – David Sankovich
- District 4 – Brad Stroth
- District 5 – Ken Anderson
- District 6 – Mary Donovan

The motion was made by Sis. ANDERSON, second by Bro. HERVOL, to elect these Athletic Directors by acclamation. Motion approved. At 12:10 p.m. the Board recessed for lunch until 1 p.m.

**Friday, March 22: Afternoon Session**

The meeting was reconvened at 1 p.m.

**Consultants**

The Board welcomed Wellington Asset Management Company representatives Liz Kleinerman and Courtney Brophy. They provided an overview of the Society portfolio, reviewed interest rate history and market outlook, and reviewed the spread analysis and portfolio positioning.

A presentation was then given by Jason Bordui, president and founder of Balanced Growth Consulting, on Strategic Planning and Succession Planning. He presented their recommendations on the steps that the Board and executive officers should take, and provided a proposal to the Board for this process.

When the presentation was completed and all consultants had left the meeting, the Board discussed the benefits of Balanced Growth Strategic Planning and Succession Planning. Interviews will be conducted with all Board members, the Executive Committee and the CIO, and a one-and-one-half day Board retreat will be planned.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the dates that the retreat could be held, and it was decided on a half day, Thursday, May 9, 2024, and a full day Friday, May 10, 2024. This retreat will be held near the SNPJ Home Office.

The motion was made by Bro. HERVOL, second by Sis. BAKER, that the Board accept this proposal and begin the work involved with this process. Motion approved.

The motion was made that the Board go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing executive compensation by Sis. ANDERSON, second by Bro. SINAN. Motion approved, and the executives and CIO excused themselves from the meeting.

The Board came out of Executive Session on a motion made by Sis. ANDERSON, second by Bro. SINAN. Motion approved.

Sis. ANDERSON presented the Board recommendations for compensation increases and incentives.

The motion was made by Bro. HERVOL, second by Sis. BAKER, to approve the Board recommendations. Motion approved.

The motion was made by Sis. BAKER, second by Bro. ZAKRAYSEK, that the next semiannual meeting of the Board would be held Sept. 13, 2024. Motion approved.

A motion was made by Bro. Don SRNICK, second by Bro. CADEZ, to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 p.m. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**KAREN A. PINTAR**, FLMI, CCP, AIAA  
National Secretary/COO

**SNPJ National Board**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- JOSEPH C. EVANISH, National President/CEO
- KAREN A. PINTAR, National Secretary/COO
- ROBERT J. LAWRENCE, National Treasurer/CFO

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

- JOANNA BAKER, Chairwoman
- VINCENT BASELJ
- KENNETH J. ZAKRAYSEK

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

- RICHARD HERVOL, Chairman
- ROGER C. CLIFFORD
- TRACEY ANDERSON

**REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS**

- MAURICE M. SINAN Jr., Region 1
- JASON J. CADEZ, Region 2
- DONALD F. SRNICK, Region 3
- JUSTINA RIGLER, Region 4
- FRED MLAKAR, Region 5

*Heritage Center Weekend, annual Slovenefest fill the Heritage Center schedule*

**HERITAGE CENTER SUMMER**  
FROM PAGE 1

will open for the season on Saturday, May 25, from 1 to 5 p.m. The Heritage Center will be open every Saturday in June, July and August. You'll want to check out some new items we have for sale, including our new tie-dye designed T-shirt and a new coffee mug design.

We have a few more ideas for items to sell that we'll finalize during our in-person meeting at the Recreation Center on May 4, so watch for more new items in the next issue of PROSVETA.

Moving into June, the Heritage Center will be hosting a Slovenian delegation visiting the Recreation Center on Sunday, June 2. Any dignitar-

ies visiting from Slovenia are always quite anxious to visit the Recreation Center, and especially the SNPJ Heritage Center. They are very impressed with the museum and how it evolved from one small room to the former basement display area, and finally to a beautiful museum with the glass display cases. This is just another stop one must make on a Saturday ride to the SNPJ Rec Center.

Our annual Heritage Center Weekend will be held June 7-9. We'll kick off the weekend in the Gostilna on Friday night, June 7, with Patty Candela and The Guys performing from 8 to 11 p.m. Saturday activity starts with a balina tournament at 9 a.m. in the Balinarena organized by Denny Brand. A

sign up sheet will be posted in the Gostilna on Friday night.

Sarah Loudon will host a paint and sip in the barn on Saturday at 6 p.m., offering a new project, painting a pre-designed saying on a tote. Afterward, you can play bingo in the Gostilna at 8 p.m.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article concerning the newly-installed fire pit, we will hold a short dedication/remembrance ceremony on Sunday, June 9, beginning at 11:30 a.m. at the fire pit. Joe Valencic will show the movie "100% Slovenian – Stories of Slovenian Woman in America" in the basement wine room of the main building starting at noon.

A dance at the Heritage

Pavilion is scheduled on Sunday from 1 to 6 p.m., featuring the Frank Stanger Orchestra alternating with the Western Pa. Button Box Club

The following weekend, June 14-15, the Simply Slavic Festival is planned in Youngstown, Ohio. Heritage Center Committee members will have the traveling museum on display both days in the ethnic tent. We will also have items from our gift shop available for purchase in the festival Marketplace both days. Many different Slavic nationalities are represented at this festival through music, food and drink. Check it out.

Committee members are busy finalizing plans for Slovenefest, scheduled July 12-14.

The Heritage Center will be open from 4 to 7 p.m. on Friday night, and from noon until 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

We're changing the former "Closer Look at Slovenia" program, which was held under one large tent on the outdoor patio, to the "Slovenian Marketplace," which will be held under several smaller tents. The location will remain on the patio. The Slovenian Marketplace will be open Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m., offering items for purchase from the gift shop both days.

On Saturday, several of the small tents will feature a make-it, take-it craft conducted by Sarah Loudon; visitors will be able to direct their questions about genealogy to Mary Jo

Hartman; and Kathy Hlad will host a presentation about learning to play the button box accordion.

On Sunday you can learn how to make Idrija čipke lace, or discover how you can become more involved in your Slovenian ancestry from Joe Valencic. An additional presentation will be conducted by Selena Progar, a pastry chef from Pittsburgh, on baking a Slovenian pastry. More information on these programs will be forthcoming, so stay tuned...

As you can see, it will be a busy summer – and even more activities are being arranged toward the end of July and into August. Be proud of your Slovenian ancestry and make an effort to attend these events.



# We've Got You COVERED



by GINA WISE  
SNPJ Marketing Manager

## Mayday!

In May the world awakens and sheds the remaining gray of winter. The landscape becomes full of watercolor blooms. The air has the fragrance of flowers, and the sun lingers longer.

As a child, I also reveled in the magic of May. One memory that stands out – the annual May Day parade. A day when the community comes together to honor America, and it was a big deal to be included in the festivities.

I was part of my school's color guard, a role I cherished. We were going to be in the May Day parade this particular year. Those marching would be dismissed from school early on parade day, and we were provided with special red, white and blue uniforms that made us feel as special as the flags we were carrying.

The parade route wound through the heart of downtown, and I marched proudly knowing that my friends and family were watching from the sidelines. Pride swelled as I moved in sync with the rest of the squad, one step at a time. Knees high, I executed the precise flag movements, each twirl a testament to our many days of practice.

But then, in a moment that would forever be etched in my memory, disaster struck. When I picked up my left foot, I set it back down in a small hole where there was a piece of asphalt missing. My ankle turned, I lost my balance, and the world tilted sideways. "Mayday!" I thought. The parade continued around me while I lay sprawled on the pavement.

Ignoring the pain of my scraped knee, I made my way to the curb. The rest of the squad was ahead, flags held high, and I had to catch up. The route was dotted with anticipated stops. If I ran alongside the curb, I could get to them. As I reached for my fallen flag, I saw *him* – the boy I secretly admired. His name was written in my notebook, surrounded by hearts. He stood there, his family beside him, watching the parade. I couldn't falter now. I picked up the flag and twirled it, eyes locked on my crush, hoping he'd forget my embarrassing flub and notice my determination and resilience.

Years later, as I navigated life's twists and turns, I realized that May Day wasn't just about parades and unrequited love. It was a reminder that unexpected setbacks could happen at any moment. Just like that unforeseen pothole, financial pitfalls could trip me up if I wasn't prepared.

So, taking a lesson from that May Day tumble, when I began working my first full-time job I began contributing to a retirement account. It wasn't as glamorous as twirling a flag, but it was so much more important. Mayday wasn't just a distress call, it was a call to action.

Just like all the practice in preparation for the big parade, starting a retirement account early on means my money has more time to grow and I'll have more years to weather any unanticipated snags that life might bring. I can march confidently toward my golden years, one step at a time, knowing that my retirement account is a steady companion in an uncertain world, and I have taken the necessary steps to avoid crying "Mayday" when I am ready to retire.

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## Slovenian language now mandatory in new tech

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — In early April, Slovenia's National Assembly unanimously endorsed a bill that will make operating systems in the Slovenian language mandatory for manufacturers that sell electronic consumer devices in the country.

The changes to the law governing the use of Slovenian partly come in response to some tech giants, most notably Apple, failing to include Slovenian among the languages it offers on its devices. The same applies to several major auto manufacturers that don't offer entertainment system menus in Slovenian.

The bill also targets Slovenian-based providers of online content, requiring that they provide their services in the Slovenian language.

Companies based outside of Slovenia, notably streaming giants such as Netflix and Disney, will not be affected, even though a lot of criticism during public debate on the bill focused on the absence of Slovenian subtitles on these streaming platforms.

The changes affecting operating systems will take effect 18 months after the law enters into force. For speech-based interfaces, the transitional period is 30 months. Addressing parliament, Culture Minister Asta Vrečko said that the existing law fails to address the problems and challenges of contemporary digital society. She said it was high time to update the legislation.

## Slovenian tourist mine marking its 30th year

**IDRIJA (STA)** — The first tourist mine in Slovenia, the Anthony's Shaft, part of a closed mercury mine in Idrija, is marking its 30th anniversary this year. Many events have been scheduled to promote one of the oldest preserved mine entrances in Europe, along with Idrija's 500-year mining tradition.

Named after Anthony of Padua, a patron saint of miners, the Anthony's Shaft was dug in 1500, soon after mercury was first discovered in Idrija.

Idrija, in western Slovenia, was once home to the second-largest mercury mine in the world and was so famous that in the 19th century a mining town in the U.S. was named New Idria in its honor. In the mid-1980s the decision was made to close the Idrija mine, and the closure actually took place in 1995. However, some of the mine's shafts and facilities have remained open to tourists.

Considered the oldest part of the mine, the Anthony's Shaft, which is 3,000 meters (approx. 9,850 feet) long, opened to tours in 1994. Visitors can walk 1,200 meters (3,900 feet) and go as low as 96 meters (315 feet) below ground level to see what conditions were like for the miners working there.

Idrija, whose mercury mining tradition is included on the UNESCO World Heritage list, will hold several events to mark the anniversary of the tourist mine, including an exhibition which is currently displayed in City Square and will later travel to several museums throughout Slovenia. The main event will offer a concert in the summer, and a film about Anthony's Shaft tour guides is also in the works.

## Effort to help ski resorts deal with climate change

**BOHINJ (STA)** — The recent drastic decline of snow conditions presents a challenge for Alpine communities dependent on winter tourism, so 13 partners from six Alpine countries, including Slovenia, have joined forces to produce an interactive map to assess both vulnerability to climate change and an area's ability to adjust to new conditions.

Many small and medium-sized Alpine ski resorts at low to middle altitudes are struggling to survive due to warmer winters that have shortened the winter season. "This is a major threat which will affect the businesses and the socio-economic situation of entire Alpine communities," said a representative from the regional Development Agency of Zgornja Gorenjska, one of the two Slovenian partners participating in the BeyondSnow project.

BeyondSnow, a project co-funded by the EU, was launched at the end of 2022 in an effort to find solutions to convert small and medium-sized ski resorts into tourist destinations that can be active year round, taking into account their cultural and natural features.



The Slovenian area taking part in the project covers Bohinj in the northwest, including all ski resorts from Vogel and Soriška Planina to Kozji Hrbet on Mt. Koba, as well as Senožeti. The other Slovenian partner in the project is the Arctur Company based in Nova Gorica.

The map will be tested in a total of 10 pilot areas before it is offered online, free of charge, to all Alpine communities. According to Eurac Research, the lead partner in the project, the vulnerability map "is an important tool that allows communities to understand their resilience to climate change in more detail, enabling informed decision-making and the development of targeted adaptation strategies."

This past winter, ski resorts around Slovenia struggled due to unseasonably high temperatures. Some resorts ended their seasons prematurely in early March; others operated through the end of March at limited capacity.

## Maribor private school gains university status

**MARIBOR (STA)** — Alma Mater Europaea—The European Center Maribor (ECM), a Maribor-based private higher education institution, has been accredited as a full-fledged university, an achievement that Ludvik Toplak, the current rector of the school that is now named Alma Mater University, said was a dream come true.

ECM was founded in Maribor 15 years ago at the initiative of members of the Danube Rectors' Conference to develop new academic programs and contribute to Europe's reintegration. The decision to accredit Alma Mater Europaea-ECM as a university was announced in mid-March by Slovenia's National Agency for Quality in Higher Education (NAKVIS).

Alma Mater University is under the wing of Alma Mater Europaea, a Salzburg-based international university established by the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. Alma Mater Europaea has study centers in several European cities, and its campus in Slovenia, Alma Mater Europaea-ECM, opened in 2011.

Its new status as a university will enable the school to join certain international associations for which membership of the national rectors' conference is a prerequisite. Prior to March, rectors' conference members included the University of Ljubljana, the University of Maribor, the University of Primorska, the University of Nova Gorica, New University, and the University of Novo Mesto.

University accreditation ensures that the institute meets specific criteria relating to faculty qualifications, curriculum, student services and general educational outcomes. It also ensures the highest quality of development in the sciences, professional fields, and in the arts, and that the school offers accredited programs at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels.

Students at Alma Mater University in Maribor can study healthcare, social sciences, management, the humanities, archives, ecology, the arts, dance, and IT, including AI.

## Slovenian students offer astronauts a barley dish

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — One Slovenian signature dish, the kranjska sausage, has already been in space, but another dish could follow if students from a Ljubljana school succeed in a competition organized by NASA.

Two students and their mentors from BIC Ljubljana, an educational center offering secondary and higher educational programs in food science, were the only non-American group to place among the 10 finalists in the NASA HUNCH Culinary Challenge.

The team from BIC Ljubljana made the cut with a breakfast menu consisting of barley groats (hulled barley), a Slovenian staple, combined with dried pears, walnuts and smoked tofu, the school announced in mid-March.

The terms of the competition for a meal for astronauts aboard the International Space Station called for a savory breakfast. There were strict rules regarding energy value, fat content and dietary fiber. "Our dish contains only good fats

– olive oil and walnuts. We replaced sodium with spices such as garlic, onions, thyme, parsley, parsnips, marjoram, bay leaf, walnuts, and dried pears," said Marko Jeraj, one of the students.

In addition to complying with the strict NASA requirements, the students also considered the diversity of the astronauts, who have different religious backgrounds. That's why they selected tofu instead of pork. "We even went a step further by freeze-drying our dish. We wanted to check what it would actually look like in space," said Andrej Molč, one of the mentors.

The final selection was announced in Houston in mid-April.

## Ages-old millet grains discovered in Slovenia

**RAVNE NA KOROŠKEM (STA)** — The oldest grains of millet found in Slovenia, discovered in Ravne na Koroškem in the northeastern Koroška region, date back to between 1300 to 1200 BC. Finding the millet "was like winning the lottery," said Saša Djura Jelenko, the archaeologist who led the excavations at the Ravne na Koroškem site, as she addressed the press in late March.

The grains were found during a laboratory analysis of sediment samples taken from an excavation site in Ravne na Koroškem, where archaeologists were working from 2021 to 2023. "Two samples of millet were sent to the Poznan Radiocarbon Laboratory in Poland for dating. One was dated to around 800 to 700 BC; the other was shown to be from around 1300 or 1200 BC," said archaeobotanist Tjaša Tolar.

Until this most recent find, the oldest grains of millet discovered in Slovenia dated back to around 900 to 1000 years BC. The new finding, amounting to 10 charred grains, is kept at the Archaeology Institute, which maintains records on Slovenia's oldest discovered grains. "Neighboring countries have found grains of millet dating back to the 15th and 16th century BC," said Tolar, who expects that older grains will also be discovered in Slovenia.

The area where the millet was found was first settled in the early Bronze Age, but then abandoned for some 2,500 years. It was settled again sometime in the 15th-14th century BC during the middle to late Bronze Age.

In a nearby cave that also dates to the early Bronze Age, archaeologists discovered a ceramic bottle with traces of lead. "This could mean that the production or use of lead in the Mežica Valley could be much older than we believed," Djura Jelenko explained. Further research is needed to verify that the bottle wasn't brought to the cave more recently.

## More challenging route for 30<sup>th</sup> Tour of Slovenia

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — The 30th Tour of Slovenia, the country's most prestigious road cycling race, will run in five stages from June 12-16. A more challenging route this year includes a climb to the Krvavec ski resort and an opening stage that will start in Murska Sobota and conclude in Ormož, during which the cyclists will pass through three neighboring countries, Austria, Hungary and Croatia.

The route of the third stage, from Ljubljana to Nova Gorica, will reach into Italy, ensuring that the cyclists visit all four countries neighboring Slovenia.

As race organizers told the press, this year's Tour of Slovenia will again be part of the UCI ProSeries, the second-tier men's elite road cycling tour. The largest Slovenian road cycling race on the international schedule has apparently become a permanent fixture in the June slot as either a warm-up for the Tour de France or as an opportunity for riders to follow up on the Giro d'Italia.

Although Slovenian superstars Tadej Pogačar and Primož Roglič will skip the race again this year, Slovenia will field strong competitors in Matej Mohorič, Matevž Govekar and Luka Mezgec. The field will also include Slovenian cyclists from local teams; however, the organizers have decided that there will be no Slovenian national team participating in this year's race.

The 2024 Tour of Slovenia, which will set a race record in terms of the number of cyclists (154), will be broadcast live by Eurosport and RTV Slovenija, offering 11 televised hours of elite racing.

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

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# Johnstown Lodge 749 welcomes members of the former SNPJ Lodge 190

by EVELYN DIMPFL  
Lodge 749 Secretary

**JOHNSTOWN, Pa.** — My articles to *PROSVETA* are getting fewer and further between. I guess I can blame that on just convincing myself to sit down and begin writing. Starting off, I will say that all Lodge officers were retained during our December meeting: President James Vasilko, Vice President Joanne Vasilko, Treasurer Judith Edsall, Lodge Secretary and Recording Secretary Evelyn Dimpfl, and auditors

Beatrice Edwards and Julie Wagner.

The Lodge extends sympathies to the family of member Nancy J. Rowan who recently passed away. In addition, Mary Jane (Ivancic) Dougherty died March 1, 2024. Mary Jane is survived by her children — Michael, Anne Zepka, Mark, Timothy, Daniel, Kelly Polasko, Shaun, and Joy Campbell — who, I'm sure, miss her very much. She was a very active woman and had a beautiful smile.

I also extend sympathies,

both personal and fraternal, to the family of Larry Thomas who died unexpectedly on Feb. 3, 2024. Larry is survived by his wife of nearly 50 years, Sharon; sons Alan (Bobbie) and J.J. (Marsha); a well as beloved grandchildren Aiden, Brenna, Easton, and Parker. Larry and Sharon enrolled their grandchildren into the SNPJ when they were born. My sincere sympathies.

Several weeks ago, I was surprised to receive a letter from Robert Bevec from Toledo, Ohio. He wrote to

tell me about his wonderful trip to Slovenia last fall when he visited relatives and also had a wonderful time visiting many parts of the beautiful country. He gave some thought to possibly writing an article for *PROSVETA*, which I encouraged him to do. Hopefully, Bob, you will do it; it sounded like a wonderful experience.

Some news relative to our Lodge: Lodge 190 in our area has merged into Lodge 749, and the members are welcome. Their Lodge secretary, Dolo-

res Yacicic, decided to retire for personal reasons. I wish her well. Dolores became Lodge secretary in 1984, the same year that I did, and we traveled to the Home Office when it was in suburban Chicago to learn our responsibilities.

It was a pleasure to attend the Slovenian Gostilna Chef Dinner held at the Imperial Lodge 106 Hall on Feb. 29. Bob Felton and I drove out and had a great time. We sat at a table with a group of very nice people and enjoyed the Slovenian wines and food. It

was nice to see a lot of people whom I knew. We all had a great time. Next on the agenda are Slovenefest, and then SNPJ Family Week at the end of July. I'm looking forward to it.

Finally, a very warm welcome to new member Brynlee Lynn Edsall, born Aug. 10, 2023, to Jason and Sammi Edsall. Brynlee's grandmother, Judith Edsall, and great-grandmother, Joanne Vasilko, proudly enrolled the little one into the Society. If you have a new addition to your family, consider the SNPJ!

## Music & Craft Festival sets the stage for the Farm season

SNPJ FARM FESTIVAL  
FROM PAGE 1

SNPJ Farm is a family-oriented picnic grounds, offering a large playground for kids, three ball courts, and more.

Bill Azman will be selling his award-winning Slovenian sausages. Gerri Trebits and our SNPJ Farm kitchen will be selling roast beef sandwiches and Slovenian potatoes. Nick Tomba will also be back sell-

ing ribs this year, and once again Wojtila's Bakery will be joining the festival selling all their tasty baked goods. The ice cream truck and Kettle corn are also returning this year. The SNPJ Heritage Center Committee will have a table this year, and we will also have a table with information about SNPJ and how to become a member.

Overnight lodging is avail-

able at Red Roof Inn, 4166 State Route 306, Willoughby, OH 44094; phone (440) 946-9872. To receive the special discounted rate, you will need to inform them that you are attending the SNPJ Polka Music Festival. The Red Roof Inn is located seven miles, approximately 13 minutes, from the SNPJ Farm.

The SNPJ Farm is a cash-only venue. There is no ATM

on the property, so plan accordingly.

The Polka Music Festival & Craft Show is our main fundraiser to help keep our SNPJ Farm alive and well in Kirtland. We hope to see you all on Saturday, May 18, at the festival.

For more information and/or tickets, call SNPJ Region 3 Vice President Don Srnick at (440) 283-9373.

## Polka Hall of Fame treats the ladies on Mother's Day

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

**CLEVELAND** — Treat the ladies in your life to a lovely evening of music and dancing at the Mother's Day dance hosted by the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame on Friday, May 10. Join Frank Stanger and his orchestra at the American Croatian Lodge for a charming evening of jolly polkas and suave waltzes.

Swing your significant other on the dance floor from 6 to 10 p.m. The Stanger sound features Frank's accordion stylings and extensive reper-

toire of ballroom favorites.

Dinners, sandwiches and nationality treats, catered by Dubrovnik Gardens, will be available for purchase. Your polka hostess, Sharon Staiduhar, will help make it an extra-special event.

The American Croatian Lodge is located at 34900 Lake Shore Boulevard in Eastlake, Ohio, just west of Route 91 (SOM Center Road). Admission is \$15 on the day of the event. Guests age 18 and under admitted free of charge. Save \$3 off admission with an advance purchase ticket,

available for \$12 through the Polka Hall of Fame, 605 East 222nd St. in Euclid, Ohio. Need a table? Reserve by phoning (440) 679-1420.

The National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame has been preserving and promoting America's good-time music since 1987. The museum features celebrity accordions and the stories behind them.

The Polka Hall of Fame is open Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Contact the Polka Hall of Fame by phone at (216) 261-FAME or e-mail [Polkashop@aol.com](mailto:Polkashop@aol.com).



Accordionist Frank Stanger brings his orchestra to the May 10 Mother's Day dance hosted by the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame at the American Croatian Lodge in Eastlake, Ohio.

## SNPJ Scholarship Fund Donations for the month of March 2024

Fontana Slovene Button Box Club, Fontana, Calif. ....	\$400
John (138) & Velma Pleskovich, Canonsburg, Pa. ....	\$50
<i>In memory of Gail Ulager</i>	
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Engel (138), Canonsburg, Pa. ....	\$20
<i>In memory of Tessie Radosy</i>	
SNPJ Lodge 265, Southview, Pa. ....	\$10
<i>In memory of Joanne P. Hixenbaugh</i>	
SNPJ Lodge 265, Southview, Pa. ....	\$10
<i>In memory of Charles A. Dinardo</i>	

The following donations were made in memory of Bro. Don Scales:

Wendy Strukel, Girard, Kan. ....	\$50
Lynn Grant, Frontenac, Kan. ....	\$40
William J. Kovacic (225), Arma, Kan. ....	\$40
SNPJ Lodge 225, Girard, Kan. ....	\$30
Jerry & Anna Lomshek (225), Pittsburg, Kan. ....	\$30
Donnie & Kathy White, LaCygne, Kan. ....	\$30
Gerald & Jan Azember (225), Girard, Kan. ....	\$25
Kristie L. Watson-Bell, Pittsburg, Kan. ....	\$25
John & Marilyn Sarley (225), Frontenac, Kan. ....	\$25

Mary A. Heidrick, Girard, Kan. ....	\$25
Jay & Kathy Stewart, McCune, Kan. ....	\$25
Kenneth & Mishelle Kmiec, Girard, Kan. ....	\$20
Shirley Gerwert (225), Weir, Kan. ....	\$20
George & Linda Barberich (225), Pittsburg, Kan. ....	\$20
Bob & Carolyn Zagonel (225), Girard, Kan. ....	\$20
M. Kathleen Brown-Cecora (225), Pittsburg, Kan. ....	\$20
Lee & Agnes (225) Goodman, Webb City, Mo. ....	\$20
Mavis Benner, Pittsburg, Kan. ....	\$10
Tim Windsor (225), Frontenac, Kan. ....	\$10

## The SNPJ Farm 2024 Picnic Schedule

SNPJ Farm, 10946 Heath Road, Kirtland, Ohio  
off Chardon Road (Route 6), three miles east of Route 306  
Visit [www.snjfarmkirtland.com](http://www.snjfarmkirtland.com) for schedule changes

May 18	<b>4th Annual Music Festival &amp; Craft Show</b> 15 bands/more than 30 crafters
May 27	<b>Memorial Day Holiday Dance</b> Frank Stanger Orch. & Don Wojtila Band
June 2	<b>Mentor Rotary Club Dance</b> - open to the public Eddie Rodick Orch.
June 9	<b>Miss SNPJ Commission Family Fun Day</b> The Chardon Polka Band
June 16	<b>SNPJ Farm Ladies Auxiliary Picnic</b> Bob Kravos Band
June 23	<b>SNPJ Loyalties Lodge 158 Picnic</b> Don Wojtila Band - FREE admission!
July 4	<b>July 4th Holiday Dance</b> Frank Stanger Orch. and Klancknik & Friends
July 21	<b>Cleveland SNPJ Federation/ SNPJ Farm Board Picnic</b> The Zolkas Band & more TBA
July 28	<b>SNPJ Lodges 5 &amp; 604 Combined Picnic</b> Jeff Pecon Band & Polka Mass
Aug. 11	<b>SNPJ Spartans Lodge 576 Picnic and Lou Novak Balina Tournament</b> Joe Novak & Friends and Patty C & The Guys
Aug. 25	<b>Penn-Ohio Polka Pals Picnic</b> Bill Bevec Band & more TBA
Sept. 2	<b>Labor Day Holiday Dance</b> Frank Stanger Orch. & Eddie Rodick Orch.
Sept. 14	<b>Slovenian Sausage Festival</b> hosted by the Polka Hall of Fame
Sept. 22	<b>SNPJ Farm Slovenian Grape Festival</b> Annual parade/music by Tony Fortuna Band

Gates open at 1 p.m. rain or shine. Sunday dinners are served starting at 2 p.m. Sunday music and dancing from 3 to 7 p.m. Sunday picnic admission is \$8 per person. No outside food or beverages permitted. No pets. The SNPJ Farm is a cash-only venue; there is no on-site ATM.



### information at your fingertips

Looking for information on your SNPJ life insurance and annuity policies? Pay a visit to [snpj.org](http://snpj.org), click the "SNPJ Portal" link and follow the step-by-step instructions.

## PROSVETA Crossword On The Road (#0524) by StatePoint Media

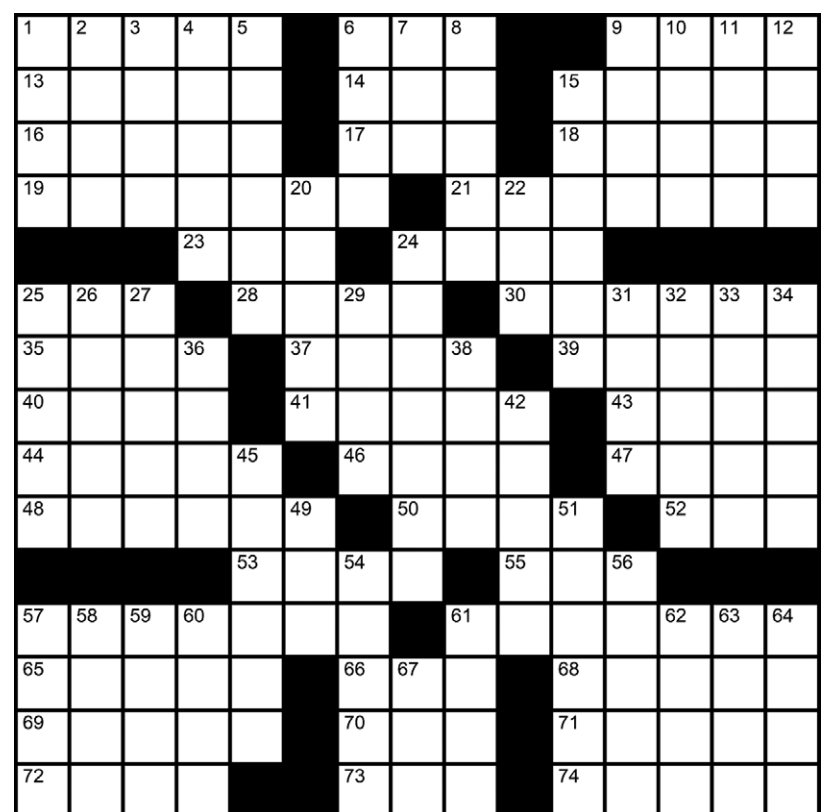
### ACROSS

1. More down in the dumps
6. Will Ferrell's 2003 Christmas character
9. Century Gothic, e.g.
13. Twisted cotton thread
14. Greek "t"
15. Biblical mount
16. Dessert sandwiches
17. Barley bristle
18. Pungent edible bulb
19. \*Shared ride
21. \*Yellow Brick Road traveller
23. Member of the Benevolent Order
24. Sword handle
25. The little one "stops to tie his shoe"
28. Al "fodder"
30. \*Gas station option
35. Thailand money
37. Phone cam images
39. Fill with happy spirit
40. Bora \_\_\_\_\_
41. Vexed
43. Uncontrolled swerve
44. Middle Eastern V.I.P.s
46. Genesis twin
47. "The Odyssey," e.g.
48. Hooray!
50. Speaking platform
52. Campfire residue
53. What sailors are to captain

### DOWN

1. Cold War's Warsaw Pact, e.g.
2. Turkish money
3. One on drugs
4. Run off to Vegas?
5. Sold on eBay, usually
6. Short for "and elsewhere"
7. Hammurabi's code, e.g.
8. Plural of fundus
9. Porto \_\_\_\_\_, Italy
10. Got this!
11. Sodium hydroxide
12. Like Tim of "A Christmas Carol"
15. Foray
20. Giraffe's striped-legged cousin
22. Like one of the Testaments

24. Fine-toothed metal cutter
25. \*Famous road from Beatles crossing
26. Actress Watts
27. Minute parasite
29. \*Spare one
31. "If all \_\_\_\_\_ fails"
32. Sarpa \_\_\_\_\_, coral reef fish
33. Tiny purses
34. Olden day phlebotomy instrument
36. Waterproof canvas
38. Clothing line
42. UAE's most populous city
45. Close the fastener, e.g.
49. Epoch
51. Between 90 and 180 degrees
54. E-wallet's content
56. Very, in music
57. Japanese zither
58. Author Bagnold
59. Goes with interest
60. Great masters' medium, pl.
61. \*Hoofed "express" traveler
62. "The Summer I Turned Pretty" actress Lola \_\_\_\_\_
63. Solemn promise
64. Surveyor's map
67. Morning drops





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The solution to puzzle #0524 will run in the June 3 issue.



Eighteen volunteers, including SNPJ Lodge 581 members **John Moore, Marcia Klancer Bleggi, John Troha, Pat Moore, Shawnee Troha, Tyler Troha and Dan Troha**, took part in the 24th Jackson Road/West Creek Road cleanup.

## For Lodge 581, a chilly start to the road cleanup

by MARCIA KLANCER BLEGGI  
Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer

**ST. MARYS, Pa.** — SNPJ Lodge 581 members organized the 24th Jackson Road/West Creek Road Cleanup, originally started by the Friends of Jackson Road and the Troha family, and led by Robert and Jerry Troha.

This year a group of 18 volunteers participated in the cleanup: seven members of Lodge 581, several students from both high schools in St. Marys, their parents, and two college students. Pennsylvania Cleanways provided all of the vests, signs, gloves and bags. Members of the North Central Pennsylvania Polka Boosters Club helped prepare the lunch, which was donated by Lodge 581, Friends of Jackson Road, and the Polka Boosters.

The day started with a few snowflakes, but no one decided that was any reason to stay home. In fact, two Jackson Road residents started early in the morning, using four-wheelers and ropes to recover 13 tires that were found down a steep hillside. With all the recycling services now avail-

able, we were disappointed to find that many tires dumped since last year's cleanup in what appears to be the action of a single actor.

Collecting all the cans, cups, paper, glass and other debris that should have been disposed of properly, the group was continually reminded of what it means to "keep America beautiful."

Lodge 581 members had plans to help park cars at this summer's drag races to raise money for the Jerry Troha Music Scholarship. However, the races have been canceled once again and that opportunity has passed us by.

This summer, we do plan to continue helping with the annual picnic hosted by the North Central Pennsylvania Slovenian Polka Boosters on Aug. 25 at the Kersey Fireman's. The picnic will feature Frank Stranger from 2 to 6 p.m.

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

## Lodge 158 offering free admission to June picnic

by DANIELLA VOLPE  
Lodge 158 Treasurer

**EUCLID, Ohio** — Happy spring, everyone! We hope that you had a wonderful Easter filled with family, friends and hopefully lots of treats from the Easter bunny. Now that we've all definitely stuck to what we gave up for Lent, we can look forward to all of the fun summer activities SNPJ has to offer.

Before we go forward however, we must look back first. We want to thank everyone who participated in the SNPJ Winter Classic Bowling tournament. It's always nice to have the opportunity to see so many familiar faces. Congratulations to all the winners!

We Loyalites also have a couple of important dates we want to shout out. First, a happy belated 26th wedding anniversary to Dan and Diane Horabik (Feb. 21), and a happy 47th anniversary to Don and Sue Srnick (March 26). With dedication like that, it's no wonder they're so good at keeping our Lodge running smoothly! We also extend a happy belated birthday to Danny Elam (March 14).

Now we can leap forward to May, when we have a lot of birthdays to recognize: Gina Marie Lorenzato (May 10), Nick Horabik (May 12), Emerson Elam (May 14), Samantha Lorenzato (May 17), Daniella Volpe (May 26), and last but definitely not least,

Carter Elam (May 28).

Jumping even further ahead, be sure to mark June 23 on your calendars for the Loyalites Lodge 158 annual picnic at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio. We'll have The Wojtilas playing some of those sweet, sweet polkas for you all day long, as well as a fully stocked kitchen with all of your Slovenian favorites.

Admission to the picnic will be free, so be sure to stop by and celebrate with us!

Speaking of the SNPJ Farm, we want to give a major shout out to all of the volunteers who are there week in and week out keeping the place running. This includes quite a few Loyalites members, as well as Dick

Tomsic from Lodge 5 and several others from time to time. While the Farm is only open during the summer, the volunteers are there all year round working on projects to continuously make the SNPJ Farm look better and better each year.

So be sure to support the Farm on May 18 for the first event of the season, the annual Polka Music & Craft Festival.

Keep up with all Loyalites Lodge 158 news and events on our Facebook page, our website, and right here in the monthly PROSVETA.

Finally, as always, we send our thoughts and prayers to all of our ailing and deceased members and their families during this difficult time.

## Keep your e-mail address with the Home Office up to date

Does the SNPJ have your current e-mail address?

The SNPJ Home Office periodically sends out e-mails to advertise the many benefits we offer our members. You can receive infor-

mation about our fraternal programs, events at the SNPJ Recreation Center, athletic tournaments, and product updates through e-mail.

In order to receive this information, we need your

current e-mail address. If we don't have your e-mail address, we ask that you send an e-mail to the Home Office addressed to [ksanders@snpj.com](mailto:ksanders@snpj.com). We will then be able to update your contact

information.

We try to keep in touch with all of our members as often as possible, and e-mail is a very cost-efficient and timely way to deliver information.

# SNPJ FRATERNAL HONOREES

Members celebrating 50, 60, 70 and 80 years with the Slovene National Benefit Society

by JOSEPH C. EVANISH  
SNPJ National President/CEO

Of the 2,000 life insurance companies and fraternal benefit societies operating in the United States, fewer than 100 have been in existence as long as the SNPJ. As a not-for-profit fraternal benefit society, we have successfully provided life insurance to our members since 1904, along with a full package of social, athletic and cultural programs, scholarships, community service projects, and much more. SNPJ also offers annuities that can be used for IRAs and Roth IRAs.

Our more than 115 years of longevity and success have been made possible by the loyalty and dedication of our members. The SNPJ's engine may have been built and its direction set by its founders and subsequent leaders, but its path has been traveled, cleared and paved by our dedicated members.

As a way to show respect and appreciation to our longtime and loyal members, we recognize membership milestones with

a custom gift. The years of membership are counted in terms of adult membership years, not including youth enrollment years. These milestones of recognition include 50, 60, 70 and 80 years of adult membership.

We ask our Fraternal Honorees, once they have received their awards from the Society, to submit a short report on their past and present lifestyle, including their Lodge affiliation, hobbies and any other information that might be of interest to our readers.

In acknowledging these dedicated members, it is our privilege to show respect for these honorees by offering our thanks and appreciation for the loyalty they have shown the SNPJ for so many years. In this small way, through our official SNPJ publication, we can etch their names even deeper into the archives of the Slovene National Benefit Society.

On behalf of the entire membership, we extend our congratulations to those members reaching these anniversary milestones.

• **Bro. JOHN T. SMATHERS Jr.**, a member of Lodge 41 in Irwin, Pa., celebrated his 50-year SNPJ membership anniversary in March. In a note addressed to SNPJ National President/CEO Joseph C. Evanish, he writes:

"Thank you and SNPJ for the recognition of 50 years of membership, the lapel pin, and the truly kind words. That was most thoughtful of you and SNPJ, and I know my mother would have been very proud of me having made it to the 50-year mark.

"Although regrettably I wish I had been more engaged with SNPJ over these many years, nonetheless, know that I take great pride in my SNPJ membership as well as my Slovenian heritage, especially being married to a 100 percent Slovenian, Jill, from Cleveland these past 37 years!

"Looking back, in many ways SNPJ was our family business with my mother taking over as Lodge secretary in the 1960s from my grandfather, Andrew Bogatay, who manned that position for several decades for the White Valley, Pa., Lodge, noting that our home and my grandparents' home were always welcome to friends and neighbors visiting to "pay Lodge," but mostly to catch up with the latest family news and gossip.

"Again, thank you. It is wonderful all that you and SNPJ do to promote fraternalism and our Slovenian heritage."

**Bro. JOHN T. SMATHERS Jr.**  
Irwin, Pa., Lodge 41  
Cranberry Twp., PA

• Chicago Lodge 559 member **Sis. MYRAE FISHER** celebrated her 70-year SNPJ membership anniversary in July 2022. In a note of appreciation addressed to National President Joseph C. Evanish, she writes:

"After reading Sis. Irene M. Henkel's letter in the April online issue of

PROSVETA, where she apologizes for being late in thanking the Society for the beautiful 70-year SNPJ blanket she received, I decided I could procrastinate no longer.

"I, too, wish to thank you for the congratulatory letter and 70-year SNPJ blanket. When the package arrived two years ago, I thought, 'Has it really been that long since my parents, Anton and Mary Dobrovolc Andres, enrolled me as a member of the SNPJ?'"

"My childhood was filled with Slovenes and the SNPJ. My mother was born and raised in Waukegan, Ill. Her whole family belonged to Little Fort Lodge 14; my grandparents, John and Mary Dobrovolc, were custodians of the Slovenic Hall for over 15 years.

"That's where my dad met my mom. He and his buddy, Donald Lotrich, drove from Chicago to Waukegan to attend a dance at the hall and to scout out the Slovenian girls. They saw two girls dancing together, and the story goes that my dad said he wanted to dance with the girl with the glasses. My mom was eight years younger, so they courted for several years before tying the knot on June 21, 1930. Mom then had to move to Chicago where they were members of Pioneer Lodge 559.

"I have so many memories, as do most of us. My sister and I belonged to Perfect Circle 26 which was very active. We had monthly meetings and were always putting on a performance which we gave right there in the first SNPJ headquarters. The stage was perfect and the hall seated many people who came to watch us. I also wrote monthly for *The Voice of Youth*, and in my first year away at college I wrote a monthly column for the magazine.

"The bad part was that our parents had built a house on the northwest side of Chicago. To get to the hall for 10 a.m. meetings and rehearsals on Saturday mornings, my sister Ellen and I had to ride on one bus and two streetcars, which took at least an

hour each way. But because we had so many friends at our destination, it was worth the time and effort.

"After college I married and moved to the San Fernando Valley where my husband had been working as an engineer at Lockheed Aircraft in Burbank, Calif., since he graduated from college two years earlier. In all those years, from June 1956 on, we moved from east to west across the Valley.

"We raised two children, a daughter and a son, who never moved too far away from home as Jack and I did. We have four grandchildren from 12 to 31 years of age, although our two are just 14 months apart — and good friends. Unfortunately, they never experienced the type of childhood I had, but they are proud of the part of me that is in them. We've been to Slovenia twice and they loved it there, meeting relatives from my dad's side of the family. Cousins we met there have been our guests here.

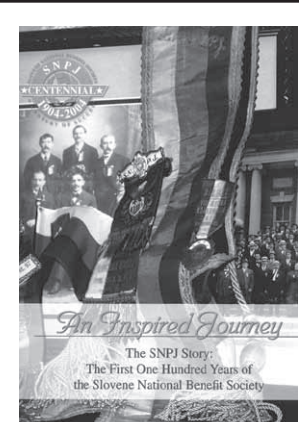
"Growing up in Chicago, I had the privilege of knowing some of SNPJ's early leaders. I can still see in my mind the building on Lawndale Avenue where PROSVETA was printed and the executives had their offices; the stairs from the entrance of the building that led to the hall upstairs, or the ones that led downstairs to the meeting room, kitchen and bar. Back then, we kids went to all the adult functions with our parents. We worked the cloak room for large events, sitting inside telling spooky stories and once in a while sneaking out to dance a few polkas. As it is so often said... those were the days.

"My thanks again to the Society for recognizing my 70 years as a member. I attribute being around this long to goulash and polenta, potica, and my mom's wonderful apple and lemon strudels. And I do use the blanket!"

**Sis. MYRAE FISHER**  
Chicago Lodge 559  
Woodland Hills, CA

## PROSVETA Crossword CLASSIC TOYS (#0424) solution

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H	O	M	Y						H	E	R			T	O	R	S	



## A CENTURY in the making

Proud of your SNPJ membership? Then you owe it to yourself to delve deeper into SNPJ history through the pages of *An Inspired Journey - The SNPJ Story: The First One Hundred Years of the Slovene National Benefit Society*. This richly-illustrated chronicle of SNPJ history compiled and written by SNPJ Publications Editor Jay Sedmak is available for purchase.

**\$17.50 EACH** (INCLUDES POSTAGE)  
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Payment in full must accompany all orders. Make checks payable to SNPJ. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

SNPJ fraternal sympathies



Sis. GAIL A. ULAGER (106)

**SIS. GAIL A. ULAGER  
• LODGE 106 •**

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — The Ulager family and the members of Lodge 106 sadly report the Feb. 5, 2024, passing of Sis. Gail Ulager at her home in the loving presence of her devoted husband of 60 years, Frank.

Born Gail Anita Vesta, daughter of Gwendolen and Robert Vesta, she was a graduate of Moon High School, class of 1959. She went on to attend Juniata College where she majored in mathematics. This led to a prolific career through which she touched many minds and hearts as a math teacher at Moon Area School District, as a remedial math coordinator and instructor at Robert Morris College, and around the kitchen table where she tutored (and fed) countless students over many years.

A 32-year SNPJ member, she was also a devoted member of St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church in Moon Twp., Pa., for 58 years.

Gail and her husband loved their Slovenian heritage. They were active in the Slovenian-American community, where they danced many polkas and made many dear friends. An avid reader since childhood, her love of books persisted even after a stroke took much of her vision. She continued to read two books at a time to the end of her days.

A phenomenal cook, she especially loved baking, which was her favorite way to show love. Like many Slovenian bakers, she was particularly proud of her potica recipe, which she developed from scratch based on Frank's childhood memories and an old shopping list of his mother's.

As a friend, Gail was known for a deep, joyful laugh and a steadfast, abiding presence. She was always available for a conversation, whether the matter be lighthearted or serious.

As mother and grandmother, she was a consummate nourisher in the broadest of ways. She provided for our bodies as a cook, for our minds as an educator, for our hearts with her love, and for our souls through the gift of her deep faith.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by three children, Lisa (Jerry), Linda, and Jim (Alicia); her seven grandchildren, Kate, Jesse (Dylan), C.J., Anna, Abigail, Joseph, and Matthew; and her sister, Roberta (Joan).

Her family would like to thank the many people who touched her life, particularly during those later years as her independence declined. The countless visits, rides, invitations and general outpouring of love from so many people filled the last years of her rich life with abundant grace.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sis. Ulager on Feb. 10 at Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Margaret Mary Church. Burial followed in Resurrection Cemetery, Moon Twp.

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

**SIS. JEAN F. OSTANEK  
• LODGE 126 •**

**CLEVELAND** — The Ostanek family and the members of Lodge 126 sadly report the Feb. 16, 2024, passing of Sis. Jean F. Ostanek, 103. An



Sis. JEAN F. OSTANEK (126)

87-year member, Sis. Ostanek outlived the life of her SNPJ insurance policy in June 2021.

Sis. Ostanek was born Aug. 3, 1920, in Yorkville, Ohio. She resided in Wickliffe, Ohio, for 68 years. She dropped out of school in the ninth grade to support her family during the Depression. Despite her lack of education, she documented every important event in her life, both through writing and photographs, and kept a diary every day. She worked for Fisher Body for 30 years before retiring 40 years ago.

She was affectionately known as "Grandma Jean" to many who knew her. Family was the most important thing to her, and she was the glue that held everyone together. She enjoyed her grandchildren, playing cards, gardening, and polka dancing at the SNPJ Farm. She was proud of her Slovenian heritage.

After retiring, she and a neighbor delivered meals on wheels for many years, often to people much younger than herself. She was an excellent cook and baker. At Christmas-time she would make dozens of poticas and numerous different kinds of chocolate candy to give as gifts to relatives, friends and neighbors. She passed this baking skill on to her daughters and granddaughters.

Up until the last few weeks of her life, she was living in her house, enjoying her favorite after-lunch Ghirardelli chocolates, and playing cards with whomever was looking after her that day. She was a remarkable woman.

She is survived by her children, Cynthia Jelinek (Charlie Gulyash), Gregory Ostanek and Loree (Tom) Rudd; her grandchildren, Kevin, Brent (Courtney), Heather, Katie (Ryan), Jon (Beth) and Kelly (Dave); and great-grandchildren Kevin, Brynlee, Kyle, Carson, Wade, Eve, Nathan and Levi.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank "Ozzie;" and her granddaughter, Miranda Gulyash.

Interment at Whitehaven Cemetery, Mayfield, Ohio, and a celebration of life are planned at a later date.

The family suggests donations in her memory to the SNPJ Farm ([www.snpjfarm-kirtland.com/](http://www.snpjfarm-kirtland.com/)) or Hospice of the Western Reserve ([www.hospicewr.org/Patients-and-Caregivers/Giving-Back](http://www.hospicewr.org/Patients-and-Caregivers/Giving-Back)).

On behalf of the members of Lodge 126 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we offer our condolences to Sis. Ostanek's family, relatives and friends on their loss.

**BRO. DONALD E. SCALES  
• LODGE 225 •**

**GIRARD, Kan.** — The Scales family and the members of Lodge 225 sadly report the Feb. 18, 2024, passing of Bro. Donald Earl Scales, 81, of Girard, at the Kansas City Hospice House, Kansas City, Mo.

Bro. Scales was born Feb. 12, 1943, in Crawford County, Kan., to Glen Wilford and Julia Faye (McColm) Scales. Don lived in the area most of his life. He graduated from Cherokee High School in 1961 and later joined the U.S. Army Reserves, serving from October 1963 to October 1969. On Jan. 30, 1965, he married Linda Lee Clugston in Crawford County; she survives at the home in Girard.

Donald worked as a coal miner for 23 years at Mine 19 Big Brutus and LaCygne, Kan.



Bro. DONALD E. SCALES (225)

He and his wife Linda later owned and operated J and W Poultry in Girard. He was of the Christian faith.

A 28-year SNPJ member, Don served as SNPJ Lodge 225 president for 10 years. He was also a member of the American Legion in Cherokee, Kan.; the American Legion in Girard; the Masonic Lodge; Elks Club 412; ER for two years; and the Cherokee Gun Club. He was also a Mirza Temple Shriner, a lifetime member of Big Brutus Inc., a Tank Pond member, and a member of the West Mineral Eagles.

Survivors include his wife, Linda; children Glen W. (Sherry) Scales of Allen, Texas, and Donna L. (Steven) Platt of Butler, Mo.; brother Melvin (Mary Jo) Scales of Pittsburg, Kan.; grandchildren Jenny Jo Burdine, Kaleb Platt, Breanna Jones, and Tessa Webb; 10 great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a brother, Maurice Glen Scales; and a sister, Judy Scales.

Funeral services for Bro. Scales were held Feb. 21 at Bath-Naylor Funeral Home, Pittsburg, Kan. Burial followed at Monmouth Cemetery in rural Crawford County.

The family suggests expressions of sympathy be in the form of memorials to the SNPJ Scholarship Fund, 247 West Allegheny Rd., Imperial, PA 15126; and/or the Girard American Legion Post 26 Building Fund.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 225 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our sympathies to Bro. Scales' family, relatives and friends on their loss.

**SIS. HELEN PREMRO  
• LODGE 138 •**

**STRABANE, Pa.** — The members of Lodge 138 sadly report the March 22, 2024, passing of Sis. Helen Premro 92, of Canonsburg, Pa., in her home with her family by her side.

Sis. Premro was born April 14, 1931, in Strabane, a daughter of the late Jacob and Ivanna "Jenny" Krovina Vehar. Helen lived most of her life in Canonsburg. She was a 74-year SNPJ Lodge 138 member and a member of St. Oscar Romero Parish, St. Patrick Church.

A graduate of the former Canonsburg High School, prior to her retirement Helen had been employed as an aide at the former Western Center for 30 years. She was a kind-hearted woman who loved the Pittsburgh Steelers, gardening, and spending time with her family and friends.

Her husband, John Mathew Premro, preceded her in death on Dec. 7, 1984.

Left behind to cherish her memory are her devoted children, daughters Michele (Kenneth) Kosem and Pamela Ashley, both of Canonsburg, Tracy (Tim) France of Eighty-Four, Pa, and Donna (James) Strennen of Canonsburg; her son, Michael Premro (Paula Polochak) of Canonsburg; four grandchildren, Amanda and Austin France, and Matthew and Samantha Strennen; seven beloved great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Deceased, in addition to her husband and parents, are her son, Daniel M. Premro, who passed away June 29, 2013; her brothers, Paul, Jacob, Martin "Matt" and James Vehar; and her sisters, Lucy Heart and Jane

Wagner. She was the last of her immediate family.

Catholic blessing services for Sis. Premro were held March 27 at Salandra Funeral and Cremation Services, Inc., Canonsburg. Interment followed in Queen of Heaven Cemetery, Peters Twp., Pa.

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

**BRO. MARTIN F. KUMER  
• LODGE 715 •**

**UNIVERSAL, Pa.** — The Kumer family and the members of Lodge 715 sadly report the March 25, 2024, passing of Bro. Martin F. "Marty" Kumer, 89, at Saint Vincent Hospital, Erie, Pa.

Bro. Kumer was born Sept. 13, 1934, in Pittsburgh and grew up in Universal. He was afflicted with polio at age 9, which caused him a lifelong disability in his left arm. Nonetheless, he enjoyed a very happy childhood with his siblings, Max, Jack and Grace Ann (Taby), and his loving parents, Grace and Max Sr., all of whom have preceded him in death. Despite his disabled arm, he loved to play football. He played fullback for his school, earning himself the nickname "Crazy Legs Mart" with his fast and unique running style.

Marty attended Penn State University where he met his wife, Gayle (DeBonis) Kumer, who also preceded him in death. They welcomed two children, and in 1976 moved to Monroeville, Pa., where they spent their family years.

Marty enjoyed a career in advertising, starting at Pomeroy's Department Store and ending at the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, with some twists and turns through Harrisburg and Philadelphia. Some of his Pomeroy's co-workers became his closest friends, particularly Earl Brandt and Mike Hamlin.

He dearly loved all of his neighbors and shared fond stories of them regularly. He was an original owner in his housing development and was proud to have been there for almost 50 years. His neighbors took great care of him in his later years; for this he was very grateful.

Marty was passionate about his Slovenian roots. He visited Slovenia on three occasions, each time more eagerly than the last. He felt as close to his family overseas as he did to his family in the U.S., knowing that his Slovenian relatives were the link to his treasured heritage. He stayed in regular contact with his Slovenian family and thought of them often.

He was devoted to the SNPJ, having been a member his whole life. Some of his closest friends sprung from the SNPJ, and some of his most cherished memories happened at the SNPJ "Campsite."

Marty served as SNPJ Lodge 715 president for 30 years, from 1993-2022, and was elected by the Lodge as a delegate to eight consecutive SNPJ Quadrennial Conventions, those held in 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022. He also served as a member of the SNPJ Recreation Center Committee from 1994-2005, and was a frequent contributor to *PROSVETA* in recent years.

Marty played countless hours of contract bridge. He was a member of several bridge clubs and earned "Gold Life Master" from the American Contract Bridge League, playing competitively well into his late 80's. His bridge partners and friends were very dear to him.

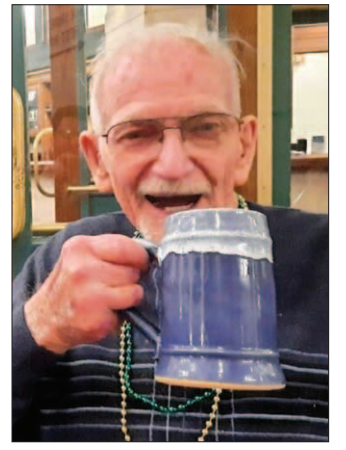
Marty collected good friends wherever he went because of his quick sense of humor, generous spirit, and down-to-earth personality. Even in his final years he enjoyed time with his newfound friends in Erie and Yardley, Pa., as he had extended stays with his children and their families.

He is survived by his children, Joseph (Rhonda) Kumer and Holly (Greg) Lazzaro; his grandchildren, Joseph (Danielle Tempest) Kumer, David (Teiahniah Tatum) Kumer, Gianna Lazzaro, and Sofia Lazzaro; his great-grandchildren, Daleah, David, King, Dream, and Skyla; and his dear cousin, Marlene Dean.

He will be pleased to find Max, Jack, Lou and Earl welcoming him to heaven's gates with a cold beer. Gayle will escort him to a nice comfy chair for the Penn State games and a few hands of bridge, and he will visit his parents in the evenings. We'll see you in a bit, pap. Keep the light on for us.

A memorial service for Bro. Kumer was held April 6 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Monroeville.

The family suggests donations to the SNPJ Recreation Center Cabin Renovation




Bro. MARTIN F. KUMER (715)

Fund, 247 West Allegheny Rd., Imperial, PA 15126; or to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 4503 William Penn Highway, Monroeville, PA 15146.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 715 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our sympathies to Bro. Kumer's family, relatives and friends on their loss.

In loving remembrance of  
**Rose Cadez**



B: JAN. 25, 1927  
D: MAY 18, 2014


STRABANE, PA.  
LODGE 138

Sons Jim, Ronald ("Buzz") & Jeffrey and their families.

In Loving Memory  
**W. Daniel Bearman**

Dec. 11, 1935 — May 26, 1994

*Those we love remain with us,  
for love itself lives on.  
And cherished memories never fade  
because a loved one's gone.  
Those we love can never be  
more than a thought apart,  
for as long as there is a memory  
they'll live on within our heart.*



Sadly missed by his wife Esther; daughter Susan (Jay) Sedmak; sons Fred (Brenda) and Dennis (the late Joyce); grandchildren Katie (Chris), Stephanie, Sam and Christine; and great-grandson Michael.

BRIDGEVILLE, PA

**DEATHS REPORTED**  
For the month of March 2024

LODGE NAME	DATE OF DEATH	CITY, STATE
A01 Clifford A. Moeller	02-18-2024	Pittsburgh, Pa.
A01 Catherine M. Lang	03-05-2024	Hawthorne, N.Y.
A01 Charlene Pancirov Thomas	01-26-2024	Sewickly, Pa.
1 John D. Brackett	02-19-2024	Scotts, Mich.
6 Robert C. Hull	01-27-2024	Davis, W.Va.
6 Paul A. Wallack Jr.	02-19-2024	Salem, Ohio
6 Edward J. Kims Jr.	02-26-2024	Aliquippa, Pa.
6 Elmer F. Gasper	12-27-2023	Carnegie, Pa.
33 Madeline M. Kosela	02-21-2024	Freedom, Pa.
34 Derrell Williams	02-16-2024	Cincinnati, Ohio
106 Ronald E. Bolind	01-29-2024	Clinton, Pa.
120 Philip A. Curbis	10-25-2019	Jamestown, N.M.
138 John C. Fleming Jr.	02-10-2024	Benwood, W.Va.
138 Dale R. Opeka	02-29-2024	McMurray, Pa.
158 Alice K. Martincic	02-15-2024	Timberlake, Ohio
218 Nancy J. Janson	02-24-2024	Aurora, Colo.
225 Sandra J. Schrage	01-26-2024	Thermoplis, Wyo.
225 Donald E. Scales	02-18-2024	Girard, Kan.
257 Rudolph J. Pivik	02-11-2024	Middleburg Hts., Ohio
274 Mary Frances Yuhus	02-26-2024	Mars, Pa.
277 Myrna J. King	01-21-2024	Poland, Ohio
518 Lester J. Appl	12-04-2023	San Diego, Calif.
518 Carl L. Slapshak	04-06-2023	Howell, Mich.
562 Pamela J. Asbury	03-10-2024	Steubenville, Ohio
564 Joseph J. Katulic	03-01-2024	Grosse Pointe, Mich.
576 Frank J. Benach	02-05-2024	Magnolia, Ohio
576 Dorothy C. Sulen	03-09-2024	Avon, Ohio
581 Angela Lichtner	01-18-2024	Ivyland, Pa.
584 Gloria Vagts	03-23-2018	Chisholm, Minn.
584 Susan K. Modoc	09-16-2022	Cloquet, Minn.
584 Janice M. Gehm	02-12-2024	Brookfield, Wis.
584 Richard Gasperic	01-31-2024	Waukesha, Wis.
584 Iris A. Belec	02-10-2024	Indianapolis, Ind.
584 Bruce O. Grampo	03-05-2024	Ripon, Wis.
603 Christine R. Shisila	03-16-2024	Parma, Ohio
604 Walter E. Koscic	07-13-2023	Glendale, Calif.
604 Joan M. Gregorcic	12-21-2022	Chardon, Ohio
604 Dorothy M. Rzeszut	02-26-2024	Chardon, Ohio
643 Vernon E. Corbin	01-16-2024	Orlando, Fla.
723 Marvina M. Cirar	12-15-2023	Banning, Calif.
723 Sophie F. Tidstrom	07-21-2022	Longmont, Colo.
749 Anthony Chiappini	12-01-2023	Johnstown, Pa.
776 Kathleen M. Porto	03-01-2024	Beaver Falls, Pa.
776 John P. Fabyanic	02-14-2024	Beaver Falls, Pa.
782 Donna M. Roncevich	02-24-2024	Cheswick, Pa.
786 Beverly Liddell	01-27-2024	Cora, Calif.

KAREN A. PINTAR  
National Secretary/COO



Volunteers assembled prior to heading out on the roads for the 10th Annual Yukon Spring Cleanup.

## Lodge 729 members spearhead 10<sup>th</sup> annual Yukon Spring Cleanup

by BARBARA LIPTAK  
Lodge 729

**YUKON, Pa.** — An amazing 10th Annual Yukon Spring Cleanup was conducted Saturday, March 16, starting at the Yukon Slovenian Hall. This event was co-sponsored by Yukon Lodge 729 and the Yukon Lions Club Ballfield and Event Center.

We were blessed with beautiful weather and an outpouring of volunteers. Each year, it's amazing to see

a community of friends and neighbors who come from areas beyond our local community to keep our roadways free of trash and litter.

A big thank you to all the businesses that participated, including the Yukon Volunteer Fire Company, Max Environmental, and South Huntingdon Township, for supporting our effort.

Again, a huge thank you to each and every one of you. Without you, this cleanup couldn't happen!



Volunteers from Yukon and the neighboring communities pitched-in to assist with the cleanup effort.



## Warm up to summer with SNPJ Region 3 double-header baseball

REGION 3 BASEBALL  
FROM PAGE 1

can run the bases after the game, and SNPJ guests can attend a meet-and-greet with the team mascot and pose for a group photo on the field.

For the low price of \$32 per person, you cannot go wrong; the overall experi-

ence is well worth the price of the ticket.

If you would like to attend, please call Ken Anderson at (248) 808-2185 to reserve your spot. Tickets should be ordered and paid for by May 29. Your tickets will be available for pick up on game day at the stadium.

## Lodge 603 preparing for Mother's Day festivities

by JEANNETTE HUMPHREY  
Lodge 603

**SAMSULA, Fla.** — SNPJ Lodge 603 members held an April 1 meeting following a covered dish dinner. The meal was provided by the Lodge "Easter bunnies;" members brought desserts to share.

Letters of congratulations from SNPJ National President Joseph C. Evanish were received by Lodge 603 50-year members Ronald Lactin, Paul Joseph Makarovich, Linda Chowder and Michael Luksan. The honorees also received their 50-year member certificates.

We had a very good turnout

for the Easter dinner served at the Lodge 603 Hall. Lodge President Connie Massey, Sheryl Benedict, Brandon and Kim Schmidt, and Nancy Bass were in charge of the meal. After deducting expenses, all funds raised were donated to our Lodge treasury.

Several other members made donations and helped out with the meal. Benedict Farms donated the produce, and Kim Schmidt conducted the Easter egg hunt. Prizes were provided by the Samsula Woman's Club. The youngest attendee this year was Maverick Max Massey who was only a few weeks old.

Shane Miller and Christian Razpotnik have been elected to attend the SNPJ Young Adult Conference which will be held June 14-16 at the SNPJ Recreation Center in the Borough of SNPJ, Pa.

Our Lodge received a \$300 award from the Home Office for attaining the Gold Level for activity in the 2023 Lodge Bonus Program.

Our annual Mother's Day celebration will be held May 12. Brandon Schmidt has volunteered to serve as chairman for the dinner, which will be served buffet-style starting at 12:30 p.m. Reservations are required; phone Ruth

Benedict at (386) 427-1410 or leave a message with the Lodge hall at (386) 428-3983. Adult meals are priced at \$20; children's meals (age 10 and under) are \$10.

This special day honors all mothers so they are relieved of any work. The men of the Lodge and community prepare, cook, serve and clean up. The event, which is open to the public, benefits the Lodge 603 scholarship fund.

The next Lodge 603 meeting and covered dish dinner are scheduled Monday, May 6, starting at 6:30 p.m. Until next time, keep supporting our great SNPJ!

## Out California Way

by PAMELA RICHTAR PANDZA  
Lodge 723 Recording Secretary

**FONTANA, Calif.** — Sun-kist Lodge 723 members held a meeting at the Ronald McDonald House in Loma Linda on April 7. We were pleased to have two guests join us, Rob and Ginny; we're hoping to add them and another frequent visitor, Bill, to our membership. It was announced that a wee one, Charlie Vargo from Colorado, granddaughter of Eric and Phyllis Wood, is added to the Lodge 723 roster.

Our business included notice of events from the SNPJ Home Office such as the Young Adult Conference, including their goodwill mission, as well as the 120th anniversary of the Society.

We noted the passing of James Harley and the upcoming memorial service. Also, the sister of his wife Carol, Cindy Petrich Shehata, recently passed away. She was a Circle 70 member and "grew up" at the Slovene Hall. Another friend of the Lodge, Fred Sonoff, an accordionist who entertained often at the hall in Fontana, passed away.

Additionally, the mother-in-law of staunch Lodge 723 member Ernie Blasich made her exit from this world just two months prior to her 105th birthday... and she had been managing her affairs, living on her own until the very last days.

We also recognized membership anniversaries and news from friends in the area.

A reminder went out to members and friends to sign on to follow the SNPJ Lodge 723 Facebook page. Lodge information is posted there, as well as some other cultural features including travel, food

and music relating to Slovenians around the world. It could be a great medium for sharing any photos or videos you have of SNPJ events or Slovenian cultural experiences.

Secretary Diana Rote requests that Lodge 723 members, no matter where they live, please send their e-mail addresses to her so that she can keep everyone updated on Lodge activities and news. And perhaps members will inform her of significant landmark occasions which we can share with others via PROSVETA or Facebook. Please do contact her at [grammad244@gmail.com](mailto:grammad244@gmail.com).

Our April meeting included a report from President Sherri Black and Treasurer Frank Rote illustrating the ongoing issue of the entangled hall and Lodge EIN numbers which they continue working to untangle. The tales of a number of their experiences begin like this: "After waiting two hours and 47 minutes on hold..." We all appreciate their work with a variety of entities to resolve past errors that burgeoned into a massive and messy mound.

As members regard the former Slovene Hall on Cypress in Fontana with nostalgia and fondness, a very special way to memorialize its story has come to pass. Michael Rote, son of Frank and Diana, has used his woodworking talent and skills to create a limited number of engraved wooden tiles commemorating Lodge 723 and the Slovene Hall in Fontana. Michael has created these from the actual wood that was saved from the suspended wall above the bar area. Some of the tiles even have nail holes as part of their design.



A commemorative tile created by Michael Rote using wood recovered from the Slovene Hall before the City of Fontana bought the property and razed the building.



Lodge 723 Vice President PAMELA PANDZA and President SHERRI BLACK with wearable mementos of "Na Zdravje," good times at the former Fontana Slovene Hall.

Members at the meeting voted to offer these commemorative pieces first to SNPJ members and to limit them to one per household and on a first-come, first-served basis. You can reserve your tile by contacting Secretary Diana Rote at [grammad244@gmail.com](mailto:grammad244@gmail.com), or alternately by snail mail to 9049 Regency Way, Alta Loma, CA 91701. Diana will work with you on the process of obtaining your piece of history.

As shown in the accompa-

nying photo, one of the tiles has been dedicated to partner the Lodge 723 president's inscribed gavel. Another one is being incorporated into a display box with some special hall photos/memorabilia to be placed in the SNPJ Heritage Center in Pennsylvania.

The next Lodge meeting is tentatively set for Sunday, June 2, in Loma Linda. It is possible that it will be canceled and deferred to the future October meeting date; officers will keep you informed on that.

## PROSVETA 2024 Publication Dates

JANUARY 2024							MAY 2024							SEPTEMBER 2024								
	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		
28	29	30	31				26	27	28	29	30	31		29	30							
FEBRUARY 2024							JUNE 2024							OCTOBER 2024								
					1	2							1							1	2	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
25	26	27	28	29			23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30	31				
							30															
MARCH 2024							JULY 2024							NOVEMBER 2024								
					1	2							1	2							1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31				24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
31																						
APRIL 2024							AUGUST 2024							DECEMBER 2024								
	1	2	3	4	5	6							1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		
28	29	30					25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30	31						

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).

### SNPJ Recreation Center 2024 Fraternal Events Schedule

June 7-9	SNPJ Heritage Center Weekend
June 14-16	SNPJ Young Adult Conference
July 12-14	SLOVENEFEEST 2024
July 28-Aug. 3	SNPJ Family Week
Aug. 30-Sept. 1	National SNPJ Days

### Uncle Sam wants your money... and it's up to you whether you pay now or pay later.

SNPJ offers **Roth IRAs** in addition to our regular IRAs and annuities to help build a safe financial future for you and your family. We've helped build secure futures for our members for over a century. Phone **1-800-843-7675** and we'll be happy to help you too.

# Westmoreland Federation wearin' the green for a St. Patrick's celebration

by LOIS DENNING (41)  
Westmoreland Fed Treasurer

**YUKON, Pa.** — The St. Patrick's Day celebration at the Yukon Slovenian Hall with the Dick Tady Orchestra was awesome! The crowd donned shades of green and enjoyed Guinness and Irish traditions. Our "Irish" dancers glided with grace and agility to traditional Slovenian polkas; the band showed their versatility with their Irish medleys.

Greeting you at the door were Westmoreland Federation President Mary Ann Bebar (41), along with Larry Krance (729) manning the 50/50 tickets. They looked so festive in their green outfits, especially Larry with his sparkling green bow tie.

Our kitchen staff was busy cooking klobase, sauerkraut, haluski, pierogies and pretzels with beer cheese. Our thanks to JoAnn Raspotnik (41) and Denny Susa (41) for serving and entertaining our guests. Thanks as well to the Yukon Lodge 729 ladies for the delicious baked goods, and to the bartenders, Gerald Govi (729),

Robert Yemc (729) and Linda Pocratsky (729), for all their help keeping the beer flowing.

Many thanks to SNPJ Region 1 Vice President Maury Sinan and his wife Kathleen for helping with the 50/50 drawing. Also in attendance were our local disc jockeys, Marko Polka Kuhns, Jerry Zagar, Jack Tady and Steve Novosel. Thanks for all your support!

A shout out to Dustin Ager for bringing a group of ladies to enjoy the day. A special thank you to Betsy and Eugene for bringing their mother, Erma, from Washington, Pa. She was able to dance to "New York, New York" and enjoyed her 95 years young with us.

Most of all, thanks to all who attended and continue to attend our dances. We appreciate your support and generosity. We are thrilled to keep our Slovenian roots alive!

We're looking forward to our next event, Pretty in Pink, scheduled Sunday, June 23, from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Yukon Slovenian Hall. This is the 13th year of our fundraiser which assists local cancer



**MARY ANN BEBAR** and **LARRY KRANCE**, both dressed in very appropriate attire for the event, greeted the St. Patrick's Day guests at the door.



**JOANN RASPOTNIK** and **DENNY SUSA** manned the kitchen for the Westmoreland Federation St. Patrick's Day celebration, serving up a variety of foods to the hungry crowd.

patients while they undergo treatment. Please be sure to mark your calendars for this worthy cause. Pretty in Pink features music by the Polka Classics, food, refreshments, Lake Bled cake, a basket drawing and door prizes.

# Support the Rec Center Cabin Renovation Project

by JOSEPH C. EVANISH  
SNPJ National President/CEO

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — SNPJ members have enjoyed the unique and remarkable place that is the SNPJ Recreation Center. Countless memories that have been made there are treasured by thousands. The Recreation Center is now going on 60 years old and thus, wear and tear has taken its toll.

The large upper cabins, situated opposite the lake, are some of the first structures built on the property. A few years ago the renovation of Cabins #1 and #2 were completed. The 12 motel units were also completed. During the offseason of 2023-2024, Cabin #15 was renovated with plans to complete Cabins #3-#7 before the 2024 season.

The cabins will be wrapped in a vapor barrier and vinyl sided. New windows and doors will be installed. On the interior, new flooring will be installed throughout. The bathrooms will have larger showers with new toilets and sinks. The kitchen sink area will be re-designed. A power vent will be installed at the roofline to draw out the heat, and wall air conditioners will be installed for those 90-degree, hot summer days.

There are 24 cabins, which leaves

16 more to do. The budgeted cost to complete one cabin exceeds \$30,000; thus, much more in the way of donations is needed. Since this is not a cultural or educational (scholarship) cause, but rather, recreational in nature, contributions are not considered tax deductible.

We encourage Lodges, Federations, members, friends and other organizations to contribute. Several have already contributed. While we do offer "Club Level" recognition, all donations will be listed in *PROSVETA*.

Donors at the following Club Levels will receive their name on a plaque: Bronze Level, \$1,000; Silver Level, \$5,000; Gold Level, \$10,000; and Platinum Level, \$25,000.

Donation checks can be made payable to "SNPJ." Please indicate "Cabin Renovation" in the memo area. Provide your name and address, and the acknowledgment name and address if the donation is made in memory of someone.

Send your donation to Slovene National Benefit Society, 247 West Allegheny Rd., Imperial, PA 15126. All donations are greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your support!



# Rec Center Cabin Renovation Donations for the months of January & February 2024

## Club Level Donations

### Bronze Level

John M. Resetch (2), Hampton, Ill. .... \$2,029.84

Oakdale A's Bowling, Oakdale, Pa. .... \$500

Workingmen's Beneficial Union Lodge A01, Sewickley, Pa. .... \$250

The Just families of Fort Wayne, Ind., and Tuscon, Ariz. (6) ..... \$100  
*In memory of Anthony Grandovic*

Jennifer Gabrielle, Dayton, N.J. .... \$100  
*In memory of Charles Baloh*

SNPJ Lodge 106, Imperial, Pa. .... \$100  
*In memory of Al "Toby" Baggiani*

Dave & Geri (719) Misch, Upper St. Clair, Pa. .... \$100  
*In memory of Joe & Lucille Krancevic*

Ronald Jerich (216), Anthem, Ariz. .... \$75  
*In memory of "Happy" & Frances Jerich (former Lodge 586) from Cheswick, Pa.*

Amy D. Mavrich (138), Canonsburg, Pa. .... \$25  
*In memory of Agnes Bostjancic*

David & Peggy Cushman (138), Houston, Pa. .. \$25  
*In memory of John A. Groll*

David & Peggy Cushman (138), Houston, Pa. .. \$25  
*In memory of Judy Germani*

# The deadline nearing for CAL Gorjup Open entries

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 25 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 at right. 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 send in your entries as soon as possible. As always, guests are welcome to participate.

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

## Important figures to consider...

- 29%...** people who would purchase more life insurance if they were asked
- 62%...** people who own coverage, but don't know what they have or why they have it
- 82%...** people who are under-insured

If your coverage is over 5 years old contact SNPJ at 1-800-843-7675 for a policy review.



## SNPJ Membership Anniversaries May 2024

### 80-Year Members

Lodge	Member
6	Anton W. Kral

### 70-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
33	Carole M. Zappie	584	Raymond V. Saari
87	Mary K. Bisignani	604	Loretta L. Bassett
218	June C. Burke	A01	Sandra J. Sheets
559	Carlotta P. Schmidt	A01	Alfred D. Schadle
559	Lorraine M. Balstrode		

### 60-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
5	Mary Lou Harmon	449	Annie Kwiatkowski
6	Susan L. Kozak	584	Ronald J. Gole
6	Ronald P. Kos	603	Jerry L. Hafner
89	Rita M. Bongioni	603	William F. Strickengloss
174	Frank M. Strazisar		
207	John W. Jaksha	749	Harry Cebon
218	Richard Falsetta	749	Carol M. Galayda
274	Stephanie P. Formosa	770	Miles C. Bair
274	Sharon A. Hollern	A01	Barbara A. Beneviat

### 50-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
6	David P. Lewis	584	Barbara D. Fisher
8	Arlenka Manojlovich	584	Deborah Reinke
8	Kathryn M. Stutzman	584	Kathleen A. Ferkul
31	Robert A. Patrizi	584	John S. Walasek
87	Lynn A. Klanchar	604	Mark A. Goryance
87	Debra L. Clifford	643	Steven E. Bada
89	Diane L. Nation	643	Harry R. Bryan
142	John D. Conklin	643	Bernice R. Mandel-Aurilio
142	Beverly A. Kramar		
142	Linda A. Bailey	715	Fred P. Harchelroad
158	Daniel J. Wojtila	715	Sheree L. Haus
174	Joseph Lesnak	715	Judith E. Festa-Hanna
207	Beverly K. Gabrielian		
216	David J. Youk	721	Linda D. Caggiano
218	Anton V. Valencich	729	Cheryl L. Miedel
218	Gerald L. Slavec	770	Gerald J. Sankovich
223	Dennis Barbi	776	Randall M. Byers
277	Karol A. Baughman	782	Kurt C. Weitzel
559	Andrea M. Spudich	A02	Carol J. Wood
576	Frank A. Lipold		

## 2024 Wisconsin SNPJ/Lucky Lanes Golf Outing June 15, 2024

at Brookfield Hills Golf Course, Brookfield, Wis.  
Starting tee times: 7:30-9:07 a.m. • Team scramble

Name	Lodge	Phone or e-mail
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Team captain's name & e-mail:

The \$80 per person entry fee covers greens fees, cart rental, prizes, and a sandwich at the turn.

Return this form, along with entry fees, to:

Lucky Lanes

5014 W. Howard Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53220

Phone: (414) 543-7110

Make checks payable to **LUCKY LANES**

**ENTRY DEADLINE IS JUNE 3, 2024**

The Home Office will verify all memberships. Complete tournament rules are available by contacting the SNPJ Fraternal Department, 247 West Allegheny Road, Imperial, PA 15126.

## 58th 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