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# Young adults, contact your Lodge secretary to participate in the 2025 Young Adult Conference

by COURTNEY KOENIG  
SNPJ Fraternal Director

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — This year’s SNPJ Young Adult Conference (YAC) is scheduled the weekend of June 13-15 at the SNPJ Recreation Center.

The Young Adult Conference is a weekend-long program designed for 18- to 30-year-old SNPJ members to learn about membership benefits, and to voice their ideas, opinions and concerns regarding the Society. It is also an

opportunity to participate in a volunteer project during the weekend.

YAC delegates are elected by their Lodges; those interested in attending the conference should contact their Lodge secretary. The Society will pay for delegate transportation, lodging and meals throughout the weekend. The 2025 conference will include a community service project, and a brief meeting is also scheduled. The chairperson for this year’s conference is Lanie Maresh (449).

Eligibility is based on birthdate. All Young Adult Conference delegates and surrogate delegates must have reached their 18th birthday by June 13, 2025, and can be no older than 30 as of June 15, 2025. Delegates and surrogates must be active members with a life insurance or annuity policy currently in force or paid-up with the SNPJ.

Regular delegates to the Young Adult Conference

**SEE 2025 YA CONFERENCE**  
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## briefly

### Home Office closed as we celebrate the New Year

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — The SNPJ Home Office will be closed Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025, in celebration of the New Year. Regular office hours, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., will resume Thursday, Jan. 2. We wish all SNPJ members and friends the very best in the new year!

### Lodge 776 sets a date for January meeting

**BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa.** — SNPJ Lodge 776 members will hold their first meeting of 2025 on Sunday, Jan. 12, at the SNPJ Recreation Center beginning at 2 p.m. All Lodge members are invited and encouraged to attend.

**RICH DOMBROSKY**  
Lodge 776 Recording Secretary

### Loyalites schedule Jan. 26 annual meeting

**EUCLID, Ohio** — Loyalites Lodge 158 members will hold their annual meeting on Sunday, Jan. 26, starting at 1 p.m. The meeting will be held in the club room at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio. Election of Lodge officers will be held at this meeting. In addition, we will discuss future Lodge events. Please attend and share your ideas.

**SUSAN SRNOVRSNIK**  
Lodge 158

### Have you recommended a new member lately?

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — Take advantage of SNPJ’s Recommender Program. Every valid referral earns the recommender \$10, plus an entry in the quarterly drawing for a chance to win \$100. Pay a visit to the SNPJ website, [snpj.org](http://snpj.org), to complete an online Recommender form and get a head start on your reward.

## THE DEADLINE

The next two *PROSVETA* issue dates are Feb. 3 and March 3. All material must be received by noon on Monday, Jan. 13, for the Feb. 3 issue, and by Monday, Feb. 17, for the March 3 issue. If you’re concerned about making the deadline, send an e-mail to [prosveta@snpj.com](mailto:prosveta@snpj.com) or submit your material via the publications area of our website, [snpj.org](http://snpj.org).

And the winner is...

The \$100 winner of the third quarter drawing in the 2024 SNPJ Recommender Program is:  
**Dwayne Romano, Lodge 106, Imperial, Pa.**  
Congratulations, and thank you for participating!

# Strabane, Sygan Lodges host the Winter Classic Bowl in February

by COURTNEY KOENIG  
SNPJ Fraternal Director

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — It’s that time of year again for some friendly competition! The 2025 SNPJ Winter Classic Bowling Tournament will be co-hosted by Sygan, Pa., Lodge 6 and Strabane, Pa., Lodge 138.

The tournament will take place the weekend of Feb. 14-16. Men will bowl doubles and singles

events Friday evening and Saturday at Sygan Lodge 6, while the women will bowl doubles and singles Saturday at Strabane Lodge 138. On Sunday, the men will bowl their team event at Strabane Lodge 138 and the women will bowl their team event at Sygan Lodge 6.

The SNPJ Winter Classic Bowling Tournament

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To celebrate the holiday season, the Chicago District Federation hosted a Christmas party/lunch at the Honey Jam Café in early December.

# The Chicago Federation gets a jump on the holidays with December lunch

by MELANIE MATIASEK (559)  
Federation Recording Secretary

**CHICAGO** — Hopefully everyone enjoyed the Christmas holiday with family and friends.

The Chicago Federation hosted a Christmas party/luncheon at the Honey Jam Café to celebrate. It was wonderful to socialize and kick-off

the season in early December. Representatives from all Federation Lodges were in attendance, along with all Federation officers.

Tina Rigler organized this event that included fun games for everyone to enjoy, one of which

**SEE CHICAGO FEDERATION**  
ON PAGE 6

# Lodge 581 greeting 2025 with plans for new activities

by MARCIA KLANCER BLEGGI  
Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer

**ST. MARYS, Pa.** — SNPJ Lodge 581 members are making plans for 2025, starting with our first meeting on Sunday, Jan. 19, beginning at 12:30 p.m. at Wildwoods in St. Marys. We will swear-in our new officers: President Pat Moore, Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Bleggi, and auditors John Moore, John Troha and Tyler Hannah.

Some of the activities we’ve planned for the year include, of course, our scheduled meetings on Jan. 19, April 27, Aug. 31 and Nov. 30, all of which start at 12:30 p.m. Each meeting is followed by a polka dance.

We also plan to bake with Tanja Pogačnik in March. Tanja, who will be visiting from Slovenia, will lend her special touch to potica, strudel and *kremšnita*. All proceeds benefit the Jerry Troha Scholarship Fund.

Our Slovenian language class has been meeting for two weeks. Seven students were able to continue with the class and are progressing through the second phase.

Our vocabulary and speaking skills are developing and improving. Some phrases that

**SEE LODGE 581 NEW YEAR**  
ON PAGE 6



**Brynlee L. Edsall**  
Born Aug. 10, 2023  
Johnstown, Pa., Lodge 749

Lodge 749 welcomes Brynlee Lynn Edsall as the newest addition to the Lodge. Brynlee is the daughter of Jason (749) and Samantha Edsall, the granddaughter of Judith Edsall, and the great-granddaughter of Joanne Vasilko (749). We welcome Brynlee to the Society and extend our best wishes to her entire family.



Go **GREEN...**  
and help SNPJ save \$\$

Did you know PROSVETA is available online? If you would prefer to read PROSVETA online and help SNPJ save on printing and postage costs, register for the e-mail notifications by sending an e-mail to [snpj@snpj.com](mailto:snpj@snpj.com).



PROSVETA  
ENLIGHTENMENT  
(USPS 448-080)  
(ISSN 1080-0263)  
The Official Publication of the  
Slovene National  
Benefit Society  
247 W. Allegheny Road  
Imperial, PA 15126-9774  
Phone: (724) 695-1100  
Toll-Free:  
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website: <https://snpj.org>

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Subscription rate is \$8 per year for non-SNPJ members in the United States (Fla. subscribers, please add 6 percent sales tax). Canadian and foreign subscriptions, \$50 per year. Advertising information available by contacting our office. Material concerning the official workings of the Slovene National Benefit Society is given publication priority. Unsolicited manuscripts returned only if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed.

Postmaster: Send all address changes to:  
**PROSVETA, 247 W. Allegheny Rd., Imperial, PA 15126-9774**  
(Published monthly)  
(Periodical postage paid at Imperial, Pa., and additional mailing office.)

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

# Lodge 603 focused on Florida SNPJ Days to start the year

by JEANNETTE HUMPHREY  
Lodge 603

**SAMSULA, Fla.** — On Dec. 9, the members of SNPJ Lodge 603 in beautiful downtown Samsula gathered at the Lodge hall for a meeting and covered dish dinner. President Connie Massey brought the meeting to order with all officers in attendance. The Samsula Woman's Club held their annual Christmas Craft Show at the Lodge hall on Dec. 7 with a great turnout of customers and vendors. Chairwoman Cindy Griswold drove from New York to fulfill her duties. Ray and Paula Budd, along with Ashley Benedict and her assistants, took charge of the kitchen for breakfast and lunch. Marcy Galbreath was

in charge of the Christmas baskets for the drawings; Cheri Smith took charge of the baked goods and the silent auction. Through the craft show, the club raises money to help with community needs and to provide several annual scholarships. Mark your calendars for Feb. 21-22, the dates for the Samsula Polka Festival/Florida SNPJ Days. Admission is \$15 for one day; \$25 for a two-day ticket. The weekend entertainment features Marcy Galbreath and her band, 3's Company, on Friday, Feb. 21, starting at 3 p.m., followed by The Brewski Brothers until 8:30. The Frank Moravcik Orchestra will

entertain on Saturday, Feb. 22. We are fortunate to have Frank and his band perform each year. Guests are welcome to bring their musical instruments and join in the jam sessions. Special guests from the SNPJ Home Office will be attending the festival, along with Miss SNPJ 2025 Erin Lawrence (138). Ruth Benedict is serving as kitchen chairwoman throughout the weekend. American and Slovenian foods will be available from the kitchen, and the bar will be serving your favorite libations. The Daytona Polish Club meets twice each month at the Lodge 603 Hall for dinner and dancing. Their upcoming events are scheduled Jan.

5 and Jan. 19. Everyone is invited to join in on the music and dancing from 2 to 4:30 p.m. when the Polish Club events are scheduled. Dance admission is \$10 per person. The new light pole and security light have been erected and installed with the help of electricians Chuck Carter and his son Hesh, Bobby Weaver, Tank Tucker and Glenn Carter, all of whom volunteered their service to our Lodge hall. We appreciate the help! An ATM is now available at the Lodge 603 Hall. Our bar is a cash-based operation, and we hope this helps. Happy New Year 2025 from all of us at Lodge 603 in Samsula!



In November, SNPJ Lodge 449 members enjoyed a Friendsgiving lunch during their annual meeting.

# Lodge 449 ready for a new year of events

by TINA RIGLER  
Lodge 449 Secretary/Treasurer

**CICERO, Ill.** — Cicero Neighbors Lodge 449 members hosted a Friendsgiving lunch and held their annual meeting on Nov. 17. All officers attended the annual meeting, along with 13 members. Secretary Tina Rigler read the communications received from the SNPJ Home Office, which included annual report forms to be submitted to the Home Office, and gave a financial report. An annual audit will be scheduled before the next meeting. As a notice to all Lodge members, Lodge 449 will be meeting four times in 2025. The meetings will be held at 1 p.m. on the following dates: March 23 (with a bowling event planned after the meeting, location to be determined), June 22, Sept. 28 and Nov. 16. Additional events to be determined at a later date. The following Lodge officers were elected: President Justin Rigler, Vice President Meredith Maresh, Recording Secretary Edward Dabrowski, Secretary/Treasurer Tina Rigler, Sergeant-at-Arms Lanie Maresh, and auditors Vince Rigler, Jan Maresh and Jason Rigler. Congratulations to the officers! Edward Dabrowski, Tina Rigler and Vince Rigler were elected as representatives to the Chicago District Federation; the

alternates are Justin Rigler, Lanie Maresh and Jason Rigler. Lodge members decided on their four activities for 2025 to be held on the same days as the regularly scheduled meetings, if possible. Our first activity is scheduled March 23 when members and guests will be participating in two games of bowling at a bowling alley to be determined. The location will be announced in a future *PROSVETA* issue. Tina Rigler reported on the Chicago District Federation meeting held Oct. 19. The Federation planned a Christmas luncheon on Dec. 7 at a local restaurant. Justin Rigler reported that he and several other Lodge members attended the annual Slovenefest in July at the SNPJ Recreation Center. Justin performed with his father's band, Vince Rigler and the Polka Pals, in the Gostilna during Slovenefest. They're looking forward to performing again next year. Lanie Maresh reported that she attended the SNPJ National Board meeting held Sept. 13 at the Home Office as the Young Adult Representative. Lanie will be researching and selecting a project for which she would like to collect donations on behalf of the young adults and the Society. Tina Rigler also reported that she attended the September National Board meeting. The

following day, Sept. 14, she and Lanie were able to attend the annual Slovenian Sausage Festival at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio. Many people listened and danced to the tunes performed by various bands that day, and of course had the opportunity to taste the sausages made by several vendors. A panel of judges and those in attendance selected the best sausages. Vince Rigler and Edward Dabrowski reported on the Slovenian Grape Harvest Festival held Sept. 29 in Joliet, Ill., that opened with a Polka Mass. Sue Rus and Tina Rigler won the meeting awards. Following the meeting, Lodge members enjoyed a delicious Friendsgiving dinner. All members brought a side dish, which included cheesy potatoes, a green bean casserole, stuffing and sweet potatoes. The Lodge provided the main entrées, fried chicken and klobase. The food was delicious, including the desserts of potica, apple slices, mint brownies and pumpkin pie. I wish all members a happy and healthy 2025, and look forward to seeing our members at the next meeting on Sunday, March 23, starting at 1 p.m. with bowling to follow. Please contact Tina Rigler at (708) 257-8312 regarding the location of the bowling alley and plan to join us.

## Important dates to keep in mind for the 2025 Young Adult Conference

2025 YA CONFERENCE  
FROM PAGE 1

ence represent their own Lodge, and have a voice and a vote during the conference. Surrogate delegates will become regular delegates if another Lodge approves them to serve as their regular delegate, thus gaining voting rights. All delegates, both regular and surrogates, will receive room and board. SNPJ will pay 100 percent of travel costs (including airfare) for regular delegates, including surrogate delegates who become regular delegates of another Lodge. The surrogate must receive approval from the other Lodge to serve as their regular delegate. Surrogates who do not have the approval of another Lodge should be prepared to pay half of their airfare when making their airfare arrangements with TravelSearch, the Society's designated travel agency. SNPJ will not pay for rental vehicles. If traveling by automobile, you will be reimbursed for mileage not to exceed 1,000 miles round trip. Regular delegates, including surrogate delegates who become regular delegates of another Lodge, will be reimbursed 100 percent of their mileage. The surrogate must receive approval from the other Lodge to be their regular delegate. Surrogates who do not have the approval of another Lodge will be reimbursed half of their mileage unless they bring another surrogate and/or regular delegate with them in the vehicle. Lodge secretaries received the Young Adult Conference delegate election forms in a recent mailing. There are some important deadline dates that Lodge secretaries and any members interested in attending this conference should be aware of. Lodges must turn in their Young Adult Conference Delegate Election Forms by April 30. Any eligible member interested in attending the Young Adult Conference must contact their Lodge secretary to ensure that their name is included on the election form. Be sure to provide your e-mail address to your Lodge secretary; correspondence about the conference will be handled electronically as much as possible. Once the election forms are received at the SNPJ Home Office, all delegates will receive an introductory packet via e-mail. This packet will include a general information sheet, a tentative agenda for the weekend, and a Young Adult Delegate Registration Form. The registration form must be completed by the delegate and returned to the SNPJ Home Office no later than May 15. Return of the registration form completes the Young Adult Conference registration process. All delegates must turn in a registration form by the deadline date; otherwise, they may be replaced by an alternate or surrogate delegate.

# Help the SNPJ Home Office keep in contact by updating your e-mail address

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — 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 also receive information about our fraternal programs, events at the

SNPJ Recreation Center, athletic tournaments, and product and annuity updates through this e-mail communication. 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 [snpj@snpj.com](mailto:snpj@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.

# Up-and-Coming... A look at events planned by the Slovene National Benefit Society

- FEB. 14-16 .... SNPJ Winter Classic Bowling Tournament co-hosted by Sygan, Pa., Lodge 6 and Strabane, Pa., Lodge 138. Entertainment is scheduled at both Lodge halls throughout the weekend.
- FEB. 21-22 .... Florida SNPJ Days hosted by Samsula, Fla., Lodge 603.
- JUNE 6-8 .... SNPJ Heritage Center weekend at the SNPJ Recreation Center. For more information phone the SNPJ Recreation Center toll-free at 1-877-767-5732 or e-mail [snpj@snpjrec.com](mailto:snpj@snpjrec.com).
- JUNE 13-15 .... 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).
- JULY 11-13 .... The 42nd Slovenefest and the 67th Miss SNPJ Pageant at the SNPJ Recreation Center. For more information phone the Recreation Center toll-free at 1-877-767-5732.
- JULY 27 ..... Miss SNPJ Commission Family Fun Day picnic at the SNPJ Farm, Kirtland, Ohio. Music by the Don Wojtila Band.
- JULY 27-AUG. 2 .... Family Week at the SNPJ Recreation Center, Borough of SNPJ, Pa. For more information phone the SNPJ Recreation Center toll-free at 1-877-767-5732 or e-mail [snpj@snpjrec.com](mailto:snpj@snpjrec.com).



We've Got You  
COVERED



by DAVID GOMBKOTO  
SNPJ Sales Manager

# What's your New Year's resolution?

Upon entering the new year, it's common for people to reflect on their lives and set goals that promote health, financial stability and personal growth. Amid resolutions to eat healthier, save more money or learn a new skill, one resolution often overlooked is securing life insurance coverage. Buying life insurance isn't just a sound financial decision – it's a commitment to protecting your loved ones and ensuring their future stability. Here are five reasons why prioritizing life insurance should top your list of resolutions this year.

**1. A Foundation of Financial Security:** Life insurance is a cornerstone of financial planning, particularly if you have dependents. It creates an instant estate. Whether you're married, a parent, or someone with financial responsibilities for loved ones, life insurance ensures that your family will have financial support in the event of your unexpected passing. The loss of a loved one is already an emotionally devastating event, but it can also result in significant financial burdens. Mortgage payments, utility bills, outstanding loans, or even daily living expenses can pile up quickly. A life insurance policy provides your family with a financial safety net, helping them maintain their standard of living and alleviating the stress of immediate financial concerns.

**2. Lock in Affordable Rates:** We're not getting any younger. You will never be as young and healthy as you are today. One of the most compelling reasons to purchase life insurance as a New Year's resolution is the advantage of locking in affordable rates. Life insurance premiums are based on a person's age before anything else. Rates are typically lower for younger applicants because they pose less of a risk. If you're a parent or grandparent who's already covered, consider locking in rates for your children or grandchildren. Delaying the purchase of life insurance often leads to higher costs down the line. Health issues that may arise as you age can increase your premiums as well, or even make you ineligible for certain policies.

**3. Tailored Coverage for Every Stage of Life:** Life insurance isn't a one-size-fits-all solution; it can be customized to fit your specific needs and life stage. As your needs change, so does the importance of re-evaluating your coverage or updating it. If you're just starting a family, a term life insurance policy with a larger death benefit may be ideal to cover significant expenses like a mortgage or an education. You also need to consider replacing your income that someone may depend on. If you're retired or nearing retirement, you may need to secure a plan to cover your final expenses so it's not a financial burden on a family member. If you're single or without dependents, coverage for debts such as student loans or future costs like final expenses (funerals) can spare your loved ones from these financial burdens. Additionally, permanent life insurance policies can act as a savings tool, accumulating cash value over time that you can borrow against or use for future financial goals.

**4. Tax Advantages:** The death benefit of a life insurance policy is paid to a beneficiary tax-free. Some types of life insurance, such as whole life policies, offer more than just a death benefit. They can serve as a savings vehicle, accumulating cash value over time that grows tax deferred. The cash value of these policies can be used for a variety of purposes, including supplementing retirement income, funding a child's education, or serving as a financial cushion for emergencies.

**5. Peace of Mind:** Making life insurance a priority for the New Year isn't just about financial practicality – it's about *peace of mind*. Knowing that you've taken steps to protect your family's future provides an unmatched sense of security. Life's unpredictability is what makes insurance so essential. While no one wants to dwell on worst-case scenarios, being prepared allows you to focus on living your life fully, without the anxiety of what might happen if the unexpected occurs.

The New Year is a time for reflection and action. It's an opportunity to evaluate your priorities and make decisions that will have a lasting impact. Buying life insurance is more than just a financial transaction; it's an act of love and responsibility. Unlike many New Year's resolutions that fizzle out after a few months, buying life insurance is a resolution with enduring benefits. It's a long-term commitment to your family's financial well-being, one that will continue to provide value for years to come. Your loved ones deserve it, and there's no better time to start than now!

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



## New Address?

Please use this form so PROSVETA will move with you. Complete this form, attach your old mailing address, and mail to: PROSVETA, circulation, 247 West Allegheny Rd., Imperial, PA 15126-9774; or e-mail your new and former address to [snpj@snpj.com](mailto:snpj@snpj.com).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

New Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## A climate office for municipalities and regions

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — In mid-November, when a three-year contract on a public-private partnership was signed, Slovenia's Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy announced that a climate office for municipalities and regions will be formed to help areas adjust to climate change and increase their climate resilience.

The contract was signed by Minister Bojan Kumer and Gregor Macedoni, president of the Association of Municipalities and Towns (SOS), one of three associations representing Slovenia's municipalities, of which there are 212.

The project, estimated at EUR 199,000 (\$210,500), will continue until October 2026, with various activities extending after this period.

According to the ministry, Slovenia is the EU leader in terms of economic damage caused by extreme weather, which reached EUR 17.5 billion (\$18.5 billion) for the period 1980-2023. The ministry thus believes that measures should be introduced to allow the safe and sustainable development of local communities.

One of the project's main goals is to strengthen municipal administrations to be better equipped to plan adaptation measures, such as directing the population away from at-risk areas and increasing the resilience of infrastructure to flooding, heat waves and other weather extremes.

"[The project] is the result of long-term efforts by the SOS and the ministry," Macedoni said. "The office will offer municipalities support in climate change adjustment. It will help them prepare projects and organize training and consulting, while enabling a more effective cooperation with government agencies and other institutions," he added.

The office will publish brochures on adaptation at the local level, produce a monthly newsletter, launch a climate website presenting up-to-date information, and create a catalog of best practices. A key focus will be on areas under municipal jurisdiction, such as the management of residential areas and infrastructure adaptation to reduce the risk of climate extremes.

## National archives moved to new premises

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — The new premises of the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia opened Nov. 15, 2024, as Culture Minister Asta Vrečko visited the renovated and expanded former military barracks on Poljanska Road in Ljubljana, which itself has an interesting past. The archives in their entirety are now finally under one roof.

Vrečko said that the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia "deserve to be in new representative premises because they are the country's top archival institution." The Archives "keep all our history, the foundations of our statehood, and the documents that have taken us to where we are as a state, community and society," she said.

"Since the perception of archives in society has changed with the severe flooding [in 2023], five new regional archive storage facilities will be built," she announced. Minister Vrečko also said that archives were a "mirror of [Slovenia]," and those working in them are the guardians of not only the archival material, but also of memories.

Andrej Nared, the director of the Archives, is happy that the Archive finally moved to the complex that the government designated for the institution 30 years ago. The portion of the building that hosts the storage facilities was renovated in the early 2000s; a separate part of the complex was left untouched. The renovation of that section started in March 2022. The newly renovated area includes an exhibition venue, a reading room, restoration and conservation shops, a library, and offices for the staff.

The Archives were formerly housed at several locations in Ljubljana, and the material had long outgrown its main location, the Gruber Mansion in the Prule borough, which had been the seat of the Archives for seven decades.

According to Nared, this is the first time since 1990 that all Archives employees are under one roof. He hopes the new premises will be "a brighter mirror of the attitude of Slovenian society and the [country] toward archival heritage." He noted that the Archives keep around 30,000 meters (98,425 feet) of archival material, the oldest items dating back to the ninth century.

The former military barracks were



built in 1899 under Austro-Hungarian rule and were used for military purposes until Slovenia gained independence in 1991. During independence efforts in the late 1980s, the building served as barracks for the Yugoslav People's Army and also housed a military court.

Since the building is protected as cultural heritage, the renovation was completed under strict supervision of the national Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage.

## Slovenia joins EU Clean Hydrogen Partnership

**BRUSSELS, Belgium (STA)** — Slovenia has signed a cooperation memorandum with the EU Clean Hydrogen Partnership. In late November, the Slovenian Ministry of Spatial Planning, Climate and Energy said in a statement that cooperation reinforces Slovenia's commitment to advancing the North Adriatic Hydrogen Valley project, along with its renewable energy targets.

"We want to further our capacities and exchange of knowledge for a more effective development and introduction of hydrogen technologies in Slovenia," said Tina Seršen, a state secretary at the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Climate and Energy, after signing the document in Brussels.

Cooperation in the partnership will grant Slovenia access to support in improving capacities, exchange of experience, and the sharing of know-how and funding management, all of which will contribute to developing an effective hydrogen ecosystem. "Breakthrough green technologies will create significant opportunities for the corporate sector," the ministry added.

The Clean Hydrogen Partnership is a public-private partnership that provides support for research and innovation in hydrogen technology. By 2027 the project will have received EUR 1 billion (\$1.04 billion) in EU funds, and at least the same amount of private investments.

The EU also announced an additional EUR 200 million (\$208.6 million) for the partnership in order to double the number of hydrogen valleys by 2025.

## Koper joins Città del Vino winemaking network

**KOPER (STA)** — Koper will be the first municipality in Slovenia to join the Italian association Città del Vino, a network of local communities dedicated to winemaking. The membership agreement was signed Nov. 16, which is why one of the local St. Martin's Day celebrations was held a week later than typical.

Koper representatives hope that by becoming part of Città del Vino, the municipality's winemakers will find it easier to penetrate new markets. It also expects a raised profile as a wine destination, and to strengthen its winemaking identity and sustainable development efforts in cooperation with Italian areas committed to the same goal.

Città del Vino members have access to funding, projects and training programs organized by the association. In addition, Città del Vino supports events and festivals at which winemakers meet and work to expand into new markets. Established in 1987, the association brings together some 500 municipalities, cooperatives and wineries.

The Altroke St. Martin's Day celebration in Koper, marking the end of the wine harvest season, was held a week later than in most other Slovenian regions to coincide with the signing of the membership agreement.

## Jožef Stefan Institute opens SQUASH project

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — In October, the Jožef Stefan Institute (IJS) presented a EUR 11.5 million (\$12.4 million) project that aims to attract quantum science and technology researchers. SQUASH (Slovenian Quantum Science Hub) will recruit 40 postdoctoral researchers from around the globe; the IJS hopes the project will also improve its research excellence and competitive edge.

The project received a EUR 5.7 million (\$6.2 million) Horizon Europe EU

grant earlier in 2024; the remainder of the funding will be provided by Slovenia's Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

The five-year SQUASH project will be launched in March. The lead partner is the University of Ljubljana; the IJS will coordinate the program. SQUASH will bring together 45 academic and non-academic associate partners from Slovenia, Europe and beyond.

IJS director Boštjan Zalar hailed SQUASH as one of the biggest scientific research projects in Slovenia with strong financial backing. "An important goal is to attract foreign researchers to Slovenia and encourage Slovenian scientists working abroad to return," Zalar said as he presented the project.

"The idea is to train innovative experts in quantum research and technologies to prepare them for the challenges of the second quantum revolution," SQUASH coordinator Andrej Zorko added.

Participating researchers will be awarded fellowships to improve their research skills in four key multidisciplinary areas. The first area is quantum theory, in which they will research open questions of quantum physics. The second area is quantum materials: researchers will look for new concepts based on quantum mechanics that could lead to new functionalities of materials. The third area is the development of various quantum technologies, and the fourth is the development of quantum computing.

"Some other projects will be carried out as part of SQUASH, such as improving food technology and sustainable development in the fight against climate change; and developing more ethical, human-friendly and sustainable AI technologies," according to Zorko.

IJS representative Rok Žitk said that quantum technologies offer many opportunities in various fields, and SQUASH is an important milestone encouraging their development.

## A new floating mill and ferry on the Mura River

**BELTINCI (STA)** — In late October a new floating grain mill and a traditional ferry were launched on the Mura River in northeast Slovenia, a EUR 450,000 (\$487,000) project that is expected to attract more visitors to the Island of Love. The island, created by river erosion, was very popular among tourists before the old mill collapsed in 2022.

The new mill was constructed as part of ReKult, a project designed to upgrade the river's cultural heritage near the Island of Love in the Prekmurje region.

Beltinci Mayor Marko Virag said the project had been co-financed with EU funds, along with funds the municipality received through a Slovenian Ministry of the Economy and Tourism award process. "The mill and the ferry are not only a symbol of the past, [they] are key to sustainable tourism that unites history, nature and modern approaches," Mayor Virag said. "They should enable visitors to experience the unique Mura, its history, and its impact on the lives of the people of Prekmurje," he added.

Cultural and educational programs will now be offered, one of which will be Miller's Day, when visitors can become a miller for a day to experience this bygone job.

As for the Love Island name, legend says that after WWI, Countess Maria Zichy was riding to the island one day and saw a handsome man. The man disappeared as she drew closer, but she continued to return to the island until she came across the man – the miller's son – again, and the pair fell in love. When their secret romance was revealed, the miller's son left the village never to be seen again, the countess swore never to marry, and she thus became the last countess at Beltinci Castle.

During the opening ceremony, a ribbon was cut by Mayor Virag, Economy Ministry State Secretary Dejan Židan, and European Commission Representation director Jerneja Jug Jerše.

Židan said that of the five municipalities in Prekmurje that had secured recent funding from the ministry, Beltinci was the first to complete their project. Apart from the five municipalities, 12 private tourist entities in the region were awarded funding, which means that Prekmurje is in the midst a EUR 45 million (\$48.7 million) investment cycle.

Stressing the role of linking natural and cultural heritage on the island, Jug Jerše said she was happy the EU contributed funds for the project from the recovery and resilience program.

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



SNPJ fraternal sympathies

BRO. ANTHONY KOVACH  
• LODGE 677 •

**DETROIT** — The members of Lodge 677 sadly report the June 14, 2024, passing of Bro. Anthony “Tony” Kovach, 84, of Howell, Mich. He was a 66-year member SNPJ member.

Bro. Kovach was born Sept. 29, 1939, in Cleveland, a son of the late Anton and Anne (Zedel) Kovach. A few years later, the growing family relocated to Southfield, Mich., where Tony spent his formative years. He graduated from Southfield High School in 1957.

Tony was a proud member of Pipefitters Local 636 and spent his career with the Stanley Carter Company, working on a number of the most visible landmarks in metro Detroit. He was known by many of his colleagues in the trades, and he took great pride in finishing his jobs on time and under budget. His creativity and ingenuity were marveled by many of his co-workers. He believed in a hard day’s work and a firm handshake; his word was his bond.

Tony was an avid outdoorsman who welcomed the role of provider for his family. Whether it was hunting for deer or fishing for walleye, he passed along his love of nature to each of his nine grandchildren. He would spend hours gazing out his family room windows watching the birds and the wildlife go about their daily routines, and would often point out unique animals.

For more than 25 years, Tony planted dozens of pumpkin seeds in his garden each spring. The pumpkins were harvested by family and friends at the annual Grandpa Tony’s Pumpkin Patch Party. Rain or shine, Tony would connect his tractor to a specially-designed wagon for a unique hayride across his 10 acres of land, stopping at the magical gourd garden where the search for the perfect pumpkin would begin.

Tony is survived by his son, Jim (Bridgette); two daughters, Diane (John) Schram and Barbara (Paul) Theriault; two brothers; three sisters; nine grandchildren; and a great-granddaughter.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Carolyn; and a brother and sister.

A memorial service for Bro. Kovach was held June 21 at Lynch & Sons Funeral Home, Brighton, Mich.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 677 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our condolences to Bro.

Kovach’s family, relatives and friends on their loss.

SIS. MARION R. KRUPA  
• LODGE 3 •

**JOHNSTOWN, Pa.** — The members of Lodge 3 sadly report the July 13, 2024, passing of Sis. Marion R. Krupa, 90, of Irwin, Pa.

Sis. Krupa was born July 16, 1933, in Johnstown, a daughter of the late John Sr. and Mary (Lousin) Znidarsic.

She was a graduate of Johnstown High School and was employed at Ames Department Store.

A 73-year member of SNPJ Lodge 3, she was also a member of St. Mary’s Byzantine Catholic Church in Herminie, Pa.

Marion enjoyed Slovenian polkas and loved dancing with her husband in Slovenian dance groups. She also enjoyed bird watching, gardening, reading, crossword puzzles, and playing the organ.

Surviving are her loving daughter, Laura (Dezi) Danko of Irwin; a son, Adam Krupa of Phoenix, Ariz.; three grandchildren; two great-grandsons; a sister, Alice Eritano of Southgate, Mich.; and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Thomas E. Krupa Sr.; a son, Thomas E. Krupa Jr.; five brothers, Theodore, William, Frank, Joseph and John; and a sister, Josephine.

A Parastas service for Sis. Krupa was held July 18 at Baker-Harris Funeral Chapel, Conemaugh, Pa. Committal followed in Holy Trinity Cemetery, East Taylor Twp., Pa.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 3 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we offer our sympathies to Sis. Krupa’s family, relatives and friends on their loss.

BRO. JOHN R. VIDETICH  
• LODGE 715 •

**UNIVERSAL, Pa.** — The members of Lodge 715 sadly report the July 28, 2024, passing of Bro. John R. “Jack” Videtich, 82, formerly of Muskegon, Mich., at his home in Hesperia, Mich.

Bro. Videtich was born Sept. 27, 1941, in Muskegon, a son of the late Ralph and Olga (Marchuk) Videtich. He graduated from Muskegon Catholic High School in 1959 and later attended Coyne Electric College in Chicago.

Jack returned to Muskegon where he started a 31-year career with GTE Telephone

Company as an installer, and later as a cable splicer and cable installation technician until his retirement in 1999.

Jack enjoyed building and flying remote control airplanes, reading about World War II history, and working on the family farm in Hesperia.

He was the founder of Jack Videtich Variety Orchestra, playing the accordion and highlighting Slovenian polkas at various locations throughout Michigan for 42 years until the band retired in 2011.

Jack especially treasured the time he spent with his grandchildren through the years and enjoyed taking them with him during his orchestra performances.

He is survived by his children, Stephanie Grell and Michael (Brian) Tellez; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; a special cousin and longtime caregiver, Marie Videtich of Hesperia; his sister, Connie (Doug) Smentkowski; his brother, James (Dede) Videtich; two brothers-in-law; and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by two sisters, Marilyn Anderson and Diane Roast.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Bro. Videtich on Aug. 6 at St. Michael Catholic Church, Fremont, Mich. Interment followed in St. Michael’s Catholic Cemetery.

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

BRO. ERNEST M. KRANCE  
• LODGE 729 •

**YUKON, Pa.** — The Krance family and the members of Lodge 729 sadly report the Nov. 2, 2024, passing of Bro. Ernest Michael Krance, 94, of Euclid, Ohio.

Bro. Krance was born June 8, 1930, a son of the late Joseph and Amalija “Molly” (Korber) Krance. He grew up in “a small coal mining town by the name of Yukon” in Pennsylvania. He worked for a year in a coal mine alongside his father.

Ernie eventually relocated to the Cleveland area for work and raised his family in Euclid. He was employed at General Electric for more than 30 years as a machine operator.

He loved the outdoors and liked to keep his mind busy. He was a skilled carpenter and built many custom bird boxes. He was fond of birds and could identify a bird by its call.

“Mr. Ernie,” as he was sometimes affectionately called, was an avid gardener and known for growing delicious tomatoes, green peppers, cucumbers and lettuce, often sharing his crop with others.

Ernie and his daughter appreciated watching beautiful sunsets on Lake Erie together. He rooted for his favorite sports teams, the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Cleveland Guardians.

He was a proud Slovenian, and he and his brother Don repaired and rebuilt accordions and button boxes. Both brothers were well known in the Slovenian community. He enjoyed listening to live polka bands, and would often sing along and tap his fingers to the music. He was a 25-year member of SNPJ Lodge 729.

Ernie could best be described as a hard-working man who was kind, generous and humble; whose mild nature and quiet charisma just drew you in. He was a gifted storyteller, often telling stories about “the good old days,” and was also very witty. Ernie was a Jehovah’s Witness for many years, and his faith comforted him as he battled a serious illness.

He was the loving husband of the late Primitiva “Isabel” (Contreras) from Argentina; loving father of Joseph (Lisa), his “baby girl” Michelle, and the late John; adored brother of the late Amalija “Babe” Costellic (late husband John), the late Tony “Chuppy” (late wife Violet), the late Joseph (late wife Joanne), the late Jean “Nene” Stanisz (late husband Paul), the late Donald (late wife Florence), the late William (late wife Donna), Sandra, and Larry (Joann); and doting uncle to several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service for Bro. Krance was held Nov. 16 at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Euclid.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 729 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we offer our condolences to Bro. Krance’s family, relatives and friends on their loss.

BRO. EDWARD S. SPOHARSKI  
• LODGE 6 •

**SYGAN, Pa.** — The members of Lodge 6 sadly report the Nov. 4, 2024, passing of Bro. Edward S. Spoharski, 89, the beloved father, grandfather and patriarch of the Spoharski family, after a long battle with various health conditions. He was a 46-year SNPJ Lodge 6 member.

Bro. Spoharski was born June 21, 1935, the son of the

late Lucy and Stanley Spoharski, and brother of the late Loretta Funari. He attended St. Ignatius Catholic School and graduated from Scott Township High School. He then went on to attend the University of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania Institute of Technology to become a mechanical draftsman. He served in the U.S. Army from 1954-1956.

He was employed by Allegheny County as a draftsman, then by the Cyclops Corporation at various divisions for 20 years as a design draftsman, project engineer and plant engineer. He later worked as a distributorship owner selling Hunter Automotive equipment. He retired in September 1997.

Ed met his beautiful wife, Betty, and they were wed June 16, 1962. He was the proud father of four children, Glenn Spoharski, Ellen (Ken) Spoharski-Snyder, Edward (Kathleen) Spoharski, and Lori (John) Spoharski-Lerda; the grandfather of 13; and the great-grandfather of four. His legacy will live on.

His family remembers how Ed, Dad, or Pap-Pap illuminated their lives with his unwavering love, his contagious joy and happiness, and his steadfast example of how to be a good man. Unequivocally loved by all, friends and family alike, he was a class act, bringing smiles to any room with his quick wit and cunning sense of humor. He loved people and the roles he played in their lives, from

enjoying a cold Yuengling at the SNPJ Lodge 6 Club with his wife and friends, to being an exemplary father and grandfather.

A draftsman by trade but a handyman by nature, he would tell you that he “can fix anything but a broken heart.” An avid outdoorsman, he passed on the passion and knowledge of hunting and fishing to several family members. He loved watching his bird feeder in the back yard, he loved driving his truck around listening to polka music, and he loved his wood-burning stove in his basement – but most of all, he loved his family.

He was very involved in his children’s and grandchildren’s lives, never missing a birthday, sporting event, recital, graduation or family function. He was the glue that held the family together. In a noisy and challenging world, he was a beacon of light, happiness and peace, the centerpiece of his family, their role model and best friend. He will be missed dearly.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Bro. Spoharski on Nov. 9 at St. Michael the Archangel Parish-Our Lady of Grace Church, Scott Twp., Pa. Burial with full military honors followed in the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies, Cecil Twp., Pa.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 6 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our condolences to Bro. Spoharski’s family, relatives and friends on their loss.

DEATHS REPORTED

For the month of November 2024

LODGE	NAME	DATE OF DEATH	CITY, STATE
A01	Ruth Brennan	05-14-2014	Mentor, Ohio
A01	Mary S. Jany	12-13-2016	Northampton, Pa.
A01	Mary H. Arduini	06-29-2023	Northampton, Pa.
2	Robert A. Mahnich	02-23-2022	Hawthorn Woods, Ill.
3	Bryan Williams	09-27-2024	Chesapeake, Va.
5	Violet M. Rupena	10-15-2024	Willoughby, Ohio
6	Stephen R. Curcio	05-07-2024	Bryceville, Fla.
6	Barbara L. Stein	09-18-2024	McDonald, Pa.
6	Elaine A. Hilker	10-09-2024	Louisburg, N.C.
6	Anna Rose Bedner	10-21-2024	Bridgeville, Pa.
8	Carol J. Klut	03-01-2023	Chicago, Ill.
8	Robert L. Hoffman	08-31-2024	Stickney, Ill.
8	Ellen I. Kosich	10-23-2024	Munster, Ind.
34	Frank J. Konechnik	09-15-2024	Morgantown, Ind.
34	Milenko Car	10-04-2024	St. Louis, Mo.
34	Linda S. Rios	10-19-2024	Warsaw, Mo.
87	Charles R. Eberts	10-23-2024	Zephyrhills, Fla.
89	Helen Colussy	10-14-2023	Hickory, Pa.
89	Rose Marie Dubic	08-30-2024	Centennial, Colo.
106	Walter R. Rejniak	07-28-2024	Imperial, Pa.
106	Byron P. Yecko Sr.	10-09-2024	Coraopolis, Pa.
106	Alvin James Morosetti	10-22-2024	Oakdale, Pa.
106	John A. Dolak	10-27-2024	Pittsburgh, Pa.
138	Donna J. Lasch	05-17-2020	Triadelphia, W.Va.
138	Marlene R. Dammann	09-21-2024	Fredericksburg, Va.
138	Peggy Ann O'Bryan	10-14-2024	Washington, Pa.
174	Robert L. Naglic	10-09-2024	Little River, S.C.
174	Gary E. Korber	11-11-2024	Seven Valleys, Pa.
559	Frank P. Tobola	10-15-2024	Tinley Park, Ill.
584	Stanley A Vidmar	06-11-2021	Oak Creek, Wis.
584	Mary D. Strukel	04-25-2023	Milwaukee, Wis.
584	Mary Motley	09-02-2024	Eveleth, Minn.
603	Robert Mochilar	03-30-2024	Milford, Ohio
629	Gloria J. Kraeer	10-16-2024	Monroeville, Pa.
715	Glenn F. Rixner	12-27-2023	Plum Borough, Pa.
721	George A. Menning	10-14-2024	New Castle, Pa.
723	Myrna L. Lewis	10-02-2024	Alhambra, Calif.
729	Antoinette C. Bazala	10-03-2024	Greensburg, Pa.
729	Mary Lou Grabosky	10-25-2024	Oakland, Md.
749	Mary Jane Dougherty	03-01-2024	Johnstown, Pa.
749	Stephen J. Lemago	10-07-2024	Johnstown, Pa.
782	Helen K. Prasnikar	07-12-2024	Gibsonia, Pa.

KAREN A. PINTAR  
National Secretary/COO

PROSVETA Crossword  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS (#1224) solution

S	T	R	A	P		P	E	R			U	V	E	A
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PROSVETA 2025 Publication Dates

JANUARY 2025

5	6	7	8	9	10	11								
12	13	14	15	16	17	18								
19	20	21	22	23	24	25								
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FEBRUARY 2025

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MAY 2025

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JUNE 2025

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JULY 2025

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AUGUST 2025

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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



SNPJ Membership Anniversaries  
January 2025

80-Year Members

Lodge	Member
174	Margaret A. Perricelli

70-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
31	Victoria A. Maykowski	174	Eleanor J. Mele
41	Virginia Avolio	584	Marian F. Demovsek
87	Eileen Arca	782	William Grottenthaler
106	George Butya		

60-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Terry Piletic	562	Samuel J. McKay
6	John W. Changle	581	William Grolemund
6	Jon K. Levec	584	John M. Gerovac
6	Erwin McPherson	603	Janis J. Stevens
6	Dorothy A. Walsh	604	Edith D. Matiyasic
6	Stephen M. Misgalla	629	Linda M. Grieco
34	Kathleen A. Wibbenmeyer	643	Karen J. Chick
87	Shirley B. Kapelar	643	Donna J. Dermotta
87	Carol J. Radakovich	677	Sandra A. Grabczynski
87	Paul F. Adams	677	Lawrence A. Strauch
89	Mary A. Punola	715	Irene M. Rosignoli
106	Marguerite A. Benini	721	Madeline A. Read
117	Gerald A. Volk	723	Patricia L. Rowley
117	Barbara A. Pecht	723	Cheryl L. Gordon
138	Frederick J. Florjancic	729	Clarence L. Newcomer
142	Dale C. Traven	745	James A. Davy
153	Roy S. Chismar	749	Janice E. Gracner
174	Diane Deison	782	John W. Patrick
559	Judith A. Donisch	782	William J. Murray
562	Delores A. Vale		

50-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
1	Miriam L. Burkland	584	Gregory T. Hirsch
3	Jacqueline M. Eastwood	584	James E. Tonkovitz
3	Kevin R. Kornprobst	603	Thomas E. Weaver
6	Christina A. Martin	603	Bryan E. Petrich
6	Gilbert J. Hervatin	603	Carol J. Strack
31	Carolyn M. Keltner	603	Stacy J. Dolan
33	Nancy A. Stassen	603	Susan C. Reichel
34	Nancy A. Stassen	604	Rosemary C. Rice
37	Mary E. Brumfield	629	Kenneth L. Kuzins
87	Mona G. Stallard	715	Deborah S. Glasstetter
106	Mark V. Falconer	729	Marcia L. Kelly
113	Michael E. Burchardi	745	John S. Mlakar
126	Ronald J. Penko	745	Joseph L. Mlakar
126	Barbara J. Hetrick	749	Jody L. Lawson
158	Robert A. Somrak	749	William L. Shomo
174	Linda M. Kerr	770	Timothy M. Mummey
218	Deborah J. Pierce	770	Dawna K. Tayebi
223	Mary J. Naumann	786	Fredrick J. Mlakar
518	Joseph H. McMurry	A01	Monica Scannell
581	Karen M. VanEtten	A02	Heather A. Overly
584	Patricia E. Tetzner		
584	Mary K. Berg		

Out California Way

by PAMELA RICHTAR PANDZA  
Lodge 723 Recording Secretary

FONTANA, Calif. — Blue skies and pleasant temperatures greeted members who attended the Lodge 723 meeting on Dec. 8. Due to simultaneous events at the Ronald McDonald House, we had cozy quarters but found enough space for tempting food platters prepared by meeting attendees, accordion cases, and a collection of Toys for Tots. We also set up a display of Slovenian materials that included a flag, interesting features and information about Slovenia, and maps. “FEEL THE LOVE” lapel pins were distributed.

President Sherri Black just had the meeting moving, and who arrived midway but a very special guest. No, not Santa Claus, but Oliver Leathers, the happy and smiling great-grandson of Marcia Leathers and grandson of Jesse and Angela Leathers. Oliver celebrated his first birthday in December, so he garnered plenty of attention.

The extended family gave parents Robert and Jade a bit of a pre-holiday break, with the family present spanning four generations. We used this diversion to enjoy the delicious lunch items awaiting us. Greatly by chance, there was a well-balanced variety of foods.

Informal discussions developed on such important topics such as: “Can you eat potica with klobase instead of bread?;” “What is the best recipe for caramel corn?” (ask Ernie); and “What are traditional seasonal meals in Slovenia?” (photos featuring that menu were shared, courtesy of member Bojan Savric). Some among us thought a sip of wine would work well with the fixings, but our current venue does not permit adult beverages. We survived that omission.

With Oliver settled in as an observer and palates satisfied, business of the meeting continued.

We dealt with topics of an updated financial report, recognition of members’ special accomplishments, our future



[Left] **FRAN OOMS** and **ANGELA LEATHERS** with the collection of fun items donated by members for Toys for Tots.



[Right] **FRANK ROTE** (left) greets **Gor Baghdasaryan**, who is with Family Support Services for the Ronald McDonald House in Redlands, Calif.

participation in the SNPJ Day event being organized by Lodge 786 on April 12, the status and prospects of our Lodge facebook page, and other business.

When we arrived at the “election of officers” point on the agenda, the body unanimously supported a continuation of the current slate of officers, with the only change of Maria Sego replacing Phyllis Wood on the auditing team. Members voiced their appreciation for the work accomplished, particularly along the path to resolution of some financial issues.

It was voted to donate \$1,000 to Ronald McDonald House. We will also donate \$100 to the SNPJ Scholarship Fund in memory of Arnold Koci of Lodge 786 and the Fontana Button Box Club who recently passed in his 90’s.

Community service activities for 2025 will include a food drive; collection of pull tabs (save yours and ask your friends and neighbors, too); Toys for Tots donations; participation in the April SNPJ Day event in Brea; and some enhancements to our Facebook page, SNPJ Lodge 723 Slovene Memories, including the collection of photo and video segments from Lodge and Fontana Slovene Hall events.

Members present who recognize the challenge of travel on the freeways in Southern California voted to continue holding meetings on Sundays at 1 p.m. Meeting dates for 2025 were established: Feb. 2, April 6, June 1, Oct. 26 and Dec. 7. The new SNPJ calendars were handy, along with pens to mark the dates.


When the meeting was adjourned, a batch of pull tabs was collected and presented to the hosting home for credit to support families of children being treated at the Loma Linda Children’s Hospital. We all had another bite or two from the food table, admired the collection of toys (and resisted playing with our favorites!), cleaned up, and moved en masse to the outdoor area where we set up the Slovenia information and our three treasured musicians donned their accordions.

We saw some windows of the apartments at the house open to let the notes of polkas and holiday tunes flow in. We also donated packaged treats for resident families to enjoy at their leisure.


Do mark your calendar for the Lodge meeting dates. We look forward to getting together in Loma Linda on Sunday, Feb. 2.

Damjan Popelar’s  
Workshop

Meticulously detailed  
scale-model reproductions  
featuring Slovenian folk  
architecture handcrafted  
by Dolenjski artist  
Damjan Popelar



Traditional Apiary,  
Stična, Slovenia,  
19th century




Simončič’s Hayrack,  
Bistrica, Slovenia, 1936

Visit the online store to see  
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SNPJ Scholarship Award Program

A potential benefit of \$3,200 for Society members



ELIGIBILITY:  
To be eligible for an SNPJ Scholarship, the student must meet the following requirements:

• Be an SNPJ member for at least two years

• Have a \$5,000 minimum permanent life insurance policy in place (\$2,000 if purchased prior to January 1996)

• Enroll as a full-time (at least 12 credit hours) or part-time (at least 6 credit hours) student at an accredited college, university or trade school

TYPES OF SCHOLARSHIPS: All requirements **MUST** be satisfied in order to qualify for the following scholarships:

REGULAR:

- Member for at least 2 years
- \$5,000 permanent insurance (\$2,000 if purchased prior to 1996)
- 1040 Tax Form (*income level not to exceed \$20,000 per dependent/per family*)
- Maintain 2.5 GPA (out of 4.0) or above
- Annual SNPJ-Approved Activity

ACTIVITY (JOSEPH C. UMECK):

- Member for at least 2 years
- \$5,000 permanent insurance (\$2,000 if purchased prior to 1996)
- Extensive SNPJ Activity\*
- Maintain 2.5 GPA (out of 4.0) or above
- Age 30 or under

ACADEMIC:

- Member for at least 2 years
- \$5,000 permanent insurance (\$2,000 if purchased prior to 1996)
- Maintain 3.2 GPA (out of 4.0) or above
- Age 30 or under
- Annual SNPJ-Approved Activity

Full-Time Student

- Attend school as a full-time student
- Minimum of 12 credit hours/semester

Part-Time Student

- Attend school as a part-time student
- Must declare a major (six to 11 credit hours/semester)

SNPJ Approved Activity: Participation at social and athletic events, attend the SNPJ Young Adult Conference, attendance or service at meetings and conferences, attend or volunteer at special Lodge events, write an article to be published in *PROSVETA*, participate in an SNPJ athletic tournament (bowling, golf, balina, bean bag toss, etc.), help organize a youth activity at your Lodge, hold an office in your Lodge, volunteer to work during Slovenefest at the SNPJ Recreation Center, participate in an SNPJ-organized activity, perform community service on behalf of SNPJ (must be approved by Fraternal Department), recommend a new member to SNPJ.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Carefully review all SNPJ scholarship requirements.
2. Select the scholarship type for which you qualify.
3. Complete the scholarship application and deliver to your Lodge secretary for signatures.
4. Return the signed application, along with the following items, to the SNPJ Home Office by the August 1st deadline:
  - Copy of your last grade report or transcript (Transcripts do not have to be originals, but must show student name, semester, GPA, and number of credit hours completed).
  - Short essay about fraternalism, the principles of SNPJ, and how they work in our Society and its Lodges.
  - Brief history of your life, high school accomplishments, past awards and achievements, and college plans.
  - Copies of your parents’ and your 1040 tax forms for the previous year (if applying for the SNPJ Regular Scholarship).
  - Copy of the Lodge secretary’s letter (if applying for the SNPJ Activity Scholarship).

Please make sure all of the applicable items listed above are included when mailing your application. Failure to provide all required information at one time may result in denial of your application.

- **PAYMENT SCHEDULE:**
- **Full-time Students:** Payments of \$400 each installment are made twice a year (first installment: February/March; second installment: August/September) totaling \$800 per year. Applicants will receive payments for not more than eight (8) installments which may include graduate school.
- **Part-Time Students:** Payments of \$200 each installment are made twice a year totaling \$400 per year. Part-time applicants who have declared a major shall receive payments equivalent to the TOTAL amount the full-time student receives for a maximum of 16 semesters.
- Selection of students to receive the scholarship awards will be based on evidence of the applicant’s school record, personality, character, SNPJ Approved Activity, the applicant’s need for financial aid or academic achievement, and on the recommendation of the local Lodge of which he/she is a member.

Applications, renewal forms and the SNPJ Scholarship Program brochure are available online at <https://snpj.org/membership/scholarships/>

Applications for SNPJ Scholarship Awards should be sent to the National President

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS AUGUST 1 of each year. RENEWAL DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 1 and AUGUST 1. Mail to:

Joseph C. Evanish, National President/CEO  
SLOVENE NATIONAL BENEFIT SOCIETY Scholarship Committee  
247 West Allegheny Rd. • Imperial, PA • 15126-9774



# Annual toy drive closes out the year for Lodge 559

by KAITLYN CHIAPPETTA  
Lodge 559 President

**CHICAGO** — Happy New Year! I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday season.

Back in November, Lodge 559 held a toy drive during the annual meeting. Members donate annually to the local chapter of Toys for Tots.

Officers were reelected to their positions with the exception of vice president; we

welcome new officer Jennifer Matiassek! Incumbent officers include President/Recording Secretary Kaitlyn Chiappetta, Secretary/Treasurer Melanie Matiassek, Sergeant-at-Arms/auditor Geri Matiassek, and auditor Mike Vidmar.

Since almost all of our birthdays fell between our November meeting and our upcoming meeting, we all celebrated our birthdays as

well as Thanksgiving.

In 2025, meetings will be held on the following Fridays starting at noon at McCook Family Restaurant: March 14, May 9, Sept. 12 and Nov. 14.

Lodge members attended the Chicago District Federation Christmas party in December. This year the Federation held a luncheon for members and guests at the Honey Jam Café. It was a fun change from our

usual Christmas celebrations.

As usual, SNPJ Region 4 Vice President Tina Rigler arranged games and gave all attendees gift bags. Thank you, Tina!

I hope everyone is keeping warm and has a great start to the year. I'll see you at our next meeting on March 14 when we'll be holding a food drive for our local community pantry at St. Cletus Church.



Lodge 559 members conducted a toy drive in November during their annual meeting, sending the donation to a local Toys for Tots chapter.

# Help SNPJ save by reading PROSVETA online

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

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

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

years worth of *PROSVETA* issues at your fingertips.

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

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

Send your e-mail to [snpj@snpj.com](mailto:snpj@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.

# Chicago Federation celebrates the holidays in early Dec.

**CHICAGO FEDERATION**  
FROM PAGE 1

was to vote on the best Christmas outfit. Alenka Rus was the winner with her lighted Christmas hat, followed by runner-up Carmella Smidl in her holiday sweater. It was nice to see youth

members Adam Rus and Jakob Rus attend this event.

SNPJ Region 4 Vice President Tina Rigler surprised us all with Christmas gift bags that she presented. We all extended a big thank you to Tina for the gifts and for tak-

ing the time to organize this wonderful event.

Looking back on the past year, we enjoyed every activity and the chance to remember our Slovenian heritage. We will be discussing upcoming events for 2025 at the next

Federation meeting. We look forward to participating in these events.

From the Chicago Federation to the rest of the Lodges, we wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!

# 2025 Winter Classic brings SNPJ bowlers to Western Pa.

**2025 WINTER CLASSIC**  
FROM PAGE 1

ment is open to all SNPJ members. You can find the entry form at right or online at *snpj.org* in the athletic tournaments section. So grab a doubles partner, put together a four-man team, and get those entries in! All SNPJ bowlers are invited and encouraged to participate in this annual tournament.

Just a short eight-mile drive separates these two ac-

tive SNPJ Lodges, and we're looking forward to a weekend full of fun, fraternalism and friendly competition.

Be sure to stop by Sygan Lodge 6 on Friday evening for entertainment by the Stampede Band from 8 to 11 p.m. On Saturday, the fun continues at Strabane Lodge 138 with entertainment provided by Veseli Fantje from 7 to 11 p.m. Food will be available for purchase at both Lodges throughout the weekend.

# New activities planned for Lodge 581 in the year ahead

**LODGE 581 NEW YEAR**  
FROM PAGE 1

might be good to know: *Ne razumen* (I don't understand), *Kje je stranišče?* (Where is the toilet?), *hvala* (thank you), *lep dan* (have a good day), and *srečno novo leto* (happy New Year).

Another plan is a music jam session in the summer. We are inviting anyone who wants to play any instrument or sing. Think about your participa-

tion and bring a friend; SNPJ membership isn't necessary. More details to follow.

Polka dances sponsored by the North Central Pennsylvania Slovene Polka Boosters are scheduled Jan. 19 and Feb. 2 at the Wildwoods, and on Feb. 15 at the Kersey Firemen's.

If you have questions about SNPJ Lodge 581, contact Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Klancer Bleggi at (814) 335-4983.

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

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

## cook eat slovenia

This keepsake Slovenian cookbook, published in English, is available for purchase through the SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center

**\$40<sup>00</sup> each**  
includes postage

Return completed order form with full payment to:  
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Make check or money order payable to **SNPJ Heritage Center**

## SNPJ Winter Classic Bowling Tournament

### February 14-16, 2025

co-sponsored by SNPJ Lodge 6 and SNPJ Lodge 138 and SNPJ Athletic Districts 1 and 2

#### MEN

##### Doubles & Singles Events

at Sygan Lodge 6  
540 Third Ave.  
Bridgeville, PA 15017  
Phone: (412) 221-9862

☐ Friday, Feb. 14, 6:30 p.m.  
☐ Saturday, Feb. 15, 9 a.m.  
☐ Saturday, Feb. 15, 2 p.m.

#### WOMEN

##### Doubles & Singles Events

at Strabane Lodge 138  
269 Latimer Ave.  
Strabane, PA 15363  
Club: (724) 745-9860  
Lanes: (724) 745-9775

☐ Saturday, Feb. 15, 9:30 a.m.  
☐ Saturday, Feb. 15, 2:30 p.m.

#### MEN

##### Team Event

at Strabane Lodge 138  
269 Latimer Ave.  
Strabane, PA 15363  
Club: (724) 745-9860  
Lanes: (724) 745-9775

☐ Sunday, Feb. 16, 9 a.m.  
☐ Sunday, Feb. 16, Noon  
☐ Sunday, Feb. 16, 3 p.m.

#### WOMEN

##### Team Event

at Sygan Lodge 6  
540 Third Ave.  
Bridgeville, PA 15017  
Phone: (412) 221-9862

☐ Sunday, Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m.  
☐ Sunday, Feb. 16, 12:30 p.m.

Doubles & Singles Entry fee \$32 per person Friday/Saturday Only	Lodge No.	Highest Average 2023-24	All-Events \$5 per person YES/NO
1.			
2.			
1.			
2.			

#### Submit bowlers' names by position in lineup

Four Person Team Event Entry fee \$64 per team Sunday Only	Lodge No.	Highest Average 2023-24
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Team name \_\_\_\_\_  
Team captain's name, phone number & e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

The entry fee for each event is \$16 per bowler, \$9.25 of which shall be used for prizes and \$6.75 for bowling. An extra \$5 is charged to all who desire to compete for handicap All-Events prizes. The Slovene National Benefit Society adds \$6 per member to each prize fund except All-Events.

Return form, along with fees of \$16 per person, per event, to:  
Jason Cadez, Tournament Secretary  
179 Alexander Ave., Strabane, PA 15363  
e-mail: [cadez138@gmail.com](mailto:cadez138@gmail.com) • Phone: (724) 299-1138  
Make checks payable to **SNPJ Lodge 138**

**ENTRY DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 1, 2025**

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

**Entries will be posted online at *snpj.org***

# PROSVETA Crossword

## Winter Fun (#0125) by StatePoint Media

- ACROSS**
- Mulligatawny and gazpacho, e.g.
  - Half of NFL
  - "Oscar" of sports
  - Relating to sight
  - Sargasso \_\_\_\_\_
  - Dugout glider
  - Not fresh
  - First H in HRH
  - Face-to-face exams
  - \*Ice fishing shelter
  - \*"Polar" activity
  - \*Type of Christmas tree
  - Diagonal
  - Tax return professional, acr.
  - Kind of cola
  - Diaphragm spasm
  - Scepters' partners
  - Of two minds
  - \_\_\_\_ Jean Baker
  - \*Rabbit's winter one is white
  - Sheik's bevy?
  - Type of dam
  - Butcher's refuse
  - Etna's emission
  - Secret disclosure
  - Stellar
  - Chap or fella
  - Diabetic ketoacidosis, acr.
  - A or O, to blood

- Unit of electrical resistance
  - \*Finger warmers
  - \*Certain sleigh ride
  - Courtroom excuse
  - Gobbled up
  - Train runners
  - Land of taekwondo
  - "Caroline in the City" Thompson
  - Relating to Scandinavia
  - Not home
  - \*Last winter mo.
  - Klondike river
- DOWN**
- Acronym in a bottle
  - Chooses
  - Colorado's neighbor
  - a.k.a. pilau
  - Like a longer route?
  - Grayish
  - ATM extra
  - Carpus, pl.
  - Bring home the bacon
  - Unforeseen obstacle
  - \*Skier's aid
  - Da or oui
  - Jenny McCarthy to Melissa McCarthy

- Engagement, archaic
- \_\_\_\_-di-dah
- Onslaught
- \*Warming drink
- Faculty members, for short
- Behind a stern
- \*Frosty's eyes
- Type of hood
- Apollo of "Rocky"
- Inuit skin boat
- \*a.k.a. anorak
- \*Betelgeuse, e.g.
- \*Snow, in Italy
- Lord's estate
- Lithuania's neighbor
- NaOH
- Like a rosebush
- Church song
- Meow, alt. sp.
- \_\_\_\_-in-the-dark
- Milano moolah
- Toe the line
- Product of lacrimation
- Michael Douglas' dad
- "The Sun \_\_\_\_ Rises"
- \*What clues #4 and #34 Down have in common
- High affair
- Barack Obama, pre-pres.

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The solution to puzzle #0125 will run in the Feb. 3 issue.