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# Slovenefest: It takes a fraternal

by JOSEPH C. EVANISH  
SNPJ National President/CEO

Another successful Slovenefest took place at the SNPJ Recreation Center from July 11-13. It was a fun-filled weekend with outstanding music, delicious food, and a celebration of Slovenian heritage. Our annual event, Slovenefest, was first introduced in 1982.

While the main venue (outside stage) hops with the traditional Slovenian polkas, on other stages we have mixed in some country, country-rock, and rock 'n roll which has also been well received. At peak times there are four different stages hosting entertainment.

Along with live music by multiple bands, there are excellent food trucks, the crafter's bazaar, and our own SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center Museum with displays and presentations. The "Kidfest" was a big hit with families, along with the pool and the fireworks, of course. This is also the time when we crown Miss SNPJ.

Obviously, Slovenefest is a large festival and a major undertaking to host. It takes a lot of planning with the Recreation Center staff and committee. However, Slovenefest would not have been able to exist since its beginning in 1982 without numerous volunteers who embody the fraternal spirit of our organization.

It takes around 180 volunteer shifts to successfully manage Slovenefest. These are typically three-hour shifts starting on Friday and ending on Sunday night. The admission gates, golf cart courtesy shuttles and beer trucks are all handled by volunteers. Some of our very generous members volunteer for multiple shifts. Every volunteer receives a complimentary admission pass for the day of the shift that they volunteer.

The Heritage Center Committee, which is a volunteer committee, spends the weekend hosting "Closer Look at Slovenia" presentations

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## briefly

### Home Office closed as we celebrate Labor Day

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — The SNPJ Home Office will be closed Monday, Sept. 1, in celebration of Labor Day. Regular office hours, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., will resume Tuesday, Sept. 2. We wish all SNPJ members and friends a safe and happy Labor Day!

### SNPJ Lodge 6, SASC reschedule meetings

**SYGAN, Pa.** — SNPJ Lodge 6 has rescheduled the regular Lodge meeting in September to be held on Monday, Sept. 15, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Lodge Hall. The SASC has also rescheduled the regular SASC meeting in September to immediately follow the Lodge 6 meeting on Sept. 15.

KAREN A. PINTAR  
Lodge 6 President

### Policy owners, register to access the SNPJ Portal

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — The Home Office staff encourages all SNPJ members and agents to register for access to the 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 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 register for 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 SNPJ Portal experience!

## THE DEADLINE

The next two *PROSVETA* issue dates are Oct. 1 and Nov. 3. All material must be received by noon on Monday, Sept. 15, for the Oct. 1 issue, and by Monday, Oct. 13, for the Nov. 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).



### Michaela G. Barnot

Born Sept. 21, 2024  
Strabane, Pa., Lodge 138

SNPJ Lodge 138 welcomes Michaela Barnot as their newest member. Michaela is the daughter of Miss SNPJ 2013 Kristen (Cushman) and Zachary Barnot, and the granddaughter of former SNPJ Executive Assistant Peggy Cushman and SNPJ Recreation Center Committee member David Cushman, all members of Lodge 138. She also joins her big sister, Ryleigh, as a member of the Lodge. We welcome Michaela to the Society and extend our best wishes to her entire family.

follow SNPJ on Facebook!

## And the winner is...

The \$100 winner of the first quarter drawing in the 2025 SNPJ Recommender Program is:

**Elizabeth Hartman, Lodge 138, Strabane, Pa.**

Congratulations, and thank you for participating!



# Starting in September, an additional security measure for the SNPJ Portal

by KAREN A. PINTAR  
SNPJ National Secretary/COO

**IMPERIAL, Pa.** — Over the next several weeks the SNPJ Portal system that you use to review your life insurance policies and/or annuities, and that agents use to access client information, will be implementing the use of

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). The use of this MFA will bring an added layer of security required to access the information contained in the Portal system.

You will continue to log in as you have been

SEE SNPJ PORTAL  
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PERIODICAL MATERIAL

# Celebrate the traditional Grape Festival at the SNPJ Farm in September

by JOE VALENCIC  
Lodge 5 President

**KIRTLAND, Ohio** — Raise a toast to old-country tradition at the colorful, musical Slovenian Grape Festival on Sunday, Sept. 21, at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland.

A polka parade with Slovenian costumes, accordions and singing opens the festivities. Afterward, enjoy the music of the Joey Tomsick Orchestra for four hours of dancing, and savor hearty harvest favorites, including smoked Slovenian sausages, savory roast beef, and homemade krofe.

This joyful afternoon of music, food and culture is part of Slovenian Week in Cleveland hosted by the Consulate General of Slovenia.

Join in the sing-along as the squeezebox parade starts at 2:45 p.m. Joey Tomsick leads the way. Joe Valencic will provide you with the lyrics and the stories behind the tradition. Dance to polka and waltz favorites from 3 to 7 p.m.

The pavilion will be decorated with grapevines and

SEE GRAPE FESTIVAL  
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Enjoy an afternoon of good food, dancing and singing at the traditional Slovenian Grape Festival hosted by the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio, on Sunday, Sept. 21.



### Extending Slovenian Greetings in Cleveland

[From left] SNPJ National President/CEO **JOSEPH C. EVANISH**, American Fraternal Alliance President **Alison Koppel**, Consul General of the Republic of Slovenia **Suzana Česarek**, KSKJ CEO **Tony Mravle**, and AMLA President **Tim Percic** renewed acquaintances at the American Fraternal Alliance Spring Symposium held in Cleveland in May.

## Call for Candidates SNPJ Recreation Center Committee

This announcement serves as a call to all members interested in serving on the SNPJ Recreation Center Committee. Two positions for terms of three years each will be filled during the Sept. 26, 2025, SNPJ National Board meeting.

- Mileage reimbursement will only be paid up to a 100-mile radius of the SNPJ Recreation Center
- Compensation also includes a \$50 per diem

Resumes for these positions should be forwarded by Sept. 16, 2025, to:

### Slovene National Benefit Society

Joseph C. Evanish,  
National President/CEO  
247 West Allegheny Road  
Imperial, PA 15126  
e-mail: [ckoenig@snpj.com](mailto:ckoenig@snpj.com)



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**Jay Sedmak**  
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**e-mail: [snpj@snpjrec.com](mailto:snpj@snpjrec.com)**

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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Imperial, PA 15126-9774  
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## Pretty in Pink fundraiser celebrates a 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary

by LOIS DENNING (41)  
Westmoreland Federation Treasurer

**YUKON, Pa. —** It was a beautiful day in the neighborhood on July 27 at the Yukon Slovenian Hall for the Westmoreland Federation of SNPJ Lodges 14th annual fundraiser, Pretty in Pink. The event featured a grand entrance decorated with a balloon arch, donning shades of pink. Our thanks to Kristin Derry (41) and her daughter, Kennah (41), for their hard work assembling this project.

Back by popular demand, The Polka Classics entertained the crowd with a wide variety of favorites. The kitchen was busy satisfying all the hungry patrons with klobase, Mary Ann Bebar's (41) homemade roast beef, Maury Sinan's (782) famous pulled pork, pierogies, hot dogs, and my famous Slovenian beans.

The bar was jammed with guests enjoying their favorite beverages, and the dessert table did not disappoint! The famous Lake Bled cake donated by Kathleen and Maury Sinan was a hit as usual, as were Joann Krance's (729) *flancati* (cruellers).

Our basket drawing was held in its own room this year. The baskets offered golf packages, gift cards, cash, lottery tickets, Pittsburgh Pirates

gift items and Hofbrauhaus items, to name a just few. A big thank you to all the Lodges who donated their time and effort for this part of the event: Lodge 41, Lodge 729, Lodge 117 and Lodge 223.

My personal thanks to my cousin, Donna Cilli, who donated the beautiful wreath for the door prize. Special thanks to SNPJ young adults Makenzie, Alex, Kennedy, Harrison and Quinn Krance (729), and Cameron Murphy (41), for donating their time toward this worthy cause.

Many thanks as well to all the DJs who advertised for us and attended – Marko Kuhns, Jerry Zagar, Jack Tady, Steve Novosel and Sharon Ujcich – and to Ed Gould for creating a fabulous CD advertising our event's 14th year.

Grateful thanks to the Yukon Hall crew – Linda Pocratsky, and Carrie and Al Cosalter – for their bartending skills. You are so appreciated!

This year we were able to have a local cancer patient, Denise, speak about her journey and how we have been able to assist her with expenses. Denise's courage, resilience and hope inspire us every step of the way. She is a true fighter, a source of strength, and a powerful reminder of why we were



Photo submitted by Rich Dombrosky (776)

### Enjoying the Fare at the Annual Picnic

SNPJ Lodge 776 members held their annual picnic and youth fishing tournament on Aug. 3 at the SNPJ Recreation Center. Although we can't see any fish on the table, it certainly does appear as though everyone enjoyed the picnic lunch.

## Volunteers, all working together, make each Slovenefest possible

**SLOVENEFEST**  
FROM PAGE 1  
and avails the museum for viewings of culture and history.

The Miss SNPJ Pageant Committee is also a volunteer group who spend the weekend chaperoning the contestants and hosting the pageant program, which culminates in the crowning of a new Miss SNPJ.

There are also a number of volunteers who help the staff with the setup, cleanup and tear down of the festival. Of course, this is a very busy weekend for the staff who get little sleep working long days.

The sponsors are much appreciated as well. These donations help cover some of the costs, such as rental of facilities, tables, chairs, tents, golf carts, entertainment, etc.

It's hard to imagine a Slovenefest happening at all without the generous fraternal spirit of all of these many volunteers. So on behalf of SNPJ, the SNPJ Recreation Center and committee, a huge *thank you* for your volunteer help! You make it possible for the many attendees to simply come and enjoy Slovenefest. It really does take a fraternal to host Slovenefest!

## Tradition thrives at the SNPJ Farm Slovenian Grape Festival

**GRAPE FESTIVAL**  
FROM PAGE 1

hanging goodies – if you dare snatch a treat, you could wind up in jail!

Admission is free when you wear your Slovenian costume or bring your accordion to the parade. Participants should arrive by 2:30 to prepare for the parade.

The regular admission fee of \$8 per person includes four hours of live music and all the balina you can play; guests age 18 and under admitted free of charge. Dinners, sandwiches and

refreshments will be served from 2 p.m. on. The gates open at 1 p.m.

The SNPJ Farm is located at 10946 Heath Road, off Chardon Road (Route 6) in Kirtland, three miles east of State Route 306 and six miles west of Route 44.

Coming from Cleveland? Chardon Road is closed at the Chagrin River. Head east on I-90 and exit at Route 306. Travel south to Chardon Road and turn left (east).

For more information phone (440) 256-3423.



Several members of a group that toured Slovenia in June attended the Pretty in Pink benefit at the Yukon Slovenian Hall in July: [seated] **JENNIFER FETCKO** (138); [standing, first row] **DENNY SUSA** (41), **JO ANN RASPOSTNIK** (41), **KAREN VALENCIC** (138), **MARY ANN BEBAR** (41); [back row] **John Wright**, **STEPHANIE WRIGHT** (138), **FRANK VALENCIC** (138), **DAREN FETCKO** (138), **DARLENE ZUZEK** (138) and **LOIS DENNING** (41).

all here supporting this fundraiser in its 14th year.

Also in attendance was Joe, representing the Karla Nease Foundation, with whom we partner in this event. Thanks to his organization, patients can be helped financially during their chemo journey.

On behalf of everyone at the Westmoreland County Federation of SNPJ Lodges, I want to extend our deepest gratitude to all who attended or donated to our recent fundraiser for local cancer patients. Your support

means the world to us and to those whose lives are impacted by this disease. Your contributions help patients stay in their homes by maintaining their everyday necessities, such as groceries, utilities, rent, etc.

Thank you for standing with us in this crucial cause – we couldn't do it without you! Donations are accepted year round by mail to Lois Denning, 40 Peters Rd., Greensburg, PA 15601. Make checks payable to Westmoreland County Federation of SNPJ Lodges. *Hvala lepa!*

## Lodge 581 recognizes 2025 Troha Scholarship recipients

by MARCIA KLANCER BLEGGI  
Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer

**ST. MARYS, Pa. —** SNPJ Lodge 581 and the North Central Pennsylvania Slovene Polka Boosters established a music scholarship as a special way of honoring Jerry Troha's service to Lodge 581, both as its former secretary/treasurer and as longtime supporter of Slovenian culture and music. His voice calling out "e-i-e-i-e-i-o" echoes in the memories of the many people who remember him and support the scholarship program.

The presentations of two music scholarships were made during the July 27 dance held at the Kersey Firemen's. The winners received recognition because of their love of music and the importance of music in their lives, reflecting and sharing the values held by Jerry Troha.

Carmen Kopp, a graduate of St. Marys Area High School, received a scholarship to aid in paying for her expenses at Penn West Clarion University. In the essay she submitted, Carmen shared, "I have been rooted in my school's music and theater program since I was old enough to enroll. Each activity, from drumline, marching band and PMEA to musical productions, has molded me into the individual I am today. These activities have taught me invaluable skills that would not have been taught anywhere else."

Ivy Jane Ginther, a graduate of

Elk County Catholic High School, has been accepted to Susquehanna University. In her essay, she wrote, "I love sharing my musical talents with others because it feels like I can finally speak from my soul and be heard."

These two students demonstrate their love of music and are planning to share that love with others, as Jerry did with family, friends, and so many people throughout the area. More than 70 polka dancers congratulated Ivy, Carmen and their families as everyone joined in the fun.

The SNPJ Lodge 581 Slovenian language classes resumed lessons for the fall on Aug. 14. All class members were more than ready to continue their studies. Four members of the class will be traveling to Slovenia in September and are eager to practice their language skills.

The polka dances in the St. Marys area have had terrific attendance. The North Central Pennsylvania Slovene Polka Boosters have 11 more dances scheduled this year, so plan to join in. Contact John Moore at (814) 558-1457 or check the Facebook page for details.

The Lodge 581 fourth quarter meeting will be held Sunday, Nov. 30, at Wildwoods in St. Marys starting at 12:30 p.m. Plan to attend and offer your ideas for the upcoming year. Contact Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Klancer Bleggi at (814) 335-4983 for more information.



SNPJ Lodge 581 and the North Central Pennsylvania Slovene Polka Boosters presented the 2025 Jerry Troha Music Scholarship awards on July 27. Pictured are (from left) Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer **MARCIA BLEGGI**; **Frank Ginther**, scholarship recipient **Ivy Ginther** and **Stacey Ginther**; Lodge 581 officers **PAT** and **JOHN MOORE**; and **Mark Kopp**, scholarship recipient **Carmen Kopp** and **Heather Kopp**.

## Up-and-Coming...

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

- OCT. 10-12.....SNPJ National Bowling Tournament co-hosted by Sygan, Pa., Lodge 6 and Strabane, Pa., Lodge 138 at the Sygan Lodge 6 Bowling Center and the Strabane Lodge 138 Lanes. Entry forms available online at [snpj.org](http://snpj.org).
- OCT. 26.....Westmoreland County Federation of SNPJ Lodges Fall Dance at the Yukon Slovenian Hall, Yukon, Pa.; 2-6 p.m. Music by the Heritage Band; food and refreshments available. For more information contact Lois Denning at (412) 554-7404.



# We've Got You COVERED



by DAVID GOMBKOTO  
SNPJ Sales Director

# The apple tree that could have been

Jack stood quietly at the edge of the old field behind his grandfather's house. The land had been in their family for generations; a place filled with memories, traditions and plans. One of those plans was supposed to be an apple orchard.

His grandfather had dreamed of planting it for years. He'd studied the different apple varieties, even marked the ground for planting rows. There were notes in an old ledger, diagrams of irrigation systems, and receipts for fencing material stacked in the shed. Joe even remembered helping him clear rocks from the soil one summer when he was a kid.

But the trees were never planted. Every spring brought a new distraction. A broken tractor. A cousin's wedding. A storm that needed cleanup. There was always something, and every time his grandfather would say, "Next year will be the year."

Now the house was Jack's. The field was still there, open and quiet – but empty. No rows of trees, no blossoms in spring, no shade in summer. Just an open field and the realization that a dream had died waiting on "someday."

That field, Jack thought, could have fed his family. Could have brought his kids joy. Could have been a small business, even. But the only thing it ever grew was good intentions. There's a lesson in that orchard-that-never-was.

As someone who works every day in the world of financial protection – life insurance, annuities, and planning ahead – I hear a version of this story all the time.

People say, "I know I should get life insurance. I just haven't had time."

"I meant to look into an annuity, but we had to replace the furnace."

"I'll do it next year, when things calm down."

But the truth is, life doesn't calm down. There's always something. And just like those apple trees, the seeds of your financial security won't plant themselves.

Our Society offers life insurance and annuity products designed specifically for members like you – people who want to protect their families, grow their savings, or create a guaranteed source of income in retirement. But all of those benefits depend on when you act.

Because here's the hard truth: time changes everything. With life insurance, age and health affect your rates – or whether you qualify at all. With annuities, the earlier you begin, the longer your money can grow and the greater the income potential. Every year you wait is a year of opportunity lost. Waiting costs.

Think about Jack's grandfather. He wasn't lazy. He didn't lack vision. He simply waited too long. His orchard wasn't lost in a storm, it was lost one spring at a time.

So what can you do this September?

- Take stock. Do you have adequate life insurance to cover your family's needs? If something were to happen to you tomorrow, would they be OK?

- Plan ahead. Are you relying solely on Social Security in retirement, or could a fixed annuity provide guaranteed income you can't outlive?

- Start small. You don't need to make a huge investment all at once. Like planting one tree at a time, even small steps toward financial protection matter.

As we head into autumn, a season of harvest, I encourage you to think about what seeds you've planted – and which ones still need planting.

At SNPJ, we're here to help you every step of the way. Whether you're ready to start a plan, or just have questions, let's have the conversation now, not next year.

Because the best time to plant an apple tree was 20 years ago.

The second-best time is today.

To learn more about SNPJ products or how to refer someone for SNPJ membership, please call 1-800-843-7675 or visit us online at [snpj.org](http://snpj.org).



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## Funding secured for new Faculty of Pharmacy

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — The Slovenian government included the construction of a new building for the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Ljubljana, a project estimated at just over EUR 133 million (\$155.2 million), in its 2025-2028 plan of development programs, the Government Communication Office announced in mid-July. Some EUR 97.6 million (\$113.9 million) of the total will come from the national budget.

With the new facility, the faculty will acquire nearly 34,000 square meters (366,000 square feet) of new premises built to modern standards, which will resolve its severe space constraints. As a result, the Faculty of Pharmacy will be able to increase enrollment of pharmacy and lab diagnostics students.

Last year the Faculty of Pharmacy had more than 1,500 students and nearly 200 staff. It operates at various sites apart from its main building, but most of the locations do not meet its teaching and research requirements.

When the building permit was issued in July 2024, University of Ljubljana Rector Gregor Majdič said construction would start in 2025 and conclude by 2030.

## Slovenia hopes for World Heritage Committee seat

**LJUBLJANA (STA)** — Slovenia is running for a spot on the UN World Heritage Committee for the 2025-2029 period, having presented its bid at the committee's 47th session held in Paris in mid-July. The decisive vote will be made in November at the general assembly of the World Heritage Convention.

Presenting Slovenia's bid to the convention signatories, Špela Spanžel, the head of Slovenia's Directorate for Cultural Heritage, said the idea for the bid had been in the making for a long time, finally maturing over the past few years due to professional heritage work and with the formation of a wide group of world heritage experts.

"Slovenia believes that heritage is a significant part of the quality of life for individuals as well as communities. It is the driver of dialogue; a source of inspiration and passion," Spanžel was quoted as saying by the Culture Ministry, the department coordinating the bid.

"Our participation in the committee would be in this spirit. Our excellent international cooperation has been proven through multi-national entries in the world heritage list and our commitment to our shared heritage," Spanžel said at a reception organized by the Slovenian embassy in Paris.

"The bid is an interdepartmental project involving government ministries that cooperate with UNESCO," the press release reads, and adds that Slovenia "was vying for a seat in the 21-member body in the second electorate."

"If elected for the four-year term, Slovenia will always work for the good of heritage and communities, working together with all parties to the convention," the Culture Ministry added.

"Slovenian heritage experts are regular participants in UNESCO meetings, several intergovernmental committees, and on working bodies. They implement the principles and the mechanisms of the convention at the national level, and take part in active exchange of knowledge, experience and practices," according to the Culture Ministry.

## Brdo Estate looking to attract individual guests

**BRDO PRI KRANJU (STA)** — The Brdo State Protocol Service expanded its services in August, introducing guided tours of the Brdo Estate, near Kranj, to present the history of the area to the broader public. Various buildings are also being revived, projects involving protocol gifts and botany are in the works, and a gym for guests is scheduled to open next spring.

When the new guided tours were presented in late July, Maja Križmančič, the director of the Brdo Estate, noted that the aim is to attract individual guests. While guided tours for organized groups are already held at the estate, these tours will also be offered to individuals on scheduled dates. Guests will be escorted around the grounds and presented with the cultural and natural heritage of the area.

Visitors will also be taken to Brdo Castle for guided tours that have only



been offered on special occasions, mainly on open days when the crowds are often quite large. "Individual tours will allow us to focus more on our guests," Križmančič said.

A number of programs are also being prepared, and the main goals are to revive as many historical buildings in the area as possible, and to create content that will be interesting for both individuals and groups.

In the Zoisova Pristava building, which once housed a restaurant, an exhibition on protocol events and gifts is being arranged and is expected to open in November. A presentation about the development of botany in Slovenia, which is dedicated to brothers Žiga and Karel Zois and which also features educational content about the natural heritage of the area, will be set up in the Oranžerija (orangery) building.

The former swimming pool will be renovated and converted into a gym, intended primarily for guests of the Elegans Hotel and the local wellness center. Work on the pool is expected to begin this fall, and the gym is expected to open next spring.

In recent years, a number of experiences have been introduced at the Brdo Estate, including horse riding, wildlife watching, carriage rides, and a culinary experience known as the "picnic basket." According to Križmančič, interest in these services is growing every year, and many people decide to simply stroll around the park. "Every Slovenian should visit the Brdo Estate at least once," she said.

Guests of the Elegans Hotel, which was renovated in 2021, include attendees of business events and private parties, such as weddings or anniversaries, while the hotel also hosts many soccer teams for training camps due to the proximity of the Brdo National Football Center.

During the presentation, Kranj Mayor Matjaž Rakovec said that "Brdo is a tourism gem of Kranj, but it is perhaps still a little too unknown," noting that at almost 500 hectares (1,236 acres) in size, it is one of the largest protected parks in Europe.

## Language museum finds a home in Štanjel Castle

**ŠTANJEL (STA)** — Štanjel Castle in southwestern Slovenia is now home to a new permanent exhibition dedicated to the Slovenian language and books. The museum marks key milestones in the development of the Slovenian language and the state-building process, all showcased at the same venue.

According to Škratelj, the organization that developed the exhibition concept and layout, "In addition to its focus on language, the 'Museum of Slovenian Language and Books' exhibition is also dedicated to the history and importance of Slovenian books, including the first books printed in Slovenian."

The exhibition opened in mid-June, coinciding with the castle's reopening following a comprehensive restoration that spanned five decades. Built in the 16th century on medieval foundations, Štanjel Castle acquired its Baroque-Renaissance image in the 17th century. In addition to this exhibition, the castle houses several other displays.

The interactive exhibition on the Slovenian language showcases facsimiles of major Slovenian books and newspapers, including the Freising Manuscripts, the oldest preserved document in Slovenian, created between 972 and 1039, most likely before 1000; and the May Declaration, a 1989 political declaration advocating Slovenian sovereignty which is seen as one of the key moments in Slovenia's independence efforts.

Visitors can listen to all the main Slovenian dialects; use a time machine to explore milestones in the development of the Slovenian language; and record themselves speaking in different languages – in a studio, for example, posing as a television presenter. They can also converse with an AI-enabled avatar of Primož Trubar (1508-1586), the Protestant reformer who wrote the first printed books in Slovenian.

The exhibition also honors Srečko Kosovel (1904-1926), a Kras region native who is now considered one of central Europe's major modernist poets. Visitors can record themselves reading his poems out loud.

The Museum of Slovenian Language and Books caters to the interests of younger and older generations regardless

of their level of Slovenian proficiency.

A separate area of the exhibition venue is dedicated to languages spoken by only a small number of people. The current temporary exhibition presents the Rhaeto-Romance language, which is spoken by only some 60,000 people in Switzerland. The exhibition was prepared in cooperation with the Swiss embassy in Ljubljana.

## Exhibition marks 40th year of a landmark road

**NOVA GORICA (STA)** — An exhibition at Kromberk Castle in Nova Gorica is marking the 40th year of a landmark road that connected the hilly region of Goriška Brda with the region's center after the connecting road ended up on the Italian side of the border following the Second World War.

Running in part across Italian land without any border checks, the road was seen as a great achievement in post-war Europe in the face of strained relationships between the East and the West.

When the national border between Italy and Yugoslavia was established after the war, Gorizia, the then-regional center, as well as the road to Goriška Brda, remained on the Italian side of the border. The only other road connection to Nova Gorica – the city developed to become the new regional center on the Slovenian side of the border – was a hilly road that required a significant detour.

Following the Treaty of Osimo, which was ratified by Italy and Yugoslavia in 1977 to establish the new border and address related challenges, a new 7.5-kilometer (4.7-mile) road link was constructed between Goriška Brda and Nova Gorica, with a 1.6-kilometer (one mile) section running through Italy.

The road was co-financed by Italy and Yugoslavia, each paying for its respective section. But the countries decided to build no border checkpoints, making it a political phenomenon at the time and a great achievement in a divided post-war Europe.

Officially named Sabotin Road for Mt. Sabotin, which the road climbs, the link is nicknamed Osimo Road. Locals also call it "Briška" or Brda Road since it serves as a connection to Goriška Brda.

The exhibition in Kromberk Castle presents the road across three rooms. The first room presents political and societal changes in the region following the war, especially the issues that emerged from the newly-drawn border. The exhibition displays how the challenges were addressed, culminating in the Treaty of Osimo.

The second room presents different proposals and plans for the road, while the third room focuses on testimonials of the politicians, road designers and civil engineers involved in the project.

The exhibition will be on display through mid-June 2026.

## Ski federation backs new ski jump in Ljubno

**LJUBNO OB SAVINJI (STA)** — The International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) has endorsed the plan to construct a new giant ski jump hill in Ljubno ob Savinji, the Slovenian Ski Association (SAS) announced in a July statement. [The new jump] would allow the venue to continue hosting women's World Cup events, and potentially host men's events in the future.

Ljubno has been hosting women's World Cup events since 2011 on its HS94 normal hill, which no longer meets the requirements of current international competitions. With the plans by FIS to merge the men's and women's World Cup calendars, Ljubno would no longer be able to host those events with its existing infrastructure. The venue announced earlier this year it was planning to either enlarge its present hill, or construct a new larger hill.

Sandro Pertile, FIS director for ski jumping, welcomed Slovenia's plans for a new, 160-meter hill. He stressed the strategic importance of the project not only for the local environment, but also for the development of the sport on a global scale. "Construction of the new hill would make Ljubno one of the first venues in the world with a contemporary 'giant' hill," Pertile said, adding that giant hills were the future of the sport. It would also allow top women's ski jump events to remain in Ljubno, and open the doors for the venue to host men's World Cup events in the future.

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



SNPJ fraternal sympathies

BRO. KEITH J. KOVALIC  
• LODGE 6 •

**SYGAN, Pa.**—The members of Lodge 6 sadly report the May 7, 2025, passing of Bro. Keith James Kovalic, 63, of Greene Twp., Beaver County, Pa., surrounded by loved ones.

Bro. Kovalic was born Dec. 22, 1961, in Pittsburgh, a son of the late James and Eileen (Kapsis) Kovalic. Keith was a graduate of Montour High School and continued his education at Edinboro University for music education.

He was the band director at Freedom Area High School for more than 30 years, where he also taught choir and directed school musicals. Keith loved to encourage students and to support them in their future endeavors.

Keith was a 33-year Lodge 6 member and a former SNPJ sales agent. He enjoyed fishing, Pittsburgh sports, cruises and hot tubs. He was an animal and travel lover, but above all he loved his family and friends.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 36 years, Cheryl (Kaminski) Kovalic; his children, Jenna Ellis and Brendan (Wendy) Ellis; two grandchildren; his siblings, Kevin (Kathy) Kovalic and Karen (Richard) Leaton; and numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

Private inurnment was in Resurrection Catholic Cemetery, Moon Twp., Pa.

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

BRO. DONALD J. PIDANICH  
• LODGE 729 •

**YUKON, Pa.**—The members of Lodge 729 sadly report the May 16, 2025, passing of Bro. Donald J. Pidanich, 70, at his home in Perryopolis, Pa.

Bro. Pidanich was born Sept. 25, 1954, in Canonsburg, Pa., a son of the late Frank and Eleanor (Bartolomucci) Pidanich, and grew up in Newell, Pa. A resident of Perryopolis for the past 38 years, he was the owner of Pidanich Financial and for years served as the elected tax collector for Perry Township.

A 22-year SNPJ Lodge 729 member and a former SNPJ sales agent, he was also a member of Sons and Daughters of Italy, and Moose International. Donnie enjoyed golfing, going to the casino, and traveling with his wife and friends. His laugh

was contagious.

He is survived by his wife, Donna Skufca Pidanich, to whom he was married for 38 years; a sister, Sandy Fordian; three sisters-in-law and three brothers-in-law; nine nieces and nephews; and several great-nieces and great-nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Frank Pidanich.

Funeral services for Bro. Pidanich were held May 20 in Parzynski Funeral Home & Cremations, Perryopolis.

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

SIS. ALBINA J. OPEKA  
• LODGE 584 •

**MILWAUKEE**—The members of Lodge 584 sadly report the May 25, 2025, passing of Sis. Albina J. “Bina” Opeka, 100, at her home in Beach Park, Ill.

Sis. Opeka was born Jan. 18, 1925, in North Chicago, Ill., and lived there for almost 70 years. She attended North School and graduated from Waukegan Township High School with the class of 1943.

On July 13, 1946, she married Tony Opeka at Mother of God Church in Waukegan, Ill. They had 28 wonderful years together which produced her beloved family of four children. Bina lost the love of her life on July 28, 1974.

Throughout her life, Bina had various occupations. She worked at Double Dip, Co-Op, Tenth Street Hardware, and North Shore Caterers, and took care of her families in Lake Forest and Wilmette, Ill., for many years.

Bina was always generous in every part of her life. She gave her time, donations and ingenuity to the organizations in which she was active. Before she became the Potica Lady, she was the Pizza Lady. She and Tony were founding members of the Mustang Booster Club at Mother of God when she came up with the idea to sell frozen Tombstone Pizzas as a fundraiser, which resulted in funds available for sports equipment.

An 83-year SNPJ member, she was active at the Waukegan Slovenic Hall and loved to play balina. She was also a member of KSKJ, the St. Roaks Catholic Womens Club, a sewing club and a card club. She was a parishioner of Mother of God Church, and then Queen of

Peace Catholic Church.

When she wasn’t busy baking potica, she loved to go polka dancing at the Slovenic Hall, and later at the Hiawatha in Sturtevant, Wis. Bina also loved to watch and cheer for the Chicago Cubs, Bulls and Blackhawks.

Although she was the last surviving family member of her generation, she leaves her family to cherish her memory. She is survived by her children, Tom (Sharon) Opeka, Peggie Opeka, Mary Beth (Jack) Metcalf, and Steve (Princess) Opeka; nine grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sis. Opeka on June 2 at Queen of Peace Catholic Church, North Chicago. Interment followed in Ascension Catholic Cemetery, Libertyville, Ill.

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

SIS. CAROLE M. ZAPPIE  
• LODGE 33 •

**AMBRIDGE, Pa.**—The members of Lodge 33 sadly report the June 12, 2025, passing of Sis. Carole Mae Zappie, 89, of Hopewell Twp., Pa., surrounded by her family.

Born May 16, 1936, Sis. Zappie lived a life defined by faith, family, and service to others.

On May 5, 1956, she married Robert Zappie, her life-long partner and best friend. Together they shared nearly 70 years of marriage filled with love, laughter and enduring commitment. She was a devoted wife, loving mother and grandmother, and a cherished member of her community.

A 71-year SNPJ member, Carole was also an active and devoted member of Our Lady of Fatima Church in Aliquippa, Pa., where she gave selflessly of her time and talents for 65 years. She served as vice president of the board of directors when Our Lady of Fatima Church was built, and was involved in establishing the OLF girls’ cheerleading program, coaching the cheerleading squads for many years and winning many championships.

Carole was an extraordinary Eucharistic Minister of communion at OLF and brought communion to homebound parishioners for many years. She championed many fund-

raisers for the church, including organizing a group of ladies to make and sell pierogies. She worked on the Our Lady of Fatima Church festival committee for more than 40 years.

She loved to cook and master many types of meals, loved to entertain, traveled to many countries all over the world, and was a passenger on more than 50 cruises. She also enjoyed playing the piano and clarinet.

Carole was the proud grandmother of three beautiful grandsons who brought her endless joy and pride. Her love for her family knew no bounds, and she was a constant source of strength, comfort and encouragement.

She is survived by her loving husband, Robert Zappie; her son, Paul Zappie; her daughter, Jeannine (John) Dabecco; and her cherished grandchildren, Dillon, Damon and Derek Drositis. She was preceded in death by her parents, John and Emily Smallis; and two brothers, Richard and John Smallis.

Carole’s legacy of kindness, dedication and faith will live on in those who were blessed to know her. Her family finds comfort in the memories shared; she will be deeply missed.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sis. Zappie on June 18 at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 33 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our condolences to Sis. Zappie’s family, relatives and friends on their loss.

SIS. PATRICIA KOS COOKE  
• LODGE 6 •

**SYGAN, Pa.**—The members of Lodge 6 sadly report the July 18, 2025, passing of Sis. Patricia “Pati” Kos Cooke, a devoted wife, sister, aunt, cousin and friend to many, at Parkwest Hospital, Knoxville, Tenn., after a long-fought health battle.

Sis. Cooke was born July 24, 1950, into a military family at Fort Eustis, Va., to parents Frank Kos Sr. and Beulah Mae (Hargis) Kos, and was raised in South Fayette Twp., outside Pittsburgh. Pati graduated from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and settled in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains on their farm, Halcyon Hills, while also holding hard and fast to her Pittsburgh roots.

Pati’s life was a testament to strength, resilience, compassion, generosity and selfless-

ness to all who knew her. She had a giving heart far beyond herself, and she loved people, animals and flowers. Her great joy was outside, rain or shine, with bare feet and hands in the dirt, or engaging with anyone she met, getting to know them by truly listening to what they had to say.

She relished human connection, especially with family, whether just talking, watching movies, playing board games, doing crossword/jigsaw puzzles, listening to music (especially The Beatles), taking folks to Dollywood or just taking a walk, almost always with her devoted fur-baby companion, Rosie.

Pati was a very pretty lady with a beautiful smile. Her favorite color was green, like her eyes, like nature. She enjoyed laying on top of the picnic table to watch a meteor shower or gaze at the moon. Her desire to benefit the world and future generations led to one of her biggest passions: recycling and composting whatever she could. Pati’s political activism and her stand on social justice were woven into her very essence from an early age, and she wasn’t afraid to debate the issue.

She loved a simple, slow life,

was proud of her Cherokee and Slovenian heritage, and could polka the night away or do Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” dance in full zombie costume on Halloween. She loved knowledge and was willing to share what she knew to make the person and the world even a little bit better.

Pati is survived by her husband of 51 years, Anthony Dale Cooke; a brother and sister-in-law, Ronald and Patricia Kos of Woodstock, Ga.; two sisters, Pamela Kos Walker of California and Margaret Kos Hess of Columbia S.C.; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents; a brother and sister-in-law, Frank Kos Jr. and Ratamane Kos; a brother-in-law, James H. Walker; a nephew, Kittipong (Keith) Promsakha; and other family and dear friends.

The family suggests donations to SNPJ, to an animal shelter or rescue of your choice, to St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital, or to Friends of the Smokies.

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

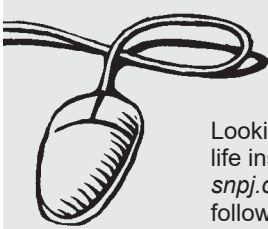
DEATHS REPORTED  
For the month of July 2025

LODGE	NAME	DATE OF DEATH	CITY, STATE
1	James A. Intihar	06-18-2025	Trevor, Wis.
2	Betty Mae Franzen	06-23-2025	Witt, Ill.
3	Fredrick Mihelic	06-13-2025	Brielle, N.J.
5	Sandra J. Reed	06-08-2025	Florence, Ken.
31	David A. Miksa	05-29-2025	Groveland, Fla.
33	Joshua A. Konyak	05-10-2025	Zelienople, Pa.
34	Ronald G. Yurkovich	04-18-2025	Mount Olive, Ill.
34	Mollie L. Stanfield	06-27-2025	Cincinnati, Ohio
41	Paul E. Lovato	04-18-2024	Claridge, Pa.
89	John A. Robertson	06-14-2025	McDonald, Pa.
89	Anita M. Ashmore	07-02-2025	McDonald, Pa.
106	Howard J. McElhaney	04-29-2025	McDonald, Pa.
113	Patricia Vouk Davis	06-25-2025	Price, Utah
138	Loulie Canady	03-08-2025	Morgantown, W.Va.
218	Frances A. Masciotra	07-31-2022	Las Vegas, Nev.
218	Marjorie M. Gann	03-03-2025	Hendersonville, Tenn.
223	Goldie Maggio	11-16-2019	Zephyrhills, Fla.
225	Margaret Ann Setina	12-13-2024	Arma, Kan.
225	Stephen D. Lomshek	05-02-2025	Pittsburg, Kan.
225	Nancy S. Logiudici	06-18-2025	Arma, Kan.
257	Wayne M. Urban	06-29-2025	Bedford, Ohio
518	Robert R. Jutla	06-17-2025	Lake Linden, Mich.
562	Alexandria Burdock	07-04-2025	St. Clairsville, Ohio
564	Dorothy A. Roth	08-29-2022	Rye, N.Y.
564	Irene Kokuba	06-17-2025	St. Clair Shores, Mich.
584	Carol M. Techar	06-21-2025	Mountain Iron, Minn.
603	Karen A. McDonald	06-22-2025	Port Orange, Fla.
604	Frank M. Sajovec	07-05-2025	Colfax, N.C.
629	Sylvia C. Cancino	07-06-2025	Millsboro, Del.
643	Eugene F. Fedorchak	12-17-2024	Beltsville, Md.
665	Georgianne Nicoletti	05-29-2025	Allison Park, Pa.
723	Charles K. Benedict	05-19-2009	Santee, Calif.
729	Robert R. Zagar	04-25-2025	Greensburg, Pa.
729	Despina J. Apostolakis	05-23-2025	Monessen, Pa.
729	Donald E. Shroyer	07-07-2025	Mill Run, Pa.
749	Shawn A. Miller	03-29-2025	Windber, Pa.
749	Lawrence W. Lugar	07-01-2025	Johnstown, Pa.
776	Robert S. Bernard	06-23-2025	Youngstown, Ohio

KAREN A. PINTAR  
National Secretary/COO

PROSVETA Crossword  
BACK TO SCHOOL (#0825) solution

B	A	L	M		B	U	S		P	A	P	A
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PROSVETA 2025 Publication Dates

JANUARY 2025

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



# Lodge 786 Aug. gathering combines birds, barbecue, and feelings for Slovenia

by TERESA KOCI  
Lodge 786 Secretary/Treasurer  
**ORANGE COUNTY, Calif.**  
— SNPJ Lodge 786 members gathered for a warm and productive meeting on Aug. 3 at the rustic Irvine San Joaquin Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary clubhouse. With birds in the background and barbecue on the grill, it was a perfect Southern California summer day to celebrate Slovenian culture, community and cuisine.

We were treated to a thoughtful handout, from Mike Bajc, about Slovenia's national brand, "I Feel SLOVEnia." This powerful brand represents the country's identity, both at home and abroad, as a friendly and passionate proclamation of origin. It's more than just a slogan – it reflects the deep, enduring love and pride the

Slovenian people feel for their homeland. Thank you, Mike, for enlightening us on this meaningful campaign.

We were honored to welcome our very own Lodge member and the new Miss SNPJ 2026, Ellen Koci, as well as runner-up to Miss SNPJ 2025 Michelle Von Merta-Sustarich from San Francisco Lodge 304. Both shared highlights from their time at the June Young Adult Conference, and Ellen recounted her experience at the July Miss SNPJ Pageant, both held at the SNPJ Recreation Center in Enon Valley, Pa.

Congratulations to Ellen as well for earning runner-up titles in both the Miss Activity and Miss Talent categories – we're all very proud of you!

If you know of any young

adults interested in connecting with SNPJ peers at the national level, please reach out to me, or directly to Ellen or Michelle, for more information on how to get involved.

Congratulations to Peggy Argubright on completing the Slovenian citizenship process and being officially sworn-in as a citizen in Washington, D.C. We're confident she is savoring the rewards of what has been a long and challenging journey over the past year. Her perseverance has certainly paid off!

Looking ahead, we discussed several exciting plans. Our holiday potluck is scheduled Sunday, Nov. 30, starting at 1 p.m. at the Laguna Hills Village Clubhouse, 23300 Santa Vittoria Dr. in Laguna Hills. Join us for a festive meeting and holiday-themed social. The Lodge will provide Slovenian sausage from Cleveland, sauerkraut, drinks and paper supplies; members and guests are asked to bring a side dish to share.

Be sure to RSVP by Nov. 26 to Teresa Koci for general attendance at (949) 246-1983 or by e-mail to [teresamkoci@gmail.com](mailto:teresamkoci@gmail.com), and to Krista Lawson for youth member attendees – because Santa Claus is already planning his annual visit! Contact Krista by e-mail to [learning\\_to\\_live\\_616@yahoo.com](mailto:learning_to_live_616@yahoo.com). Musicians, please bring your instruments and join in the fun.

A food drive will be held once again for St. Timothy's Catholic Church Kitchen, which helps those in need. Donations are welcome!

California SNPJ Day is tentatively scheduled for Saturday,

April 18, 2026, and there is a potential visit and performance by Slovenia's Kamnik Folk Ensemble sometime in 2026 or 2027. Our 2025 SNPJ Day was a sold-out success, so mark your calendars for another fabulous celebration next year!

A big thank you to Mike Bajc for his expert grilling of *čevapčiči*, a delicious Balkan specialty that was extra juicy and flavorful (basted with a little pivo, of course). Those in attendance contributed an impressive variety of potluck dishes, making it a feast to remember.

Mike and Marie went the extra mile by bringing homemade sweet cream-stuffed *palačinke*, Slovenia's delightful version of crepes. Rumor had it during the gathering that *čevapčiči* and *palačinke* might soon unite... yielding the legendary *čevap-činke*. Stay tuned!

Adding to the atmosphere, Fred Mlakar played classic Slovenian tunes on the button accordion, evoking nostalgia and joy among attendees. Thank you, Fred, for keeping the spirit alive through music!

Members enjoyed the scenic trails of the wildlife sanctuary, exploring the rustic Duck and Audubon houses. It was a lovely venue for all ages and abilities, and we hope to return again in 2026.

Whether it's bringing a dish, playing music, or just showing up to enjoy the camaraderie, your participation makes our Lodge stronger. Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to this wonderful day. We look forward to seeing all of you in November. Na zdravje!



SNPJ Lodge 786 members and guests (from left) **MARIE BAJC, MIKE BAJC, DON MILEK, FRED MLAKAR, Claire Palmerino, CHRISTI GOTTDANK, ADAM GOTTDANK, ANA LORENZO, Arcelia Zepeda, TERESA KOCI, JEAN KOCI, KEN KOCI**, Miss SNPJ 2026 **ELLEN KOCI**, San Francisco Lodge 304 Secretary **MICHELLE VON MERTA-SUSTARICH, CATHY UDOVCH, FRANČ REBEC** and friend, **JACK KOLTAJ** and **PEGGY ARGUBRIGHT** outside the San Joaquin Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary clubhouse.



Miss SNPJ 1989 **TERESA (Mlakar) KOCI**; her daughter, reigning Miss SNPJ 2026 **ELLEN KOCI**; and runner-up to Miss SNPJ 2025 **MICHELLE VON-MERTA SUSTARICH**.



Barbecue master **MIKE BAJC** bastes the *čevapčiči* as he mans the grill.

**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

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by EVELYN DIMPFL  
Lodge 749 Secretary

**JOHNSTOWN, Pa.** — I have just returned from a wonderful time at the SNPJ Recreation Center enjoying the activities of Family Week. After a several-year hiatus, my sister, Joanne Vasilko, was able to attend this year.

It was great to spend time and renew friendships with Janet and her daughter Carolyn, Ed and Chris, Beth and Barth, Gail and Jim, Lois and her granddaughter Faye, and Bob, along with many members of the Kumer family who come from far and wide. We joined in the balina tournament, but didn't do too well this year – no klobase for us!

I have to give Annmarie

Finch credit for all of the hard work and planning she puts into the many activities arranged for the campers throughout the week. And it was great to see David Jones at the helm of the kitchen, preparing our delicious meals three times a day. David is looking good.

The newly remodeled cabins at the Campsite are looking great. Hopefully, I will be alive and still able to get there by the time our cabin #16 is done.

At our most recent Lodge meeting, we welcomed new member Rita Comitz into the SNPJ. Also in attendance at the meeting were SNPJ scholarship recipient Xavier Yuhass and his father, Stephen Yuhass. We look forward to seeing them at future meetings.

Lodge member Julie Wagner reported on plans for the upcoming Slavic Fest, slated Sept. 19-20 at the Discovery Center in Johnstown. As a committee person, Julie works very hard to make this event a success. The festival is something to look forward to each year.

Sadly, I report the passing of members Sara Zwick, Ida E. Millward, Agnes Ceslovnik, William Kopriva, Shawn Miller, Joanne Harclerode, Vivien Morris, Richard Mostoller and Lawrence Lugar.

Of these deceased, I have known Larry Lugar practically my whole life. Larry was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, George. He is survived by his wife, Carol Ann; children Christine,

Catherine, George and Crystal; six grandchildren; and his brother, James.

Member William Kopriva, who passed away June 18, was the son of William and Josephine Kopriva, who preceded him in death, along with his daughter, Wendy Suzanne. Bill is survived by children Kelly Burns, Heather Barberena and Chad Kopriva; and a sister, Margaret "Peggy" Crist.

He was the grandfather of eight grandchildren – Brock and Trent Burns; Kayla Barberena; Bryce, Brayden and Sydney Pierce; and Hayden and Lily Kopriva – and is also survived by his former wife, Barbara Lamberson. I extend sympathies to all of the families on their loss.

## PROSVETA Crossword Football (#0925) by StatePoint Media

### ACROSS

- Command to Fido
- Sheep not yet sheared
- Cap and gown accessory
- Blood line
- Ancient Chinese dynasty
- Ringworm
- Driver's license notation
- Not outs
- Like Cheerios
- \*Piece of football equipment required since 1943
- \*Peyton or Eli
- Napkin spot
- Eminem's 2002 hit "\_\_\_\_\_ Yourself"
- Embargo
- Feed storage cylinder
- Like house from a kit
- Greek god of love
- Smokes
- \*Super Bowl I M.V.P. Bart \_\_\_\_\_
- Taj Mahal locale
- \*Career rushing yards record holder
- Equals s squared
- Regretting
- \*Highest college football level: \_\_\_\_\_ Division I
- Extend credit
- \*Seventeen games in NFL
- Somewhat (2 words)
- "Whatever Will Be, Will Be" singer

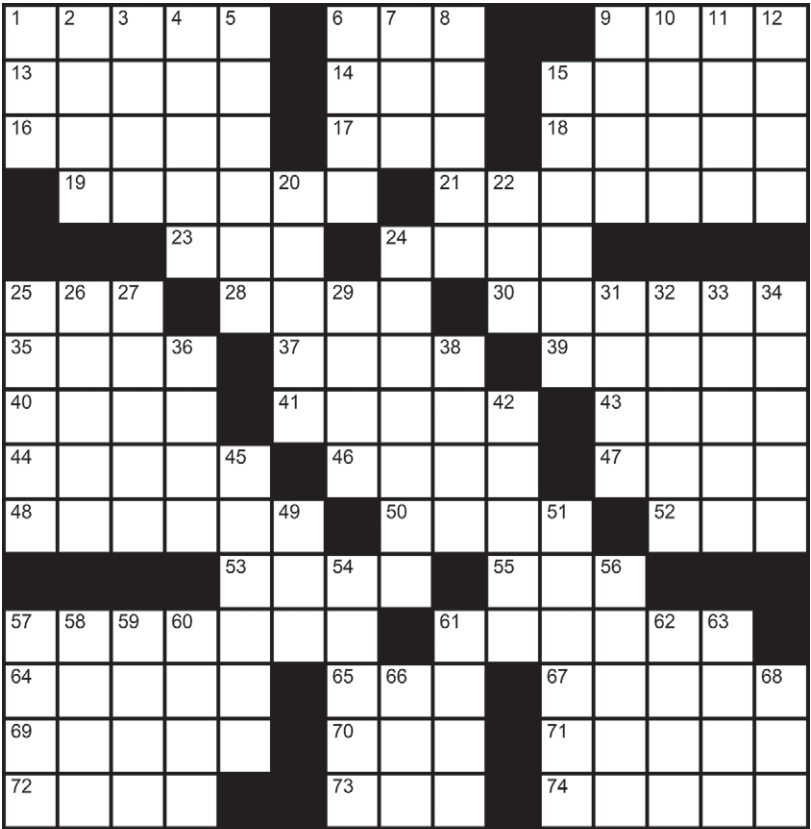
- Mare's baby
- Not a friend
- \*55 of them
- \*Home of the NFL Hall of Fame
- Hole-borer
- For every
- Color red on coat of arms
- Birds of ill omen
- Outrage
- \_\_\_\_\_ shopping cart
- Party barrels
- Sound from one of #69 Across
- Homes for #69 Across

### DOWN

- Down in the dumps
- Cry of contempt
- Marine eagle
- Wake Island, e.g.
- Kizmet, pl.
- Foolish one
- Even, poetic
- Useful contraption
- Lamborghini model
- Unfavorable prefix
- "As \_\_\_\_\_ on TV"
- Suspend
- Astrigents
- "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey," e.g.

- Venomous Egyptian snake
- Deducible
- \*One of 2 NFL founding teams still in league
- Lock horns
- Waterwheel
- Outline
- Et alii, abbr.
- Got along
- \*Like indoor eight-men football
- \*Career NFL passing yards record holder
- Without
- Wild guess
- Israeli port
- Errand-runners
- Neither's partner
- Nuku'alofa language
- Meat jelly dish
- Musician's exercise
- \*"Go \_\_\_\_\_ Go!"
- Fishing decoy
- Awestruck
- Archery wood
- "Ship, Captain, \_\_\_\_\_"
- Cutlass or Delta 88, for short
- Remaining after deductions
- \_\_\_\_\_ of Good Feelings
- Lusitania's last call

The solution to puzzle #0925 will run in the Oct. 1 issue.



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# A casino bus trip in the Spartans Lodge 576 plans

by LINDA GORJUP  
Lodge 576 Secretary/Treasurer

**CLEVELAND**— Well, we're in the dog days of summer. August was extremely hot and humid, but it's better than winter!

The Spartans Lodge 576 picnic was held Aug. 10, and what a busy day it was. We started the day with the Lou Novak Balina Tournament and crowned the champions, the Crusaders, consisting of Greg Volpe, and Annie, Anthony, and Amelia Lawrence. Thanks to everyone who participated.

The SNPJ Farm Ladies Auxiliary manned the kitchen, with the Tomsick boys making the krofe. The cabbage rolls (compliments to Betty Young and her crew!) were well received. I believe they rolled more than 200.

The kitchen helpers – Charlie and Christian Thomey, Betty Young and Nancy Novak – spent most of the day in the kitchen, helping the auxiliary and staying 'til the end to clean up. Since it was Craig Young's birthday, the crowd was invited to share his

birthday cake. After dinner, the crowd enjoyed the tunes of Joe Novak & Friends who played all of our favorite polkas and waltzes.

Throughout the day you could visit Toni Thomey at the basket drawings. Boy, I really wanted to win the lottery tree... but no luck! Lou and Karen Novak also walked around with decks of cards for another drawing.

Thanks to the bar help: Erica and Lou Novak, Larry Young and Donna Sebusch. My apologies if I missed naming anyone. Thanks as well to the officers and members who volunteered their time to make our picnic a success.

On to our next activity. The Spartans Lodge is hosting a one-day casino bus trip on Saturday, Nov. 22. We're heading to Presque Isle to try our hand at the slot machines, then making a stop at Grand Rivers Cellar Winery on our way home.

It's always a good time, and don't be surprised if an accordion player treats us to some tunes – even the kitchen crew



The Crusaders – (from left) **GREG VOLPE** (158), **ANTHONY LAWRENCE** (576), **AMELIA LAWRENCE** (576) and **ANNIE LAWRENCE** (576) – were the champions of the 2025 Lou Novak Balina Tournament.



The SNPJ Farm Ladies Auxiliary and assistants manned the kitchen for the Spartans Lodge 576 picnic.

gets serenaded. For information contact Karen Novak at (216) 965-3181 or Erica Novak at (440) 725-6523.

Finally, let's celebrate our

Lodge birthdays: Lou Novak (Sept. 16), Gabriella Thomey (Sept. 17), Charlie Thomey (Oct. 1) and Linda Gorjup (Oct. 20).

## MFA, a new layer of security, added to the SNPJ Portal

### SNPJ PORTAL

FROM PAGE 1

by providing your username and password. Once you have accomplished this first step, you will receive a six-digit

numeric code sent to the e-mail address you provided when you enrolled on the portal.

Once the code is received to your designated e-mail account, you will type it into

the box on the screen that requests your verification code, then proceed as you normally would.

We encourage all members to sign up for access to the SNPJ

Portal so that you can look at anytime to see the value of your annuity account, the cash value and face value of your life insurance policies, premiums due, dividends earned, etc.

# August picnic draws Chicago area members together

by TINA RIGLER  
Lodge 8 Secretary/Treasurer

**CHICAGO** — Several officers and members of SNPJ Lodges 8 and 559 attended the Slovenian Catholic Center annual picnic on Aug. 10. This was the first event attended by the newly-merged Lodges 449 and 8, with the members of Lodge 449 agreeing to move forward as Lodge 8 so the Society may retain the original charter Lodge number.

The day opened with several Lodge 8 members participating in the Mass celebrated at the grotto. Even though the temperatures started out very warm and climbed throughout the day into the 90s, that didn't deter everyone from attending this annual event.

Many volunteers worked

hard setting up and preparing for the picnic, with more volunteers working all day long.

The picnic was a success, offering good food consisting of roasted lamb, pork and chicken dinners served with delicious sides of cole slaw and potato salad. To top that off, homemade baked goods – strudels, poticas, krofe, and many more – were also available.

A short program that included music and folk dancers followed lunch. Games for children and adults – along with and a craft table for all children, led by members of the Slovenian school – were offered in the afternoon. Everyone's favorite, *čevapčiči* dinners, were made available later in the afternoon.



Several members of SNPJ Lodges 8 and 559 attended the Slovenian Catholic Center annual picnic in Lemont, Ill., on Aug. 10.

The activities for the day concluded with the dollar drawing and the much-anticipated \$10,000 drawing. Congratulations to all of the winners. The annual picnic

and drawings are among the main sources of income for the Slovenian Catholic Center.

We're already looking forward to attending next year's annual picnic!

# Rec Center Cabin Renovation Donations for the month of July 2025

Richard & Georgiana Woodhall (715),  
Monroeville, Pa. .... \$100  
*In memory of Roger and Anna Evanish*

William & Esther Phillips (6), Bridgeville, Pa. .. \$50  
*In memory of Pati Cooke*

Sam & Joan Oldham (6),  
Hendersonville, Tenn. .... \$50  
*In memory of Pati Cooke*

Evelyn Dimpfl (749), Johnstown, Pa. .... \$25  
*In memory of Anna Evanish*

## SNPJ LODGE 371 FIRST CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT BENEFITS ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH

by KEN KLADNIK  
Lodge 371 President

**CLE ELUM, Wash.** — SNPJ Lodge 371 hosted its first-ever cornhole tournament on Aug. 16. The Lodge is planning to hold the tournament on an annual basis.

Savannah Davies captured first place among the 18 tournament participants; second-place honors went to Jerred Weis and Zane Davies. A total of \$905 was raised and donated toward Alzheimer's research.



A great throw draws applause from **Joan Breznikar**.



Lodge 371 President **KEN KLADNIK** presents tournament champion **Savannah Davies** with her award.



**Kubby Singletary** plays his shot.



**Jarred Weis** and **Zane Davies**, the SNPJ Lodge 371 cornhole tournament runners-up.

## SNPJ Membership Anniversaries September 2025

### 70-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
5	Barbara J. Cunningham	584	Lawrence Loncaric
6	M. Elaine Joseph	584	Donald A. Ott
153	Janice M. Smaltz	643	Robert F. Lucich
158	Joseph P. Zugic	749	John M. Micko
518	Loretta Brewster	749	Catherine Daniels

### 60-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
6	Robert N. Susko	584	Anne L. Froehlich
87	Karen A. Fedrow	584	James R. Techar
117	Lewis A. Volk	603	Alice C. Benedict
218	Rose M. Bogard	604	Patricia A. Gruden
225	John M. Pecarina	689	Carolyn M. Oman
257	Diane J. Klinec	715	Marion J. Novak
304	Christine Olson	729	John P. Chudy
562	Phyllis J. Hruschak	749	Jean A. Omerzo
562	Linda D. Helt	749	Carol A. Mehall

### 50-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
5	Elizabeth A. Bilicic	559	Barbara J. Khan
34	Sandra F. Foster	559	Donna N. Keto
34	Timothy D. Pavletich	559	Jo Ann Schaidle
87	Michael A. Gerber	581	Gary J. Gerchman
89	Brian A. McLaughlin	584	James R. Milakovich
138	Carolyn M. Svitek	584	Mary A. Makela
138	John A. Svitek	603	Janet Barnes
138	David Abbondanza	604	Edwin A. Gerchman
142	Mary L. Tromp	604	Vlasta M. Rodela
142	Stephanie Nebehay-Ulmer	604	George Staiduhar
142	Michelle Avram	629	Marlene Donnelly
153	William T. Clark	643	Lori A. Ulicny
158	Carol A. VanKornut	689	Perry D. Skerl
223	John E. Mazurek	719	Kathleen A. Prince
371	Janet H. Johnsen	723	Michael J. Omahen
518	Debra L. Kirar	770	Louis J. Presnar
		776	Mary A. Flyak

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## SNPJ 87<sup>th</sup> National Bowling Tournament October 10-12, 2025

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

MEN	WOMEN
<b>Doubles &amp; Singles Events</b> at Sygan Lodge 6 540 Third Ave. Bridgeville, PA 15017 Phone: (412) 221-9862 <input type="checkbox"/> Friday, Oct. 10, 6:30 p.m. <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday, Oct. 11, 9 a.m. <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday, Oct. 11, 2 p.m.	<b>Doubles &amp; Singles Events</b> at Strabane Lodge 138 269 Latimer Ave. Strabane, PA 15363 Club: (724) 745-9860 Lanes: (724) 745-9775 <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday, Oct. 11, 9:30 a.m. <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday, Oct. 11, 2:30 p.m.
MEN	WOMEN
<b>Team Event</b> at Strabane Lodge 138 269 Latimer Ave. Strabane, PA 15363 Club: (724) 745-9860 Lanes: (724) 745-9775 <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday, Oct. 12, 9 a.m. <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday, Oct. 12, Noon <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday, Oct. 12, 3 p.m.	<b>Team Event</b> at Sygan Lodge 6 540 Third Ave. Bridgeville, PA 15017 Phone: (412) 221-9862 <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday, Oct. 12, 9:30 a.m. <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday, Oct. 12, 12:30 p.m.

Doubles & Singles Entry fee \$32 per person Friday/Saturday Only	Lodge No.	Highest Average 2024-25	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 2024-25
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 \$7 per member to each prize fund except All-Events.

Return form, along with fees of \$16 per person, per event, to:  
Den Brand, 405 Forbes St., Bridgeville, PA 15017  
e-mail: [dbrand3517@gmail.com](mailto:dbrand3517@gmail.com)

Make checks payable to **SNPJ Lodge 6**

**ENTRY DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 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](http://snpj.org)