



In This Issue

Slovenia from the Source	3
PROSVETA Crossword Puzzle	4
SNPJ Fraternal Sympathies	6
SNPJ National Tournament Results	7

Holiday Light Tour on the Lodge 142 Dec. schedule

by KARA MARUSZAK
Lodge 142

CLEVELAND—Lodge 142 bid farewell to summer aboard the Goodtime III, Cleveland’s largest cruise ship, during a two-hour narrated cruise which featured spectacular views of downtown Cleveland.

We had a perfect day, with warm sunshine, a light breeze, and no waves! While there was no polka music, our group certainly energized the cruise

SEE HOLIDAY LIGHT TOUR
ON PAGE 2



SNPJ Lodge 142 members and guests, wearing festive Hawaiian leis, aboard the Goodtime III. The Lodge is hosting a Holiday Light Tour in December.

Lodge 643, Youth Circle 7 share plans for their annual holiday party

by KATHLEEN SEIFERT
Lodge 643 Secretary

GIRARD, Ohio—SNPJ Golden Eagles Lodge 643 and Youth Circle 7 members are ramping up plans for their annual Christmas party scheduled Saturday, Dec. 20, starting at 2 p.m. at Amen Corner in Girard.

The staff at Amen Corner will be decorating their party room and fireplace with red, green and all of their holiday trimmings, as well as displaying their beautiful Christmas tree.

The combined Christmas party will begin at 2 p.m. and Santa will be stopping by. We’ll also conduct our election of officers, followed by a delicious meal.

As in the past, we hope to have button box and accordion music, compliments of our members, to add to the festive occasion.

There is no charge for Youth Circle 7 and Lodge 643 members to attend. Please submit

SEE LODGE 643 PARTY
ON PAGE 2

PERIODICAL MATERIAL

Home Office closed as we celebrate Thanksgiving

IMPERIAL, Pa. — The SNPJ Home Office will be closed Thursday, Nov. 27, and Friday, Nov. 28, in celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday. Regular office hours, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., will resume Monday, Dec. 1. We wish all SNPJ members and friends a very happy Thanksgiving.

Herminie Lodge 87 sets November meeting date

HERMINIE, Pa. — SNPJ Lodge 87 in Herminie will be meeting Saturday, Nov. 8, at 11:30 a.m. The meeting will be held at 777 Herminie Rd., Herminie, PA 15637. Refreshments will be served. RSVP to Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Florence Gradisek at (724) 446-5134. Please leave a message if able to attend.

PAM GRADISEK-IANNITTO
Lodge 87 President

Lodge 776 slates holiday party in early December

BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa. — SNPJ Lodge 776 will be holding its annual Christmas party and December meeting on Sunday, Dec. 7, starting at 2 p.m. at the SNPJ Recreation Center. Food and beverages will be provided. All Lodge members and their families are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please call or text Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Ed Snyder at (330) 565-6276 to let us know how many people in your party will be attending.

RICH DOMBROSKY
Lodge 776 Recording Secretary

THE DEADLINE

The next two *PROSVETA* issue dates are Dec. 1, 2025, and Jan. 1, 2026. All material must be received by noon on Monday, Nov. 10, for the Dec. 1 issue, and by Monday, Dec. 8, for the Jan. 1 issue. If you’re concerned about making the deadline, send an e-mail to prosveta@snpj.com or submit your material via the publications area of our website, snpj.org.



Thirty Years... and Counting

Chris Heck (left), President/CEO of the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce (PAACC), presented SNPJ National Secretary/COO **KAREN A. PINTAR** and SNPJ Sales Director **DAVID GOMBKOTO** with a certificate recognizing the Society’s 30th anniversary of Chamber membership. SNPJ joined the PAACC just a little over a year after construction of the Home Office in Imperial was completed in November 1993.

Sharon Lodge 31 recognizing nine honorees during Nov. 15 dinner

by BARB BOGOLIN
Lodge 31 Secretary/Treasurer

SHARON, Pa. — Nine SNPJ Lodge 31 members are celebrating membership anniversaries this year: 50-year members Carolyn Keltner, Arden D’Amico, Geri Scarmack-Warchol, Kenneth Trontel and Edward Cvelbar; 60-year members Harry Paulenich Jr. and Joann Smith; 70-year member Victoria Maykowski; and 80-year member Elsie Shine.

These members will be honored at our annual meeting and dinner on Saturday, Nov. 15, starting at 2 p.m. The dinner will be held at Hickory Grille, 1645 N. Hermitage Rd., Hermitage, PA 16148. Members’ meals will be paid for by the Lodge; those attending will order from the menu.

Election of officers will be held and meeting dates for 2026 will be set during the annual meeting. Members interested in attending must contact Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Barb Bogolin by Sunday, Nov. 9. I can be reached at (724) 347-1197 or (724) 931-4184.



Sebastian R. Skrajner
Born April 21, 2023
Cleveland Lodge 142

SNPJ Lodge 142 welcomes Sebastian Rackus Skrajner as the newest addition to the Lodge. Sebastian is the son of Matthew (142) and Melissa Skrajner, and the grandson of Kathy (142) and SNPJ Recreation Center Committee member Dave Skrajner (142). He also joins his big sister, Eleanor, as a Lodge member. We welcome Sebastian to the Society and extend our best wishes to his entire family.



follow SNPJ on
Facebook!



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:
1-800-843-7675 (THE SNPJ)
Fax: (724) 695-1555
e-mail: prosveta@snpj.com
website: <https://snpj.org>

EDITOR:
Jay Sedmak

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.)

SNPJ NATIONAL BOARD
Executive Committee:
NATIONAL PRESIDENT/CEO
Joseph C. Evanish
NATIONAL SECRETARY/COO
Karen A. Pintar
NATIONAL TREASURER/CFO
Robert J. Lawrence

Correspondence received at:
247 West Allegheny Road
Imperial, PA 15126-9774

Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.
to 5 p.m.; Fridays, 7:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Finance Committee:
Robert Lawrence, Secretary
Joseph C. Evanish
Richard Hervol, Chairman
183 Wylie Ave.
Strabane, PA 15363
Roger C. Clifford
568 Lang Rd.
Sewickley, PA 15143
Tracey Anderson
1014 Edgewood Dr.
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Audit Committee:
Joanna L. Baker, Chairwoman
301 Cactus Rd.
Gallup, NM 87301
Vincent Baselj
1001 Grandview Ave., Apt. 903
Bridgeville, PA 15017
Kenneth J. Zakraysek
106 Queens Row, P.O. Box 137
Elton, PA 15934

Regional Vice Presidents:
Region 1: Maurice M. Sinan Jr.
116 Shady Oak Dr.
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066
Region 2: Jason J. Cadez
179 Alexander Ave.
Strabane, PA 15363
Region 3: Donald F. Srnick
29254 Chardon Rd.
Willoughby Hills, OH 44092
Region 4: Justina Rigler
1116 Berkley Ln.
Lemont, IL 60439
Region 5: Fred Mlakar
13592 Onkayha Cir.
Irvine, CA 92620

SNPJ Recreation Center
270 Martin Road
Enon Valley, PA 16120
(724) 336-5180 • fax (724) 336-6716
Toll-free: 1-877-767-5732
website: www.snpjrec.com
e-mail: 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:
PROSVETA
247 W. Allegheny Road
Imperial, PA 15126-9774
e-mail: prosveta@snpj.com

Lodge 8 celebrating Friendsgiving during November meeting

by TINA RIGLER
Lodge 8 Secretary/Treasurer

CHICAGO—Lodge 8 members met Sept. 28 at the home of Jan and Bill Maresh. This was the first meeting since Lodge 8 merged into Lodge 449. It was a great first meeting since the merger took place on Aug. 1, 2025.

President Justin Rigler called the meeting to order and appointed Carmella Smidl as acting recording secretary for the meeting since Edward Dabrowski was on vacation in Germany enjoying the Octoberfests. Edward did call into the meeting from Germany.

Sergeant-at-Arms Lanie Maresh reported that there were 15 members and one guest attending the meeting, either in person or by phone. During the meeting, Secretary Tina Rigler read all correspondence and gave the financial report.

Vince Rigler and Justin Rigler reported that many Lodge members attended Slovenefest this year. It was a great weekend, and we enjoyed catching up with friends who we only see once a year. Members Vince and Justin Rigler performed with the Polka Pals in the Gostilna during Slovenefest.

Many Lodge members attended the Slovenian Catholic Center annual picnic on Aug. 10, and the annual Honey Picnic held Aug. 24 at the St. Mary's picnic grounds.

Tina Rigler gave an updated report on the Chicago Federation.

Tina also reported on the recent SNPJ National Board meeting held Sept. 26, and on her attendance after the meeting at a reception on the occasion of the visit of the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Nataša Pirc Musar, held at the Parish Hall of



SNPJ Lodge 8 members enjoyed spending some time in the pool at the conclusion of their September meeting.

St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Cleveland. The Consul General of the Republic of Slovenia in Cleveland was also in attendance.

Other SNPJ National Board members attending included National President/CEO Joseph Evanish, Finance Committee member Tracey

Anderson, and SNPJ Region 1 Vice President Maury Sinan and his wife, Kathleen.

Vince Rigler and Alenka Rus won the meeting awards.

Following the meeting, members enjoyed a barbecue and a pool party hosted by Jan and Bill Maresh. The

weather was terrific, and a dip in the pool after the meeting was a great way to end the day.

Our next meeting will be held Sunday, Nov. 16, starting at 1 p.m. This is our annual meeting, after which we will hold a Friendsgiving luncheon.

best wishes to our

Honorary Members

Lodge 518 member a former secretary of an Illinois Lodge

MELVINDALE, Mich. — Sis. Bertha Herron, a member of SNPJ Lodge 518, outlived her SNPJ life insurance policy in March 2025 and has since joined the ranks of the Society's Honorary (outlived) Members. She writes:

"My name is Bertha (Yuvan) Herron. On my recent birthday, Feb. 22, 2025, I became 100 years of age. I was not planning or striving for it, but it happened.

"My parents, John and Ludmila (Matko) Yuvan, and my oldest brother, John, came to the U.S.A. from Slovenia in January 1913. They first settled in Radley, Kan., where my father began working in a coal mine. He was a lifelong coal miner.

"In Kansas, my parents joined SNPJ Lodge 72 in 1916. My brother Emil and sister Ludmila (we always called her Emily) were born in Kansas. They moved to another mining area in Worden, Ill. My sister Mary was born there and passed at a few months of age during the "Flu" epidemic in 1917. My sister Emma was born a short time later.

"The next and final move for our family was to Auburn, Ill., in November 1922, where dad worked at one of the five coal mines in the area. There were many Slovenians living here. An active SNPJ Lodge 335 existed which had received its charter on Aug. 16, 1917, and of course, my parents transferred.

"There were many Slovenians here who worked together and helped each other with many projects around their homes, and with butchering and making klobase. House raisings were done, where Slovenian miners gathered at a house, hand-dug out the soil beneath the house, manually elevated the house, and then poured a concrete floor and walls under the structure to form a basement. The wives and families would help by providing meals for the workers. Once done with that home, they would move to another Slovene's house on a following date, working together to improve living conditions for their families.

"These Slovenians were not only good workers, but also liked to get together for small picnics which were held at the edge of town with permission from the land owners. For the picnics, several members got together, made sausage, and cooked it on a kerosene stove which was easily moved. I remember there

was little transportation then, and everyone walked to the picnic and carried food and children. I remember ONE car at a picnic when I was little. Members brought a potica, some donuts, or other dishes to share.

"There was always someone who brought their accordion or concertina and played some polkas and waltzes so everyone could dance on the grass or dirt during these early picnics. Slovenians could dance anywhere there was music! And then they would all get together to sing before cleaning up the area and going home. I was young then, but I remember those times.

"Even during the Depression, Lodge 335 held little picnics. We were invited to Joe Lapanja's home. We accepted, and he invited members to help him build a concrete dance floor behind his home. Joe was a mason and knew how to work with cement. Ladies made crocheted pieces to raffle, and the money received helped defray expenses. Later picnics were held at his home.

"I was a juvenile member, as were my brothers and sisters (and all became adult members), and I transferred to the adult Lodge at age 16. Four years ago I was honored as an 80-year member, at which time I received a lovely gift from the Home Office. It is a beautiful commemorative blanket depicting our Home Office, the Recreation Center, 1904 National Emblem, Lake Bled in Slovenia, and a couple in traditional dress.

"At the annual election of officers for 1960, my sister, Emma Rigg, was elected president as members present felt it was time for younger officers. At the Lodge meeting in March 1967, the secretary/treasurer passed unexpectedly. He was in his 21st year in that position. There was an immediate search to fill that office. There was urging from all the older members that they needed a "younger" member to fill the office, and my father, who was 83 then, was in agreement. So I decided I'd see if I could handle it. I was elected and served in that position until 2003.

"Death took five active Lodge members in 2002, and we could no longer have a quorum for meetings. We had members, but they had moved from Auburn. First we transferred to Lodge 567 in Springfield, Ill. In just a few years, they had



Sis. BERTHA HERRON (518)

our problem and were transferred to Lodge 2 in La Salle, Ill.

"In 2016 I moved to Michigan to live with my daughter, Irene Kovac, and family. She is an active president of SNPJ Lodge 518 in Melvindale. Recently, my son Mike and I transferred to Lodge 518. Because of being 100, I am now an Honorary SNPJ Member, and I have enjoyed these meetings and activities.

"During my years with Lodge 335, my records show that we were very active for 10 years in the 1970s. The Auburn VFW always held a three-day Labor Day picnic with many activities, and where they sold fish dinners and beer. They also had dancing in the pavilion. In 1970 we asked the VFW if we could set up a tent and sell klobase sandwiches. They were happy to have us. The sandwiches were a big hit, and we also added potica and apple strudel that several of our members made and donated. This joint picnic continued for 10 years.

"That picnic was followed by the Slovenefest which was organized by the SNPJ Lodges from Auburn, Springfield, and St. Louis. It was a big, one-day picnic at the same park location, and was also held annually for 10 years. Auburn friends liked what was happening, and they began to donate garden-fresh tomatoes and pickled peppers they raised and canned. People came from many states to attend, and buses arrived from the St. Louis and Chicago areas with attendees.

"So it was, Slovenians working together, picnics, and dancing. But our local members who could work became fewer, and so this big project could not continue and the last picnic was held in 1989.

"In closing, I want to add that I enjoyed all the busy years. It is so nice to remember all the people I met and worked with... and all the polkas and waltzes I danced. So many nice memories of SNPJ for this 100-year-old Honorary Member."

On behalf of the members of Lodge 518 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend best wishes to Sis. Herron for continued health and happiness.

Lodge 643, Youth Circle 7 preparing for the holidays

LODGE 643 PARTY
FROM PAGE 1

your reservations by Friday, Dec. 5, by phoning Kathleen Seifert at (330) 883-2513 or Ray Kovac at (330) 824-2154. The cost for non-members is \$20. A cash bar will be available.

Please be sure to give us the names of Circle 7 children attending so Santa has a gift for them.

The first Lodge 643 meeting of 2026 will be held Thursday, March 19, starting at 6 p.m. at Amen Corner. Be sure to mark the date.

Lodge 643 wishes everyone a very merry Christmas!

Lodge 142 plans Holiday Light Tour to close out 2025

HOLIDAY LIGHT TOUR
FROM PAGE 1

with our festive Hawaiian leis and fraternal camaraderie. In fact, everyone enjoyed it so much that attendees were asking for and planning another outing before we disembarked the ship!

Our Lodge officers quickly worked together and planned our next event, a Holiday Light Tour featuring the very best light displays in Northeast Ohio. The Holiday Light Tour will take place Saturday, Dec. 13, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. A private chartered bus will pick up the group at the Willoughby Senior Center and return to the Senior Center by 9:30 p.m.

Seating is limited and we expect the bus to fill quickly. Contact Carol Maruszak at (440) 655-8776 for more information and to register.

Up-and-Coming...

A look at events planned by the Slovene National Benefit Society

- NOV. 22 SNPJ Spartans Lodge 576 one-day casino bus trip to Presque Isle. For additional information contact Karen Novak at (216) 965-3181 or Erica Novak at (440) 725-6523.

2026

- FEB. 13-15 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.

- JUNE 12-14 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.

We've Got You COVERED



by DAVID GOMBKOTO
SNPJ Sales Director

Giving thanks by planning ahead

As November arrives, we naturally turn our hearts toward gratitude. The air turns crisp, the trees trade green for gold, and families gather around tables filled with familiar dishes and even more familiar faces. Thanksgiving isn't just a day, it's a mindset – a reminder to pause, reflect, and appreciate the blessings we hold dear. But beyond the mashed potatoes and memories, Thanksgiving carries a deeper message about preparation and provision. Long before the first Thanksgiving, early settlers gave thanks for a successful harvest because it meant one thing – security for the winter ahead. Their gratitude wasn't only for what they had gathered, but for the foresight that made it possible.

In that same spirit, financial preparation – through life insurance and annuities – is a modern-day harvest. It's how we ensure that our families will be cared for, no matter what season of life comes next.

Thankfulness Is More Than Words

Each year, we express gratitude for family, home and health. Yet true thankfulness often shows itself in action. Just as a parent carves time out of a busy schedule to create lasting holiday traditions, thoughtful planning today is an act of love that endures far beyond the holiday season.

A life insurance policy can be the most meaningful “thank you” we leave our loved ones; a promise that, should life change unexpectedly, they'll have the support to move forward. An annuity can provide peace of mind in retirement, ensuring your own hard-earned savings continue to serve you, rather than the other way around. These tools aren't just financial products, they're expressions of care and gratitude, built to last generations.

A Legacy of Gratitude

Think of Thanksgiving traditions that have been passed down through time: the secret stuffing recipe, the family prayer, the extra seat for a guest. Each one tells a story of values, lessons and love. Life insurance and annuities tell a similar story: they preserve what we've worked for and ensure it continues to bless others.

At SNPJ, we understand that our members don't just want to protect what they've built – they want to pass on the values that built it. The early immigrants from Slovenia knew this back in 1904 and built a legacy which has carried on for 120 years into new generations of family here in America. Planning ahead reflects gratitude not only for what we have, but for those who helped us achieve it – parents who taught us to save, grandparents who modeled self-reliance, and communities that stood beside us.

When you take steps to protect your family's financial future, you're not just thinking about money – you're extending your gratitude into action. It's a quiet, powerful way of saying, “Thank you... and I want to make sure you're taken care of.”

Preparing for Tomorrow, Today

As we reflect on what we're thankful for this Thanksgiving, let's also remember what it means to prepare. Just like those who gathered the harvest before winter, now is the perfect time to review your family's financial plan. Ask yourself:

- Would my loved ones be protected if something unexpected happened?
- Do I have a plan to ensure my retirement income lasts as long as I do?
- Am I passing along not just possessions, but peace of mind?

If any of those questions give you pause, we're here to help. SNPJ has proudly served members for generations, offering life insurance and annuities that fit your needs, your values, and your family's future.

This Thanksgiving, as we gather around tables filled with gratitude, let's celebrate more than the feast before us. Let's give thanks for the foresight to prepare, the wisdom to plan, and the love that inspires us to do both. Because when we take care of those we love, that's something truly worth celebrating.

To learn more about SNPJ products and solutions, please call 1-800-843-7675 or visit us online at snpj.org.



PREPARE FOR RETIREMENT CONFIDENTLY!

Having an SNPJ Loyalty Annuity eliminates stock market concerns, ensures principal protection, and provides predictable growth. Contact the SNPJ Home Office at 1-800-843-7675 to open your annuity TODAY!

Loyalty 8 Annuity

8-year surrender period
5.50% first-year *guarantee* rate for new money
3.50% in years two and after

Loyalty 5 Annuity

5-year surrender period
5.00% first-year *guarantee* rate for new money
3.25% in years two and after

- No fees attached to either Loyalty Annuity
- Rates not guaranteed after the first year
- **3.00%** guaranteed minimum on *new issues only*
 - IRAs/Roth IRA/non-qualified eligible
- Conversions of existing annuities available at first-year rates

Slovene National Benefit Society
247 West Allegheny Road • Imperial, PA • 15126
1-800-843-7675 • www.snpj.org

Slovenia signs the EU Chips Act 2.0 declaration

BRUSSELS, Belgium (STA) — All EU members, including Slovenia, have signed a declaration calling for revised and more ambitious legislation on computer chips to secure critical technologies, speed up approvals, and deepen skills and financing in the semiconductor chain.

Slovenian Minister of Digital Transformation Ksenija Klampfer signed the declaration on behalf of Slovenia during a session of the EU Competitiveness Council, the Digital Transformation Ministry wrote in a press release.

Joining forces through the Semicon Coalition launched by the Netherlands earlier this year, EU member states are advancing Chips Act 2.0, shifting focus from a 20 percent market-share target to securing critical technologies, accelerating approvals, and strengthening skills and financing across the semiconductor value chain.

The document lists three key objectives: Prosperity through a stronger European semiconductor ecosystem to generate economic and societal value; indispensability by maintaining and enhancing leadership in critical points along the chain; and resilience by ensuring capacity, supply chain stability and technological autonomy.

To achieve this, the declaration identifies several policy priorities: a stronger collaboration among industry, research and start-ups; aligned EU and national funding, and mobilization of private capital; a robust European “talent pipeline;” and collaboration with like-minded global partners while protecting European strategic autonomy.

Slovenia will host Road Cycling Championships

LJUBLJANA (STA) — Slovenia will host the 2026 European Road Cycling Championships, the European Cycling Union (UEC) announced in late September. Although the country is considered a cycling powerhouse thanks to the achievements of its riders, particularly the generational talent Tadej Pogačar, this will mark the first time for Slovenia to host a major road cycling championship. The 2026 competition, known officially as the UEC Road European Championships, will take place in Ljubljana Oct. 3-7.

Two weeks prior to the announcement, the Slovenian Cycling Federation revealed its bid to host this major competition, a move supported by the Slovenian government. “This is one of the biggest cycling events in Europe, bringing together the best European riders, fans and media attention. A successful bid would provide an exceptional opportunity to promote sport, tourism and the country as a whole,” a spokesman for the government said at the time.

The Road European Championships have been held since 1995, but it wasn't until 2016 that elite races became part of the schedule. Previously, the competition featured only juniors and U-23 races.

Slovenia has been enjoying a golden era of cycling in recent years as several of its riders, such as Primož Roglič and Matej Mohorič, have made a name for themselves. But the rider who has been most dominant and credited with turning Slovenia into a cycling powerhouse is Pogačar, who recently defended his road race world title. He is currently the world's best rider and already one of the all-time greats due to his versatility and incredible accomplishments, which include four Tour de France titles.

The announcement of the 2026 host follows Slovenia's decision to vie for hosting the opening stages of the Tour de France, an event known as the Grand Depart, in 2029.

Research group now part of Primorska University

IZOLA (STA) — InnoRenew CoE, an Izola-based research institute where an international team of experts has been studying renewable materials and sustainable construction since 2017, has become part of the University of Primorska, the university announced in early September.

The University of Primorska is one of the founders of InnoRenew CoE, which operates as part of the project under the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program.

Through a court decision dated July 29, the institute was merged with



the Koper-based university as an independent department within the Andrej Marušič Institute (IAM). The merger is a “contribution to upgrading the joint efforts to develop knowledge, strengthen cooperation, and encourage the creation of an environment for transferring knowledge into practice,” university Rector Klavdija Kutnar was quoted as saying in a press release.

Andreja Kutnar, the director of InnoRenew CoE and acting head of the new department, said [the research institute] would continue to strive to create new knowledge, develop materials and create a healthy environment.

In more than eight years of operation as an independent institute, InnoRenew CoE has acquired and implemented 96 publicly funded projects with an estimated value of EUR 15.78 million (\$18.5 million), and numerous projects funded by national and international companies estimated at EUR 2.81 million (\$3.3 million).

Vintgar Bridge a cultural monument – temporarily

GORJE (STA) — Slovenia's Culture Ministry has temporarily declared Vintgar Bridge on the railway between Jesenice and Sežana a cultural monument of national importance while the railway is undergoing an upgrade. The stone arch railway bridge will hold the provisional status of cultural monument for one year.

Vintgar Bridge was constructed in 1906. It is the only one of the three large stone bridges on the Jesenice-Nova Gorica-Trieste railway line to have retained its original form. With a 41-meter (134.5-foot) arch, it is also the longest stone bridge in Slovenia that has remained unchanged and is still in use, the ministry noted.

The bridge is considered an exceptional example of the Austrian School of large bridge construction, and was featured by French engineer Paul Sejourne in the “*Grandes voutes*” (Great Arches) publication. The bridge runs across the Vintgar Gorge, a deep and narrow gorge along the Radovna River, a popular tourist attraction.

The ministry temporarily declared the bridge a cultural monument so that its design would be protected during renovation work on the railway. In the next few months, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia will draft a proposal to permanently declare the bridge a cultural monument. The provisional declaration is valid through Aug. 23, 2026.

“Vintgar Bridge is not just a piece of infrastructure, but a symbol of past knowledge and of delicate placement in a vulnerable natural environment. With everything it represents, it connects us to a future in which the updated railway infrastructure will play a key role in the sustainable development of the area,” Culture Ministry State Secretary Matevž Čelik Vidmar said.

New funding to promote e-books and audiobooks

LJUBLJANA (STA) — In September, a new project promoting digital publishing was launched in Slovenia, aimed at co-financing more than a thousand e-books and some 300 audiobooks. The three-year project is estimated at EUR 2.6 million (\$3.05 million).

As part of the project, the Book Agency (JAK) will co-finance production of e-books and audiobooks in Slovenian. The first applications were requested this fall for audiobooks and e-books that will be released next year.

JAK will be able to co-finance more than a thousand e-books and some 300 audiobooks. “When readers don't have access to books in Slovenian, they reach for books in foreign languages,” agency director Katja Stergar said. A study on reading habits conducted last year showed that among young people (up to age 24), 76 percent are reading English works.

“Audiobooks and e-books will be provided to libraries that normally receive them, while some of the content will also be included in the language corpora required for large language models and digitalization of the Slovenian language,” Culture Minister Asta Vrečko said. “This will allow for bet-

ter accessibility of digital content, and promote the exchange of knowledge between research organizations and businesses, she added.

In 2024 the Culture Ministry increased the budget for books to EUR 1.2 million (\$1.41 million), Vrečko explained, adding that this project would further strengthen the publishing industry, libraries, and the Slovenian language. Training courses will also be offered as part of the project, covering topics such as technology, e-books, audiobooks, language corpora, AI, and the legal aspects of copyrights.

Slovenian Braille added to list of cultural heritage

LJUBLJANA (STA) — The Slovenian version of Braille, a tactile writing system used by the blind and vision impaired for reading and writing, was added to the national register of intangible cultural heritage in late August.

On its website, the register of intangible cultural heritage explains that Slovenian Braille is adapted to the Slovenian language and is used primarily in Slovenia and by Slovenians abroad. “The blind use Slovenian Braille every day for schoolwork, personal and public communication, and to access information in various forms,” the website notes, adding that it has been incorporated in legal proceedings since 2008.

Braille is formally taught in Slovenia at the Centre for Education, Rehabilitation, Inclusion and Counseling for the Blind and Partially Sighted (IRIS Center). According to the register of intangible cultural heritage website, the Union of Associations of the Blind and Partially Sighted runs a printing house and maintains a Slovenian Braille library where digital content is also available.

As part of IRIS Center, the Slovenian Braille Commission preserves and further develops Slovenian Braille, regularly updating standards and generating new materials and tools.

The use of Braille in Slovenia started in 1918, when many soldiers returned home blind following their service in the First World War. Minka Skaberne (1882-1965), who completed a course for the blind in Vienna in 1911, is believed to be one of the first typhlopedagogues [educators of blind children] in Slovenia. In 1917 she visited blinded Slovenian soldiers at the Institute for the Blind in Graz, Austria. After the war, Skaberne organized a course of instruction for reading and writing Braille that was attended by roughly 100 volunteer students. After finishing the course, her students began transcribing the works of Slovenian writers into Braille.

Josip Kobal (1882-1964), who compiled the first Slovenian alphabet for the blind which was approved in 1923, is also credited with the development of Slovenian Braille. Kobal included diacritics in the alphabet, thus perfecting Braille in Slovenian.

The first institute for the blind on the territory of present-day Slovenia was established in 1919, while the first Slovenian Braille standard was adopted in 1974. It was later updated to ensure greater accuracy and usability.

Maribor bike-sharing network growing rapidly

MARIBOR (STA) — Maribor introduced Mbajk, a bike-sharing system, in 2022, and the network has quickly expanded to 39 stations offering 390 bicycles. Mayor Saša Arsenovič says the goal is to have more than 70 Mbajk stations citywide, forming a sustainable mobility network.

The most recent area to be better connected with the city center is Tezno, one of Maribor's largest boroughs with more than 11,000 residents. “With the new stations, we are continuing to implement Maribor's vision of becoming a 15-minute city, where all essential services, workplaces and schools are accessible without a car,” Arsenovič said.

The rapidly growing network is increasingly transforming Maribor into a sustainable and accessible city, according to the municipality.

Maribor introduced the Mbajk system through a public-private partnership with the Europlakat company, and the network has been further expanding in collaboration with other companies and organizations. To date, Mbajk bicycles have been rented by nearly 40,800 riders.

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

A family visit in Slovenia for Lodge 581 members

by MARCIA KLANCER BLEGGI
Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer

ST. MARYS, Pa. — SNPJ Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Klancer, her husband Don and grandson Dylan spent three weeks visiting relatives in the Mirna Valley area of Slovenia.

Marcia’s cousin, Igor Zaplotnik, is a member of University for the Third Period of Life, a seniors group. Some 100 group members from the Trebnje area participate in a variety of activities which serve to better their lives.

Some of the activities that are available for the 2025-26 year include language classes in English, Spanish, German and French; hiking; art; guitar; calligraphy; recreation; crafts; folklore; bowling; and tennis. Each class holds 30 sessions, and each member can take part



Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer **MARCIA KLANCER BLEGGI** and her cousin, **Igor Zaplotnik**, in Mirna, Slovenia.

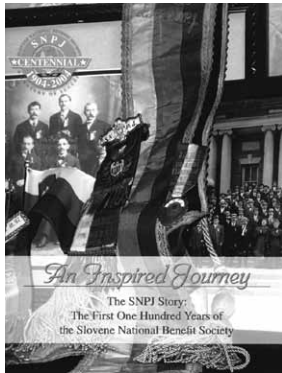
in several groups.

The university also scheduled four educational bus trips in 2025-26. The group will tour the Museum of Banks in Slovenia, the Savinja Valley, the Škrlj Bunker, and the Olimje Monastery.

With all these activities available, this organization encourages seniors to learn and stay active. What a great example for us all!

Lodge 581 encourages you to stay young and active. Attend the polka boosters dance on

Sunday, Nov. 30, at Wildwoods in St. Marys, or volunteer to serve as a Lodge officer in 2026. For more information about Lodge 581 activities, contact Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Klancer Bleggi at (814) 335-4983.



A CENTURY in the making

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

\$17.50 EACH (INCLUDES POSTAGE)
ADD \$1 POSTAGE FOR EACH ADDITIONAL COPY ORDERED

RETURN THIS ORDER FORM TO
Slovene National Benefit Society
247 West Allegheny Road • Imperial, PA 15126-9774

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Number of copies _____

Payment in full must accompany all orders. Make checks payable to **SNPJ**.
Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame hosts 61st Thanksgiving Polka Weekend

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

CLEVELAND — Celebrate the joy of polka with a weekend of unforgettable music, dancing and heritage at the 61st Thanksgiving Polka Weekend hosted by the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame. Scheduled Nov. 28-29 at the Holiday Inn Cleveland South, it’s the nation’s premier showcase for Cleveland-style and Slovenian polkas, featuring a lineup of world-class performers and festive fun for all ages.

Experience America’s favorite good-time music with legendary entertainers: Joey Miskulin, the accordion virtuoso from Nashville and Hollywood; Walter Ostanek, Canada’s beloved Polka King; Hall of Famers Eddie Rodick and Kathy Hlad; Polka Hall of Fame Radio’s Joey Tomsick; the Zolkas; Klancnik and Friends; The Fešta Band; Bob Kravos; Mikey Dee—and more.

Kick off the festivities Friday afternoon and dance until midnight. Five top bands will be playing polkas and waltzes you know and love.

The celebration continues Saturday with the Polka Mass and the Polka Music Awards induction of the latest greats. Five more orchestras swing you into the night, along with live performances and the All-Star Accordion Jam on stage with amateurs and pros sharing the spotlight and their Slovenian spirit.



Accordion virtuoso **Joey Miskulin** (left) and Canada’s Polka King **Walter Ostanek** headline the entertainment for the 61st Thanksgiving Polka Weekend hosted by the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame.

Lifetime achievement awards in polka music will be presented to instrumentalist, vocalist and bandleader Mollie B, host of the Mollie B Polka Party TV show in Ohio; accordionist Karl Lukitsch, formerly of Pittsburgh and the current leader of a polka band in Florida; Al Bambic, a Cleveland drummer since the 1970s; Milwaukee’s Don Hunjadi, a saxophonist, polka radio host and record producer; and late Cleveland accordionist Ernie Benedict, who led the Polkateers and the Range Riders on radio and TV with hits like “Red Lips and Red Wine.”

The Board of Trustees has added new names to the Honor Roll: Vladislav and Isabella Kralj, longtime radio hosts and Slovenian cultural leaders in Milwaukee; accordionist

Bruce Korosa, who leads a polka band in Chicago and hosts events and a radio show; and late accordionist Johnny Gribbons, a polka bandleader in the 1920s who wrote “Mitza Polka” and “Loretta.”

Enjoy Turkey Day weekend the polka way. The Holiday Inn Cleveland South is close to I-77 and I-480 on Rockside Road in Independence, Ohio. Parking is free. Reserve your room directly for a special rate of \$109 per night, plus tax, by phoning (216) 524-8050.

Admission on Friday and Saturday is \$25 per day. Save \$5 with a weekend pass available for \$45. Guests age 18 and under admitted free of charge. Order your tickets from the Polka Hall of Fame by phone at (216) 261-3263 or e-mail polkashop@aol.com.

DANCE AND DINE ACROSS SLOVENIA ON THE SLOVENIAN UNION OF AMERICA CENTENNIAL TOUR

Hosted by Joe Valencic, SUA President

TOUR DATE: JUNE 21 - JULY 2, 2026

PRICE: \$3,584

Slovenia rolls out the red carpet for the Slovenian Union of America with an unforgettable tour packed with music and culinary experiences for the group's 100th anniversary. Kollander Travel plans the most entertaining Slovenia trip ever, with SUA President Joe Valencic leading you to his favorite sites. Enjoy magnificent Alpine vistas, the sunny Adriatic, and fascinating locations.

Contact Kollander World Travel for details:

- phone: (216) 692-1000
- toll-free: (800) 800-5981
- email: kwt@kollander.com

Kollander World Travel

New Address?

Please use this form so PROSVETA will move with you. Type or print name and new address in the space provided below. Mail to: PROSVETA, circulation, 247 West Allegheny Road, Imperial, PA 15126-9774; or e-mail snpj@snpj.com.

Name _____

New Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Attach old mailing label here

PROSVETA Crossword

Thanksgiving (#1125) by StatePoint Media

ACROSS

- As opposed to Ave.
- *Male turkey
- *The National ____ Show
- Suggestive look
- Transversus abdominis location
- Milan's La ____ opera house
- Curved molding
- Welcoming sign
- Crossword entries
- *Skillet-cooked batter
- Bristles on grass
- Talked like a pigeon
- Scepter's partner
- A way to steal gas
- With two maxima, in statistics
- All Nippon Airways
- Tip of lion's tail
- Body, breath and mind workout
- Garments
- Singer Benatar
- Unethical loaner's practice
- Copcat
- *Pie nuts
- Honey maker
- Like Old Glory
- Time for an egg hunt
- "As if!"
- Battle of the ____, a.k.a. Ardennes Offensive

- Moldy appetizer
- *Green bean ____
- *Thanksgiving football regulars
- Cream-filled cookie
- Chieftain in Arabia
- Poem at a funeral
- Of two minds
- Not ever, poetically
- Oui in French
- Ensign, for short
- Make them meet

DOWN

- Coalition
- Emmet Brickowski's brick
- Zig or zag
- Make wet
- Safari hat
- Mountain nymph
- "Cobbler, cobbler, ____ my shoe"
- Repair a sock
- Cutlass or Delta 88, for short
- "Now we're cooking with ____"
- "La cerveza más fina"

- Bunch of #42 Across
- *Football regulars on Thanksgiving
- They're made for walking
- Tin Man's remedy
- "The Forsyte ____, " pl.
- Not suitable in certain circumstances
- Fruit-cutting device
- 2nd letter of Greek alphabet
- Skeptic's MO
- Come to terms
- Extra sweatshirt, e.g.
- Hightailed it
- Cul de ____
- *Prepping a turkey
- Cell phone bill item
- Teacher's favorite student
- Infamous Baby Face
- Verse
- Tranquil
- Noble one
- Internet patrons
- Digestive aid
- Fish eggs, pl.
- ____ d'Ivoire
- Bad luck predictor
- What Pinocchio did
- Makes mistakes
- Bovine hangout

The solution to puzzle #1125 will run in the Dec. 1 issue.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14

15 16 17

18 19 20

21 22

23 24 25 26 27 28 29

30 31 32 33 34

35 36 37 38

39 40 41 42

43 44 45 46

47 48 49

50 51 52 53 54 55

56 57 58

59 60 61

62 63 64

SWITCH & GET

\$25

Off First Month of New Service!

USE PROMO CODE: GZ590

Consumer Cellular

CALL CONSUMER CELLULAR 888-804-0913

© StatePoint Media © 2023 Consumer Cellular Inc. For promo details please call 888-804-0913

Santa paying a visit to the Recreation Center Dec. 6

by SUSAN ZARELLA (277)
SNPJ Recreation Center

BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa. — It's true; it's true! There is a Santa, and he's coming to the SNPJ Recreation Center on Saturday, Dec. 6!

The SNPJ Heritage Center and Recreation Center are hosting the children's Christmas party in The Alpine Room starting at noon. Lunch will be served at 1 p.m. while we

await the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus.

The party is members-only this year. Parents and grandparents may register their children age 10 and under to come see Santa. A donation of \$5 will be asked for adults in attendance.

The party will include music, balloons, crafts and cookie making for the children to have fun with the elves while they

wait for Santa and Mrs. Claus to arrive.

We would like you to register your children before the deadline of Monday, Nov. 24, so that Santa can have a gift for each child. There will be lots of fun for everyone, so be sure to call the Recreation Center at 1-877-767-5732 for reservations.

We're also accepting donations to Toys for Tots at this

time. Please feel free to bring an unwrapped gift with you so that we may donate some toys for children who are in need this year.

Please don't forget the reservation deadline, Monday, Nov. 24, to register your children. Seating is limited, so it's first to call and register, first to see Santa.

Merry Christmas to everyone in SNPJland!



The SNPJ Lodge 34 officers for 2025: (from left) Vice President **JOZEF WATSON**, President **MARY DRAGAN**, auditor **JENNIFER VELIKAN**, and Secretary/Treasurer **JERRY WATSON**.

Spartans Lodge 576 heading to the casino in Nov.

by LINDA GORJUP
Lodge 576 Secretary/Treasurer

CLEVELAND — Happy November, Spartans Lodge members. We have important updates for you.

First, the Spartans Lodge will be holding their annual meeting potluck on Sunday, Nov. 9, starting at 1 p.m. at the home of Betty Young, 101 Pine Hollow Circle, Chardon, OH 44024. Please text Betty at (440) 463-1982 for the menu

and what is needed for our meal.

We will hold our regular meeting first, followed by our annual meeting, during which we will be voting for our 2026 officers.

This is a very important meeting, and I urge you to attend as we will be discussing next year's events.

Secondly, Spartans are hosting our annual Presque Isle Casino bus trip on Satur-

day, Nov. 22. The cost is \$55 per person which includes round-trip motor coach transportation, drinks, snacks, and musical entertainment while on the bus.

The bus will leave at 9 a.m. from Orr Ice Skating Arena off Babbitt Road in Euclid, and at 9:30 a.m. from McDonald's on Rt. 44 and Auburn Rd. in Concord.

After enjoying the afternoon "winning" at the casino

(we can only hope), we will have a brief stop at Grand River Cellars Winery. This is always a fun stop as the musicians will play a few tunes for everyone in the restaurant, as well as the kitchen staff.

For more information about the casino trip, please contact Karen Novak at (216) 965-3181 or Erica Novak at (440) 725-6523.

Finally, we wish everyone a blessed Thanksgiving.

Hodgepodge from the Reveliers Lodge

by CHRIS PETUKAUSKAS
Lodge 33 Secretary/Treasurer

AMBRIDGE, Pa. — Happy Hallo-Thank-Mas! I hope this finds our friends in SNPJland happy, healthy and well.

The fraternal calendar was teeming with numerous summer social events to attend, and I hope many of you were able to participate. Slovenefest 2025 is just a memory, but it certainly provided enough entertainment to fill the weekend with polkas, waltzes, camaraderie, crafts and tons of fun! It's the perfect environment

to catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

Moving forward, the gorgeous autumn colors are surrounding us with spectacular beauty all around. The crisp, cool air reminds us that we will be changing our clocks and tasting the delectable pumpkin flavor of various foods and drinks.

As we edge in on gathering for turkey time and giving thanks, don't blink! We all know the progression — and dare I remind you that the season of red, green, carols and shimmering lights glowing on trees is peeking in to say hello. The store shelves have all the pumpkins and turkeys tucked far away to display the newest novelties of Christmas. The countdown is on whether we're ready or not.

The annual combined holiday party for SNPJ Lodge 33 and Lodge 721 is planned for Saturday, Dec. 13, at Harold's Inn in Hopewell, Pa. The time will be from noon until 3 p.m., and a lunch buffet will be available for both adults and children

(10 and under).

I'm sure if we all behave until then, our jolly buddy will be stopping by to say hello and HO-HO-HO! Please bring some non-perishable food items to provide the local food bank with an additional supply of goodies.

We'd love to see many of you to celebrate the joy and sparkle of the season with your fraternal Sisters and Brothers. If you will be attending the party, please contact the following officers with any questions or to RSVP (we need a count for the restaurant by Nov. 29): Lodge 33 — contact Irene Pendel at (412) 418-8704 or e-mail her at ipendel@msn.com; Lodge 721 — contact Nancy Koutoulakis at her e-mail, Inkout@comcast.net.

We wish each and every one of you a Christmas blessed with radiance and a New Year that embraces you with peace, love and many reasons to smile.

May our Lodge members who are unwell know that we send them our best!

SNPJ Scholarship Fund Donations for the months of August & September 2025

SNPJ Lodge 174, Krayn, Pa. \$200	SNPJ Lodge 31, Sharon, Pa. \$50 <i>In memory of Samuel Heaslip</i>	SNPJ Lodge 225, Girard, Kan. \$30 <i>In memory of Steve Lomshek</i>
---------------------------------------	--	---

Jerry Watson and two young assistants prepared the potica served at the Slovenski Festival held in August at the Indianapolis SNH.



SNPJ Scholarship Award Program

A potential benefit of \$4,000 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 the 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 \$500 each installment are made twice a year (first installment: February/March; second installment: August/September) totaling \$1,000 per year. Applicants will receive payments for not more than eight (8) installments which may include graduate school.

Part-Time Students: Payments of \$250 each installment are made twice a year totaling \$500 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

2025 National Golf Results

Men’s Individual: Members

Name	Lodge	Score	Prize
*Cory Ward	138	72	\$90
*Mike Desocio	138	72	\$90
**Vince Braddock	138	65	\$90
Jeremy Cadez	138	66	\$66
Lou Pesnar	770	68	\$50
Ian Brumbaugh	138	68	\$50
David Sankovich	770	68	\$50
Mike Almasy	138	69	\$40
Daren Fetcko	138	69	\$40
Tom Vehar	138	70	\$35
Skip Morgan	138	70	\$35
Donny Moeslein	138	71	\$30
Joe Graff	138	71	\$30
Jack Evanish	138	72	\$18
Tom Copich	643	72	\$18
Ryan Brumbaugh	138	72	\$18
Joey Volpe	564	72	\$18
Tom Sedora	138	73	\$10
Eric Valencic	138	73	\$10
Rob Miller	6	73	\$10

Men’s Team Event

Team	Lodge	Score	Prize
*David Sankovich	770	329	\$148
Ed Caggiano	770		
Don Prejsnar	770		
Lou Presnar	770		
**Ed Galicic	138	288	\$148
Mike Almasy	138		
Bill Galicic	138		
Daren Fetcko	138		
Eric Valencic	138	295	\$100
Ryan Brumbaugh	138		
Mike Desocio	138		
Nick Verch	158		
Alec Brumbaugh	138	297	\$72
Ian Brumbaugh	138		
Ken Lawrence	138		
Tom Vehar	138		
Robbie Rockwell	138	298	\$60
Donny Moeslein	138		
Jeremy Cadez	138		
Robert Lawrence	138		
Nevin Robb	6	305	\$48
Rob Miller	6		
Robert Curtis	6		
Gary Usnick	6		

Women’s Individual: Members

Name	Lodge	Score	Prize
*Tina Seifert	643	90	\$40
**Cathy Fisher	138	69	\$40
Carly Evanish	106	77	\$20
Sara Tkach	138	78	\$12

Men’s Individual: Guests

Name	Score	Prize
*Greg Samsa	82	\$18
**Craig Ruston	65	\$18

Women’s Individual: Guests

Name	Score	Prize
*Catherine Copich Van Noy	115	\$7

*Indicates Actual Champion
**Indicates Net Champion

Peoria Holes Selected: North Course – 5, 6, 9
South Course – 4, 6, 9

2025 National Balina Results

Men’s Division

Team	Lodge	Prize
Gamblers Part Deux	138	\$180
Dead to Me	33/138/564	\$128
Freebirds	6/158	\$100
The Replacements	564	\$88
(tie-5th) Charlie’s Anchors	6/158	\$80
(tie-5th) TBD & Rich	6/158	\$80
(tie-7th) Slo Bros	6/106/158/782	\$68
(tie-7th) The Wild Honkeys	277/782	\$68
(tie-9th) Jebes Race	126/576	\$36
(tie-9th) Cousin Eddies	158/358	\$36

Women’s Division

Team	Lodge	Prize
One With The Ball	158/564	\$152
Vortex Ladies	138/158	\$112
The Landburghinis	6/158	\$96
AOOOOOs	6/138/782	\$80
(tie-5th) Golden Girls	6/138/158	\$68
(tie-5th) 4 Js	715/782	\$68

2025 Nat’l. Beanbag Toss Results

Men’s/Co-Ed Division

(Place)/Team	Lodge	Prize
(1) E. Valencic/J. Randolph	138/715	\$100
(2) D. Brand/E. Lorenzato	6	\$84
(3) B. Stroth/D. Fetcko	576/138	\$72
(4) J. Cadez/J. Wagner	138	\$64
(tie-5th) S. Sutton/D. Belfiore	138	\$50
(tie-5th) T. Zivkovich/M. Brately	158	\$50
(tie-7th) G. Smrdel/R. Dabecco	158/6	\$42
(tie-7th) D. Bosek/R. Apanaites	564/158	\$42

Women’s Division

(Place)/Team	Lodge	Prize
(1) L. Smrdel/S. Likovic	158/576	\$92
(2) K. Skovenski/M. Skovenski	158	\$58
(3) C. Forrest/B. Snow	158/6	\$42



In August, Lodge 559 members gathered in Lemont, Ill., for the Slovenian Catholic Center annual picnic, enjoying the food and entertainment.

Lodge 559 closing the year with Toys for Tots collection

by MELANIE MATIASEK
Lodge 559 Secretary/Treasurer

CHICAGO — When SNPJ Lodge 559 met in September, it was great to hear about our members’ summer activities.

One surprise over the summer was to hear from longtime member Myra Andres Fisher. Her parents were Anton “Tony” and Mary Dobrovolc Andres, active members at the original meeting hall in Chicago.

Myra sent me some of the publications from the early days of the SNPJ in the Waukegan and Chicago areas. It’s fun to see what was happening with the organization back then. Thank you, Myra, for taking the time to send these items for our Lodge to see.

In August, Lodge members got together at the Slovenian Catholic Center annual picnic in Lemont, Ill. This is a wonderful event. We especially enjoy the roasted pork, chicken and lamb, all cooked over open pits.

It was a great afternoon socializing with Lodge members, as well as friends from other Lodges and

organizations. Listening to the Slovenian music and watching the dancers was especially entertaining.

During our September meeting, Robert Rigler (8) submitted his report on the SNPJ Young Adult Conference. He represented our Lodge again this year and gave a detailed report; we thank him for representing us. The Young Adults are an important part of our organization, and we thank all of them for their hard work.

We conducted the first half-year audit. All was found to be in good order.

We also discussed our final meeting of the year, during which we will participate in our annual Christmas toy drive, collecting donations for Toys for Tots. Any member who cannot attend that meeting but would like to contribute can contact me.

Our next meeting is scheduled Friday, Nov. 14, starting at noon at the McCook Family Restaurant in McCook, Ill. Please contact me if you plan to attend so that I can make the reservation. Lodge 559 members wish everyone an enjoyable fall!

Slavija Lodge 1 plans Dec. 14 annual meeting

by MICHELLE HRIBAR-HERNANDEZ
Lodge 1 President

CHICAGO — Slavija Lodge 1 members held their third regular meeting of the year at McCook Restaurant in McCook, Ill. Members reflected on recent summertime activities, including participation in the annual Slovene Cultural Center picnic on Aug. 10 in Lemont, Ill., and the Slovenian Grape Festival on Sept. 6 in Joliet, Ill.

Following the meeting, members and friends enjoyed the restaurant’s delicious Bo-

hemian cuisine.

Looking ahead, President Michelle Hribar-Hernandez will host the Dec. 14 electoral meeting, which will be followed by the Lodge Christmas party. Members also plan to attend the annual Christmas Grotto Lights celebration at the Slovene Cultural Center in Lemont as part of their holiday festivities. For additional details, please contact Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Janina Hribar at (708) 598-2570.

We wish everyone a wonderful holiday season!



In September, Slavija Lodge 1 members attended the annual Slovenian Grape Festival in Joliet, Ill.

Fall a season of giving for Comets Lodge 715 members

by BAILEY RUSTON
Lodge 715 Secretary

UNIVERSAL, Pa. — SNPJ Lodge 715 has been having a great year.

In June, four members – Alyssa Urban, Trevor Urban, Juli Kurta and Bailey Ruston – represented our Lodge at the SNPJ Young Adult Conference. They provided a report on the service projects that were completed, such as the road cleanup, landscaping and painting. They were also involved in discussions and activities regarding life insurance, membership retention and marketing to young adults.

We would also like to give a shout out to member Juli Kurta for competing in the Miss SNPJ Pageant during Slovenefest this past July. She did a great job representing herself and our Lodge!

Our Lodge organized a food drive in September, collecting donations for the Turtle Creek Community Food Bank. Rose Smeltzer kindly accepted our goods, which were dropped off by Luke Samsa, Joseph Samsa and Juli Kurta.

We’re looking forward to our next meeting in November. Happy fall!



Universal Comets Lodge 715 members (from left) **LUKE SAMSA**, **JOSEPH SAMSA** and **JULI KURTA** delivered a food donation to the Turtle Creek Community Food Bank. The donation was accepted by **Rose Smeltzer** (right).

BALINA CHAMPIONS CROWNED AT NATIONAL SNPJ DAYS



Men’s Division 2025 Champions: Gamblers Part Deux (from left) **DAREN FETCKO**, **RON TKACH**, **DAVE BELFIORE** and **JIM CADEZ**, all Lodge 138.



Women’s Division 2025 Champions: One With The Ball (from left) **MALLORY LAMOVEC** (158), **LORI KIEFER** (158), **ASHLEY BRATELY** (158) and **JULI BOSEK** (564).



Men’s Division 2025 Runners-Up: Dead to Me (from left) **JEROME PETUKAUSKAS** (33), **ROBBIE ROCKWELL** (138), **JUSTIN VOLPE** (564) and **DANNY VOLPE** (564).



Women’s Division 2025 Runners-Up: Vortex Ladies (from left) **LIZ SMRDEL** (158), **JANICE ROCKWELL** (138), **JAN SMRDEL** (158) and **DIANE HORABIK** (158).

Support the Rec Center Cabin Renovation Project



by JOSEPH C. EVANISH
SNPJ National President/CEO

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

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

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

There are 24 cabins, which leaves

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

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

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

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

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

Rec Center Cabin Renovation Donations for the months of August & September 2025

The Waldman family, Ohio	\$498.23	SNPJ Lodge 31, Sharon, Pa.....	\$50	Brock Cosic (5), Willoughby, Ohio.....	\$20
In memory of Edward Waldman		In memory of David Miksa			
SNPJ Lodge 174, Krayn, Pa.....	\$200				

PROSVETA 2026 Publication Dates

JANUARY 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	MAY 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24/31 25 26 27 28 29 30	SEPTEMBER 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
FEBRUARY 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	JUNE 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	OCTOBER 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
MARCH 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	JULY 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	NOVEMBER 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
APRIL 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	AUGUST 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23/30 24/31 25 26 27 28 29	DECEMBER 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

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

SNPJ Membership Anniversaries November 2025

80-Year Members

Lodge	Member
782	Adeline D. Kino

70-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Patricia A. Serri	603	John L. Pleterski
138	Jenny Z. Raspet	749	Joan S. Grafe
518	Marlene L. Alestra	782	Irene V. Marmo

60-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Janet S. Conard	218	Janet L. Kennedy
2	Stephen F. Cenkar	218	Joyce M. Chruma
2	James A. Muzzarelli	223	Kathleen C. Dorko
3	Lynn Ann Musulin	225	Frank Tersina
6	Marion R. Miller	257	Charlotte A. Sustersic
41	Nicholas Yakovich	559	Warren T. Wittek
138	Rodney F. Petras	584	William J. Matko
153	Angela P. Pagano	584	Shelia J. Petrovich
158	Sandra A. Barszcz	665	Nancy J. Wetlesen
218	Deborah L. DeCarolis	677	Karen A. Farney
218	Geanie L. Oulehla		

50-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Paul A. Furar	158	Bernard J. Senick
3	Denise M. Sapolich	158	Donna Yan
5	Susan J. Glavac	257	Pamela Plavecski
5	John Trommetter	265	Andrew A. Druga
6	Catherine M. Rudzinski	277	J. Gregory Mangin
6	Lucretia M. Matthews	371	Micheal J. Deslich
6	Denise R. Graham	559	Linda L. Dyke
6	Richard P. Drankoski	564	Laura T. Norden
6	Deborah L. Dolence	584	Gary L. Klinka
8	Edward J. Dabrowski	584	Janet M. Davis
41	James J. Volkar	584	Jennifer A. Mueller
87	Kathleen H. Cochran	604	Colleen M.
87	Vivian A. Drop		O'Grady-Shearman
87	Robert L. Albert	604	Christine A. Curran
87	Cindy L. Brown	715	Timothy E. Kobal
87	John J. Kuis	721	Richard A. Dudak
87	Paul F. Welty	729	Stanley J. Kostyal
89	Susan Bradburn	749	Brian P. Murphy
106	Janet Williams	749	Anthony M. Beltz
106	Jeffrey B. Morgan	771	Robert M. Slosser
106	Timothy D. Harbaugh	776	Dominick G. Mioni
106	Marcy M. Cacia	776	Mark E. Anderson
126	Robert Fox	776	Patricia A. Huff
126	Christine M. Stearns	A01	Margaret Garofalo
142	David G. Bezek	A02	Ronald L. Shanahan
142	Lois M. Levar		

information at your fingertips

Looking for information on your SNPJ life insurance and annuity policies? Pay a visit to snpj.org, click any “SNPJ Portal” link, then follow the step-by-step instructions.

Damjan Popelar's Workshop

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

Visit the online store to see my various available designs

Online Store: www.dpopelar.com
Information/Inquiries: info@dpopelar.com
Phone: +386 (0)51-208-387

cook eat slovenia

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

\$40⁰⁰ each
includes postage

Return completed order form with full payment to:
Ed Robich • P.O. Box 1286 • Hermitage, PA 16148

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Email _____
Phone _____ Number of copies _____

Make check or money order payable to **SNPJ Heritage Center**

SNPJ RECOMMENDER PROGRAM

Recommending a new SNPJ member could be worth a total of **\$110**

The SNPJ Recommender Program provides an opportunity for adult members to encourage family, friends, children and acquaintances to join the Slovene National Benefit Society and take advantage of SNPJ's competitive products and numerous fraternal benefits. Not only will you be helping a friend and strengthening our Society, you'll also be receiving benefits yourself.

Recommender Benefits

- Receive \$10 for each valid referral submitted.
- Every valid referral earns the recommender one chance in the Quarterly Drawing for an opportunity to win \$100.

By submitting one valid referral, you have the opportunity to earn a total of \$110 in cash prizes!

I would like to introduce

for SNPJ membership

Please contact: _____
(Parent or guardian if under age 18)

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: () _____

Indicate Preferred Agent _____
(Optional)

My Name: _____

My Lodge Number: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: () _____

e-mail _____

Each individual must be informed that an agent will contact him/her and the referral must have some interest in SNPJ in order for the recommender to be considered valid.

Complete this coupon and return to
Slovene National Benefit Society
Att'n: Marketing Department
247 West Allegheny Road • Imperial, PA 15126