Your source for snpj News

prosveta

Official Publication of the Slovene National Benefit Society

YEAR CXIX
ISSUE 7

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2026

USPS: 448-080
ISSN: 1080-0263

The SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center presenting a full schedule of activity for Slovenefest weekend

by KATHY PAULENICH (776)
SNPJ Heritage Center Director

BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa. — Since I have been giving *PROSVETA* readers a short review of SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center history, I will pick up where I left off with the dedication of the newly renovated and expanded SNPJ Recreation Center.

Following the renovation, the SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center museum and library moved to the main floor of the Culkar Building at the Recreation Center. By 2004, the elected committee stood at 13 members: Chairman Roger Evanish, Blanche and John Asherman, Ed Crnart, Agnes Elish, Jeanette Zaman Elish, Ann Evanish, Jennie Gorjanc Kogovsek, Mary Mercina, Kathy Paulenich, Al and Mary Roginski, and Jennie Zaman.

Several members dropped off the committee, and in 2007 Joan Barbish Gaspersic and Carol Sadar Maruszak were added; Kathy Loudon and Mark Petkovic joined the committee in 2008.

This committee remained intact until 2011, when committee members were added due to the loss of a few more members. Maury Sinan, Patty Candela, Sarah Loudon and Kara Maruszak all joined the Heritage Center Committee in 2011. Following the passing of Chairman Roger Evanish in May 2011, Maury Sinan was elected Heritage Center director in June.

I will conclude this brief history in the August *PROSVETA* issue.

Let's take a look at Slovenefest, the biggest and best Slovenian festival of the year, scheduled July 10-12 at the SNPJ Recreation Center.

Make plans to visit the Slovenian Heritage Center museum and gift shop during Slovenefest. The Heritage Center will be open on Friday from 5 to 8 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday from noon until 6 p.m. While visiting the museum, use your smart phone to scan the QR codes in the displays and listen to a short description of what is included in the display.

During Slovenefest, be sure to check out the Heritage Center 50th anniversary table which will feature a display of old photos and a slide show compiled by committee member Tracey Belle.

Plan a visit to the Heritage Center gift shop as well. We have several new T-shirt designs available, along with onesies and toddler shirts. The noodles have arrived, and we also have the "napolitanke" wafer cookies plus so much more. The gift shop will also be set up outdoors next to the entertainment tent in the Slovenefest midway on Friday from 5 to 8 p.m., on Saturday from 2 to 8 p.m., and on Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m.

Our "Closer Look at Slovenia" presentations have moved from the Heritage Center patio to different areas around the festival grounds. Sarah and Kathy Loudon will be set up next to the outdoor sales trailer from 2 to 5 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday, presenting a make it/take it craft.

SEE **SLOVENEFEST 2026**
ON PAGE 5

JULIE WAGNER (749) shared two Slovenian cookie recipes while hosting a baking demonstration at the SNPJ Recreation Center during the annual Heritage Center Weekend in June.

Westmoreland Federation hosting the 15th Pretty in Pink fundraiser in memory of organizer Lois Denning

by JACKIE DENNING
Lodge 41

YUKON, Pa. — This July, the Westmoreland County Federation of SNPJ Lodges invites you to join us for our 15th annual Pretty in Pink cancer benefit fundraiser, a celebration of community, compassion, and the enduring spirit of those who fight cancer every day. Our goal is to assist those going through treatment to remain in their homes by supporting them with needed essentials such as gas, groceries and assistance with utility payments, to name just a few.

This year's event holds a very special place in our hearts. For 14 years, my mother, Lois Denning, organized the Pretty in Pink fundraiser with unwavering dedication and a deep personal commitment to this cause. A two-time cancer survivor herself, Lois understood firsthand the strain that cancer places on patients and their families.

Lois passed away in December, but her spirit lives on in every life this fundraiser has touched. We are honored to continue this tradition in her memory, and we know she will be with us in spirit this July.

We want to thank all of those who have attended this event in the past and encourage you to support this cause again. As my mother always said, "Just imagine – if everyone would bring one new person, what a wonderful display of support we would show to our local patients."

SEE **PRETTY IN PINK**
ON PAGE 4

The late **Lois Denning** *[right]*, pictured with her daughter, **JACKIE DENNING** (41), and Miss SNPJ 2024 **MORGAN SINAN** at the 2024 Pretty in Pink fundraiser. The 15th annual Pretty in Pink fundraiser, scheduled Sunday, July 26, at the Yukon Slovenian Hall, will be held in Lois' memory.

Join Lodge 715 members at Slovenefest for the Polka Crawl

by PATTI EVANISH
Lodge 715

BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa. — Comets Lodge 715 members, it's that time of year again. Join us on Sunday, July 12, for the annual Lodge 715 Slovenefest Polka Crawl.

Please meet in the back of the Gostilna at 2:45 p.m. This will be our first stop, dancing to the music of the Rex Taneri Band. We'll then travel as a group to the Outside Stage to show off our dancing skills to the Garrett Tatano Band. Finally, we'll stroll to the Heritage Pavilion to enjoy dancing to the music of Veseli Fantje.

Remember to stay tuned to our Facebook page for more exciting Lodge events taking place throughout the year.

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 Aug. 16, 2026, 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 Aug. 6, 2026, to:

Slovene National Benefit Society
Joseph C. Evanish, National President
247 West Allegheny Road
Imperial, PA 15126
e-mail: **cvalencic@snpj.com**

PERIODICAL MATERIAL

In This Issue

Slovenia from the Source 3
SNPJ 33rd Convention Delegates 4
PROSVETA Crossword Puzzle 6

briefly

Home Office closed for the July 4th holiday

IMPERIAL, Pa. — The SNPJ Home Office will be closed Friday, July 3, in celebration of Independence Day. Normal office hours, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., will resume Monday, July 6. We wish all SNPJ members and friends a happy and safe Independence Day.

July merger unites two Pennsylvania Lodges

IMPERIAL, Pa. — Effective July 1, SNPJ Lodge 719 in Clairton, Pa., has been merged into SNPJ Lodge 729 in Yukon, Pa. All members of Lodge 719 were sent letters informing them of the merger and providing the name, address and phone number of their new Lodge secretary, Joann Krance, along with the dates and times of Lodge meetings.

We thank the former officers of Lodge 719 for all of their years of work and dedication to their Lodge and the Society. We also thank the officers and members of Lodge 729 for accepting this Lodge in a merger.

KAREN A. PINTAR
SNPJ National Secretary/COO

Lodge 776 plans a social event at the Rec Center

BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa. — Join SNPJ Lodge 776 members for a social gathering on Sunday, July 19, starting at noon in the Gostilna at the SNPJ Recreation Center. If you haven't done so already, please follow us on Facebook – just search "SNPJ Lodge 776."

RICH DOMBROSKY
Lodge 776 President

THE DEADLINE

The next two *PROSVETA* issue dates are Aug. 3 and Sept. 1. All material must be received by noon on Monday, July 20, for the Aug. 3 issue, and by Monday, Aug. 17, for the Sept. 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*.

Mila Rae Bacnik
Cleveland Lodge 142

Lodge 142 welcomes Mila Rae Bacnik as the newest addition to the Lodge. A fifth-generation SNPJ member, Mila is the daughter of Michael (142) and Christina Bacnik, and the granddaughter of Miss SNPJ 1971 Carol Bokal Bacnik (142). We welcome Mila to the Society and extend our best wishes to her entire family.

follow SNPJ on **Facebook**!

Make snpj.org your first stop for SNPJ information on the go. Scan the code to get started.

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*

Students enrolled in the Lodge 581 language class tour Slovenia

by MARCIA KLANCER BLEGGI
Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer

ST. MARYS, Pa. — Lodge 581 Slovenian language class students Lisa Kaucic, Lisa Adamich and Kathy Suess traveled to Slovenia with the SGSI Tour at the end of May.

In addition to the tour, the students met with their Slovenian language instructor, Lea, at the Šestica Restaurant (Gostilna) in Ljubljana. While posed in front of the restaurant, they noticed the sign "Gostilna Trattoria Gasthaus – 1776." The group agreed that the mushroom soup was terrific!

Other special stops on the trip included a castle in Novo Mesto (*Nove Mesto nad Metuji*), a spa, the Api-Bee Hive and Honey Garden, and a cooking class where they made *štruklji*. The group also searched for relatives at the archives and toured Ljubljana.

Kathy, Lisa and Lisa were thankful for knowing the basics of the Slovenian language. Another member of our Slovenian class, Janice Rockwell, is traveling to Slovenia in July – we are thrilled to visit our families' homeland! The Slovenian language classes will resume in September.

The weekend of July 10-12, members of the Slovenian class and Lodge 581 plan to meet during Slovenefest at the SNPJ Recreation Center in Enon Valley, Pa. Hopefully we'll meet up with other SNPJ friends.

Lodge 581 and the North Central Pennsylvania Slovene Polka Boosters have scheduled dances on July 19 at the Kersey Firemen's in Kersey, Pa., with the Rex Taneri Band; and on July 26 at Wildwoods in St. Marys with Patty C and The Guys.

Our annual picnic is planned Sunday, Aug. 2, at the Kersey Firemen's featuring music by the Garrett Tatano Band. For the picnic, bring an unwrapped item for the Chinese auction. Did you know that listening to polka music can reduce pain? Spend three hours on a Sunday afternoon relaxing!

For more information about Lodge 581 activities, contact Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Klancer Bleggi at (814) 335-4983 or Lodge President Pat Moore at (814) 598-2269.

[From left] **LISA KAUCIC** (6), **LISA ADAMICH** (581), SNPJ Lodge 581 Slovenian language class instructor **Lea Udovc**, and **KATHY SUESS** (33) in Ljubljana.

Samsula Lodge 603 delegates ready for the 33rd Convention

by JEANNETTE HUMPHREY
Lodge 603

SAMSULA, Fla. — The members of SNPJ Lodge 603, located in beautiful downtown Samsula, gathered in June for a business session preceded by a covered dish meal. All officers' reports were read and approved after a financial amount was corrected. Past President Connie Massey presided over the meeting, filling in for President Brandon Schmidt who was in Alabama attending his daughter Kaitlyn's college graduation. Kaitlyn is also a Lodge member.

Get well wishes were extended to those who had recent surgeries and procedures, George Benedict, Rudy and Dede Pleterski, Marlene Valpatic, Johnny Reichel and Mac Turberville. George is recuperating at home after several hospital visits and is being cared for by his wife, Ruth.

Congratulations to Brooke Benedict of Jacksonville, Fla., who recently graduated from college with two business degrees. Brooke is the daughter of David and Lisa Benedict. Several from Samsula attended the congratulatory party held at the Benedict home.

Thanks were extended to the Lodge 603 Scholarship Committee, Ella Adle, Ruth Benedict and Jeannette Humphrey, who awarded a scholarship to Sophia Sepuneda.

Christian Razpotnik designed the Lodge 603 ad for the upcoming SNPJ Quadrennial Convention, scheduled Aug. 17 in The Alpine Room at the SNPJ Recreation Center in Pennsylvania. Rhonda Tesauro, Ruth Benedict and I will serve as delegates from our Lodge. We're looking forward to seeing your smiling faces and talking about how lucky we are to have such a great fraternal society. Please take a look at our ad – and all the ads – in the Convention program book.

Slovenefest, which will be held July 10-12, is a fun-filled weekend hosted by the SNPJ Recreation Center. All are welcome to attend.

Lodge 603 dues for 2026 remain at $10 per member. If you haven't yet paid your Lodge dues, please send a check or money order to Lodge Treasurer Ruth Benedict, 3605 Darby Rd., New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168.

During a trip to Slovenia in May, Samsula Lodge 603 member **JEANIE PLETERSKI NOVOTNY** had the opportunity to visit with her cousin, **Jože Krek** of Dolenja Vas, Slovenia.

Victoria Stein and Shane Miller attended the SNPJ Young Adult Conference held at the Recreation Center in June. We appreciate them representing our Lodge.

Michael Daniels and Joseph Patton are the newest members of Lodge 603.

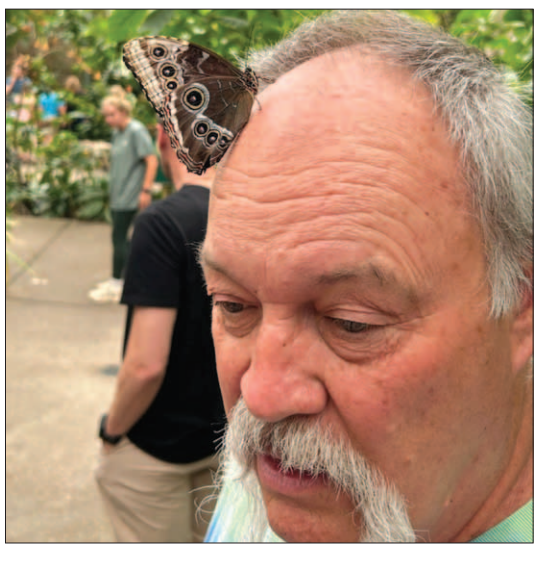
Be sure to check out the SNPJ annuity products that just became available in Florida. Information about the Florida annuities was received from SNPJ National Secretary and dear friend Karen Pintar.

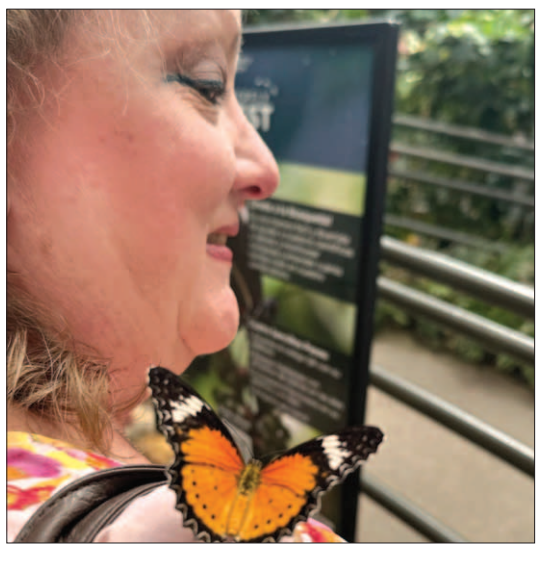
So long for now. We hope to see you at the Lodge 603 Hall and at the beautiful SNPJ Recreation Center this summer. While visiting the Recreation Center, be sure to check out the Slovenian Heritage Center!

Photos submitted by Julie Chamberlin (218)

Paying a Visit to the Home of the Butterflies

In May, SNPJ Lodge 218 members visited to the Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster, Colo. The butterflies landed on some members, some fluttered past others, but everyone had a great time. In attendance were Lodge President **BONNIE LEHNERZ**; Vice President **JULIE CHAMBERLIN**; Treasurer **GREGG LEHNERZ**; Secretary **JULIE MILAVEC**; auditors **DAVID CHAMBERLIN** and **CAITLIN ZIMMERMANN**; members **McKAILA** and **RONON CHAMBERLIN**, and **RYAN**, **INDY** and **HARPER ZIMMERMANN**; and guest **Lenore Laposa**.





Call for Candidates
SNPJ Heritage Center Committee

Notice is hereby given regarding the opening of nominations for candidates to the SNPJ Heritage Center Committee. The Heritage Center is located in the Borough of SNPJ, Pa. Committee members will be selected by the SNPJ National Board at the Aug. 16, 2026, meeting and will serve a four-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2027.

Qualifications

Successful candidates should:

- be members of SNPJ for a period of at least two years
- be members in good standing
- have an interest in the Slovenian language, history and culture
- enjoy working with people and explaining the displays throughout the SNPJ Heritage Center
- present ideas for the improvement of the SNPJ Heritage Center
- perform docent duties on a rotating schedule from April through October
- be available to attend 8 to 10 meetings per year
- be able to attend approximately 8 work days per year, or more as needs require
- milage reimbursement paid up to a 100-mile radius of the SNPJ Recreation Center

Please forward names and qualifications by Aug. 6, 2026, to:

Joseph C. Evanish
SNPJ National President/CEO
247 West Allegheny Rd.
Imperial, PA 15126
Fax: (724) 695-1555
e-mail: cvalencic@snpj.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*

Up-and-Coming...

A look at events planned by the Slovene National Benefit Society

- JULY 10-12 .....The 43rd Slovenefest at the SNPJ Recreation Center. For additional information phone the Recreation Center toll-free at 1-877-767-5732 or e-mail *snpj@snpjrec.com*.
- JULY 26-AUG. 1.....Family Week at the SNPJ Recreation Center, Borough of SNPJ, Pa. For more information phone the Recreation Center toll-free at 1-877-767-5732 or e-mail *snpj@snpjrec.com*.
- AUG. 8 .....SNPJ Lodge 643 picnic, noon-4 p.m. in the large pavilion at Tod Park, Girard, Ohio. Music by Anthony Culkar. Food and soft drinks, all inclusive, for $5. Free admission for SNPJ Lodge 643 members. For more information contact Lodge Secretary Kathy Seifert at (330) 883-2513.

We've Got You
COVERED

by DAVID GOMBKOTO
SNPJ Sales Director

Freedom isn't just for the Fourth of July

Every year on the Fourth of July, Americans gather with family and friends to celebrate our nation's independence. We enjoy backyard cookouts, fireworks displays, parades, and time spent with those we care about most. It's a holiday that reminds us of the freedoms we often take for granted and the opportunities we all have to build the lives we want.

While Independence Day celebrates our country's freedom, it also provides an opportunity to reflect on another type of freedom that many of us strive for throughout our lives: financial freedom.

Financial freedom means different things to different people. For some, it's the ability to retire comfortably without worrying about running out of money. For others, it's knowing they can help their children or grandchildren when needed. It may mean having enough savings to travel, pursue hobbies, volunteer in the community, or simply enjoy peace of mind knowing that unexpected expenses won't derail their plans.

Whatever your definition may be, achieving financial freedom rarely happens by accident. It's often the result of years of hard work, disciplined saving, thoughtful planning, and making decisions that protect both you and your loved ones.

One of the greatest challenges many Americans face today is uncertainty. Market fluctuations, inflation, rising healthcare costs and economic headlines can leave people wondering whether they are truly prepared for the future. Just consider social security as an example: The retirement trust fund is projected to be depleted in eight years (2032) if Congress does nothing. That doesn't mean it's going away, but payroll taxes will only cover approximately 78 percent of scheduled payments. So what would you change right now with planning if you knew your social security is being cut by 22 percent?

While no one can predict the future, there are steps we can take to help reduce uncertainty and create a more secure financial foundation. That foundation often begins with a simple question: "Do I have a plan?"

Just as we maintain our homes, service our vehicles and schedule regular medical checkups, our financial plans deserve periodic attention as well. A mid-year review can be an excellent time to evaluate your goals and determine whether your current strategies still align with your needs. As the saying goes, "Failing to plan is planning to fail."

Consider reviewing your retirement savings, insurance coverage, beneficiary designations and long-term objectives. Have there been any major life changes in your family? Any new additions to the family tree? Has your retirement timeline shifted? Are there new financial goals you would like to achieve? Even small adjustments today can make a meaningful difference in the future.

Life insurance remains one of the most effective tools available for protecting the people we love. While many individuals focus primarily on accumulating assets, it is equally important to consider how those assets – and the financial security of our families – would be impacted if something unexpected was to occur. Life insurance can help provide stability during difficult times and ensure that loved ones are not left facing financial hardship alone. For those who do not have a secure amount of assets, life insurance can create an instant estate from day one.

For those approaching or already enjoying retirement, guaranteed interest rates or income solutions may also play an important role in creating confidence and financial independence. Knowing that a portion of your retirement income is designed to continue regardless of market conditions can provide valuable peace of mind and help support a more predictable retirement lifestyle. The new SNPJ Promise Annuities are currently paying 5.0 percent and 5.25 percent renewal rates!

SNPJ has always believed that financial security goes hand in hand with community, family and service. For generations, our members have understood the importance of looking ahead while also caring for those around them. The values that built our organization remain just as relevant today as they were when SNPJ was founded more than a century ago.

As you celebrate this Fourth of July, take a moment to appreciate not only the freedoms we enjoy as Americans, but also the opportunity we all get to create greater financial freedom for ourselves and future generations. The choices we make today can help provide confidence tomorrow.

On behalf of everyone at SNPJ, we wish you and your family a safe, enjoyable and memorable Independence Day!

To learn more about how we can help you or a family member, please call 1-800-843-7675 or visit us online at *snpj.org*.

New Address?

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

Name _____

New Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Slovenia starts a stint on OPCW executive council

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (STA) — Slovenia started its two-year membership on the executive council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in mid-May. The country's term in the 41-member body will focus on new technologies and support for peaceful and safe uses of chemicals, the Foreign Ministry announced.

This is Slovenia's second term on the OPCW executive council, having previously served from 2000-2002. The country was elected to the executive council in October 2025, receiving the highest number of votes of candidates in the East European group. Slovakia and Ukraine are the other candidates from the group elected to the executive council.

The OPCW Executive Council meets three times a year to monitor the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, approve inspections and oversee the work of the Technical Secretariat, the OPCW executive body. The executive committee, the second-highest OPCW body, convenes once a year; review conferences are scheduled every five years.

According to the Foreign Ministry, the executive council will play a key role in ensuring that OPCW remains a credible, technically advanced and politically relevant pillar of global security. The ministry added that the Slovenian Chemicals Office, the body in charge of implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention in Slovenia, had scheduled a regional seminar in Ljubljana.

Infrastructure updates at tourist caves announced

LJUBLJANA (STA) — A project to renovate the infrastructure (lighting, paths and railings) at 12 Slovenian caves open to organized tourist visits will begin this year with work commencing in four caves. The project is estimated at EUR 5.35 million ($6.21 million).

Implemented by the Natural Resources and Spatial Planning Ministry, the "For Caves" project will start with work at the Planinska Jama, Dimnice, Kostanjeviška Jama and Županova Jama caves, and is expected to be completed by the fall of 2027. The infrastructure at an additional eight caves will also be renovated in the coming years as part of the project.

Announcing the project in mid-May, the ministry said it aims to preserve and improve cave biodiversity and the typical living environment within the caves.

To implement the project, the ministry will be aided by the operator of the Škocjan Cave system, which will contribute expertise, supervise the work, and participate in administrative and communications activities.

Old graffiti discovered at the Maribor Town Hall

MARIBOR (STA) — Experts working on the restoration of the Maribor Town Hall have discovered remnants of graffiti dating back to the 16th century on one of the walls. Unfortunately, the wall is heavily damaged. Conservationist Eva Sapač from the Maribor branch of the National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage told the press that experts are already studying the graffiti, but determining its meaning will be challenging.

Completed in 1565 by Italian fortress-building masters, the Maribor Town Hall is considered an exceptional example of architecture. It is comparable to the Landhaus and the former Rathaus in Graz, Austria.

The graffiti was discovered during exploratory restoration work on the courtyard facade of the north wall of the town hall. Beneath the whitewash, conservationists found a variety of short handwritten inscriptions, primarily in Latin and German, which Sapač estimates date from the 16th to the 19th centuries.

The graffiti isn't the only interesting find conservationists have made during the ongoing comprehensive renovation of the Maribor Town Hall. They have also discovered Renaissance beams with finely carved, partly symbolic patterns beneath the plastered ceilings in the rooms on the upper floor. "Another remarkable discovery is that the courtyard facade, which borders the Town Hall Square, was designed just as ambitiously as the main facade in the Main Square," Sapač said.

The renovation of the Maribor Town Hall is slated for completion in 2028. The city is building a modern cultural center next to the town hall, scheduled for completion by the end of this year. The cultural center will house a library, a gallery and a cinema.

Availability of guide dogs hinders the blind

LJUBLJANA (STA) — There are approximately 10,000 blind people and people with visual impairments in Slovenia, but only 28 to 30 guide dogs are currently active, which is a relatively low number, the Association of Blind and Visually Impaired Persons pointed out at an event marking International Guide Dog Day in mid-May. The problem is the long and demanding process of training guide dogs.

"Guide dogs are invaluable for the independence of the blind. They enable the blind and visually impaired to enjoy greater independence, safety and social inclusion," an association representative said.

"The trend of having 28 to 30 – or at most, 35 – guide dogs in Slovenia has remained the same for the past 10 or 15 years, but I'm glad [the number] isn't declining since personal assistance has, to some extent, replaced guide dogs for some people," association representative Sabina Dermota told the press.

The demand for guide dogs is growing, primarily because they enable independent living to the blind and visually impaired, and allow active participation in society, education and the labor market. The problem is that training guide dogs is a long and demanding process.

The process begins with finding an appropriate dog and preparing it for training. Later, the dog is trained together with the user which, according to Dermota, is a completely new and very challenging experience for many blind people. "The training usually takes at least a year because even though the dogs learn quickly, they need time for many things to sink in," she added.

The dogs are trained at SLO-CANIS based in Maribor, the main training center for guide dogs and service dogs, where basic and specialized dog training takes place at the training grounds, followed by joint training with the user.

Representatives of the Association of Blind and Visually Impaired Persons also pointed out that the public is still largely unaware of the rules of conduct around guide dogs. These dogs must remain fully focused while performing their duties, so passers-by must not pet them, feed them, or speak to them without the user's permission.

Route set for European Cycling Championships

LJUBLJANA (STA) — As Slovenia prepares to host the European Road Cycling Championships in October, organizers officially unveiled the race route at Ljubljana Castle in May. Notably, the peloton will ride past the childhood home of Slovenian cycling superstar and multiple Tour de France winner Tadej Pogačar, who is also the defending European Champion.

The organizers evaluated 53 potential routes before selecting a course that highlights central Slovenia and the neighboring Gorenjska region. The core of the route will be centered around the northern municipalities of Šenčur and Preddvor, featuring punishing climbs through the foothills of the Kamnik-Savinja Alps.

The elite men's and women's races will roll out from Ljubljana. From there, the peloton will head north through a string of towns that include Škofja Loka, Kranj, Vodice, Mengeš and Kamnik before arriving in Šenčur. On the stretch between Kamnik and Šenčur, the route will pass through the municipality of Komenda, taking riders past Pogačar's hometown of Klanec.

The European Championships schedule will open Oct. 2 with the U-23 men's and women's road races, followed a day later by the junior men's and elite women's events. The first major highlight of the championships will come on Oct. 4 when the elite men's road race is featured.

The European Cycling Union (UEC) expects some 850 cyclists from 45 countries to participate in the championships. Local authorities and race organizers are hoping for good weather to draw massive crowds to the roadside.

For Slovenia, the event extends beyond elite sport. Maja Pak Olaj, director of the Slovenian Tourist Board (STO), described the championships as a crucial milestone to promote Slovenia internationally as a premier destination for cycling and active vacations.

Charcoal burning enjoys a revival across Slovenia

ŽELEZNIKI (STA) — The traditional craft of charcoal burning is experiencing a revival in Slovenia, emerging not only as a commercially viable business but also as a growing rural tourism attraction, according to industry representatives.

At present, there are roughly 100 active charcoal burners across the country who build traditional earth kilns annually, producing nearly 1,100 tons of charcoal. The majority of the charcoal is sold domestically for barbecuing, and to supply restaurants and seasonal street vendors who sell roasted chestnuts.

Jože Prah, president of the Charcoal Burners' Association of Slovenia, noted that Slovenian charcoal is highly regarded for its quality, adding that establishing a dedicated brand could secure even higher market prices. He highlighted that today, unlike in the past, all traditionally-produced charcoal is easily sold.

Active charcoal burning takes place at more than 20 locations nationwide. The highest production volumes are found in Dole pri Litiji and the villages around Sveti Mohor in the Selška Valley, where production operates practically year round.

In other areas, the kilns are built primarily as educational and tourist attractions. The practice has been integrated into school programs, university research and thematic hiking trails. The Brinovec tourist farm, for instance, attracts more than a thousand visitors annually through charcoal-related tourism.

The craft is officially registered as intangible cultural heritage in Slovenia. Slovenian producers are also part of a wider European association comprising some 4,000 members across 12 countries. Efforts are underway to secure UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage status for the practice, and a transnational tourist route is being planned.

Janez Pegam, a member of the organizing committee for the national gathering of charcoal burners, explained that charcoal burning in the Selška Valley historically supported local mining and ironworks. Today, it provides vital supplementary income for farms, allowing them to utilize unsold timber.

Železniki Deputy Mayor Janez Habjan praised the craft's ongoing relevance. "Charcoal burning represents an important commitment to preserving old technology and transferring knowledge to the younger generations," he said, noting its continued potential for modern rural development.

Ljubljana hosting the UNICUM ceramics event

LJUBLJANA (STA) — The sixth UNICUM international ceramics triennial opened in Ljubljana in May, featuring fine art and functional ceramics produced by 170 artists from some 30 countries. Exhibitions are on display at two National Museum locations and at the Rog Centre through mid-October.

"This year, 395 artists from some 50 countries applied to exhibit at the triennial, demonstrating a great response from the international art scene," said Zora Žbontar, UNICUM project leader at the National Museum.

Fine art ceramics created by 90 artists from more than 30 countries are currently exhibited at the National Museum. The museum's other location has arranged a display of contemporary ceramics, as well as an exhibition of works by ceramics students from Turkey, Germany and Slovenia. The Rog Centre, which is partnering with the triennial for the first time, is hosting an exhibition of functional ceramics titled "Boundless Use," showcasing 60 works by artists from 20 countries.

Triennial founder and acclaimed sculptor Dragica Čadež Lapajne said she was pleased that as many as 20 Slovenian artists were taking part in the triennial, which points to a growing interest in ceramics.

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

Delegates and Alternates to the 33rd SNPJ Quadrennial Convention

August 17, 2026, at the SNPJ Recreation Center, Borough of SNPJ, Pa.

Lodge	Delegate	Alternate
1	Edward Hribar Jr.	Michelle Hribar-Hernandez
3	Marilyn Alberter	Jeanne Susko
5	Joseph Valencic Michael Tomsic	
6	Ken Pintar Bryn Snow John Baselj Beverly Baselj Greg Curl Joni Curl Nicki Baselj	Ross Snow Christine Trout
8	Justin Rigler Carmella Smidl	Edward Dabrowski Jason Rigler
31	Barbara Bogolin Edward Robich Ruth Pettey	
33	Jerome Petukauskas	Christine Petukauskas
34	Jerry Watson Mary Dragan Jozef Watson	
41	JoAnn Raspotnik	Mary Ann Bebar
87	Pamela Gradisek Florence Gradisek Angela Sinan	
106	Brian Cain Robert Falconer Wendy Kinney Gary "Butch" Kinney Carly Evanish Jules Dewey	Bob Chauvet Terry Messner Ken Buckley Stanley Majocka Sr.
120 (A18)	Lisa Caviggia	
138	Jason Snider Katie Green Eric Valencic Ken Vogrig Margaret Cadez Christopher Cadez Jess Nakoneczny	Karen Brumbaugh M. Chris Hervol
142	Carol Bacnik Kara Maruszak Carol Maruszak	Chris Bacnik Ron Maruszak Greg Tomsich
153	Diane Chermely-Tanner Wilma Vukovich	Mary Lou O'Reilly Steve Pavlich
158	Elizabeth Smrdel Janet Smrdel Sue Srnick Daniella Volpe Colleen Kuhn Diane Horabik	
174	Kimberly Zakraysek Jennifer Zakraysek Christine Naugle Brittni Walters	
216	Jennifer Provenza	
218	Bonnie Lehnerz Gregg Lehnerz Julie Milavec	
223	Rose Marie Masarik Andrea Kowalsky	
225	David Main Mary Liposek Aaron Zagonel	Dawson Berg Johnnie Zibert
277	Susan Krispinsky	Andrew Krispinsky
304	Michelle Von Merta-Sustarich	
358	Howard Loudon	
518	Donald Yuvan Elaine Yuvan	Mary Beth Krzisnik William Krzisnik
559	Kaitlyn Chiappetta Geri Matiasek	Jennifer Matiasek Melanie Matiasek
564	Daniel Volpe Gelsino John Volpe	Cathy Volpe
576	Erica Novak Louis Novak Karen Novak	Linda Gorjup
581	John Troha Marcia Bleggi	Patricia Moore
584	Jeffrey Mlaker Mary Donovan Eric Donovan Mary Alyce Francis Gerald Francis	
603	Ruth Benedict Rhonda Tesauro Jeannette Humphrey	Christian Razpotnik Constance Massey Marcy Galbreath
604	Gerri Trebets Jami Meglich	
629	Dawn Klasnick	Ryan Klasnick
643	Kathleen Seifert Kandace Franklin Raymond Kovac	Andrew Kocjan Kathleen Kocjan Ann Marie Gearheart
665	Sharon Ujcich	
677	Carol Roberts Jeffrey Anderson	Stephen Anderson Karen Schnuell-Ruth
715	Bailey Gomez Patti Evanish Roberta Kurta Joseph Samsa Meghan Manning	Juli Kurta Dave DiPiazza
721	Kristine Stedeford Kathryn Lutz	Larry Kamicker Andrea Kamicker
729	Joann Krance Larry Krance Rose Marie Govi	Barbara Liptak Gerald Govi
745 (719)	John Mlakar	Lucille Mlakar
749	Evelyn Dimpfl James Vasilko Joanne Vasilko Steve Yuhas	Beatrice Edwards Julie Wagner
770	David Sankovich	Gerald Sankovich
771	Carol Penwell	Christine Penwell
776	Richard Dombrosky Cathy Kalenits Edward Snyder	Michael Greb Henrietta Snyder Carol Solomon
782	Jill Yingling Deborah Budzinski Megan Dwyer	Paul Budzinski Kathleen Sinan
786	Teresa Koci	Mike Bajc
A01	Robin Clifford Betty Orlowski Robert Mustio	Gary Westfall
A02	Gail Buchman James Buchman	

* Lodge numbers listed in parentheses are those which were combined during the delegate election process. Representatives of combined Lodges may belong to any of the Lodges contained under the combination.

SAMANTHA and **LUCY JO LORENZATO** *[left]*, and **COLLEEN** and **CLOVER CLEARY** joined in the fun of the Loyalites annual picnic held on Flag Day, June 14, at the SNPJ Farm.

Night at the Races on the Lodge 158 Aug. schedule

by DANIELLA VOLPE
Lodge 158 Treasurer

EUCLID, Ohio — And just like that, it's already July. Time really does fly when you're having fun. We can't believe half of 2026 is already gone, but that doesn't mean there isn't more fun to come. There's still a lot of summer left, so don't pack away the beach gear just yet.

Recent summer fun included the Loyalites Lodge annual picnic at the SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, Ohio. We celebrated our Lodge 158 members, along with Flag Day for America's 250th anniversary. We had a great day filled with kids activities, good food, and good music by Mike and Dan Wojtila. Unfortunately, we did get a heavy dose of Mother Nature's tears just as the band started, but that didn't stop our dancing friends! We thank everyone who came out to support our Lodge.

Since we know our members love to support each other, we wanted to mention a few items to be proud of coming out of Lodge 158.

Starting off strong, Alora Verch graduated from Chardon High School with a 3.5 GPA. We wish her all the best with her plans for the future. Aria Verch, at the whopping age of just 9 years old, won the title of Miss Maple at the Chardon Maple Fest, beating out 13 other girls for that sweet, sweet title. Congratulations, girls!

We have a few more things to celebrate, both belated and upcoming. First are some birthdays we missed, starting with Gina Lorenzato (May 10), Clare Cleary (May 13), Emerson Elam (May 14), Samantha Lorenzato (May 17), Daniella Volpe (May 26), and Lucy Jo Lorenzato (May 31). Our new head honcho, Liz Smrdel, will celebrate her birthday on July 5, and Evan and Samantha Lorenzato will be celebrating their eighth wedding anniversary on Aug. 18.

What better way to fill up your summer dates then with a horse, of course! Our next event is a Night at the Races. Who doesn't love a night of good friends, good drinks, and of course, horses! You can purchase a horse or just bet on them. Our night at the track is scheduled Aug. 14 at the SNPJ Farm. See any of our socials, our website (*snpj158.com*), or contact Gary Smrdel at (440) 655-7592 for information.

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

Pretty in Pink fundraiser marking its 15th year in July

PRETTY IN PINK
FROM PAGE 1

Many thanks to our local businesses and individuals who have supported this cause and continue to do so.

Mark your calendars for Pretty in Pink on Sunday, July 26, at the beautiful Yukon Slovenian Hall in Yukon, Pa. The event will be held from 2 to 6 p.m. Food and refreshments will be available, along with delicious homemade baked goods. Thank you to all the bakers who donate their desserts, made with love!

We will have baskets galore for our basket drawings. If you would like to donate a basket or gift card for the event, please contact Mary Ann Bebar at (724) 244-4986. All donations would be appreciated!

On the bandstand, by popular demand we will have the Polka Classics playing all your favorites. Be sure to request a song or two!

The Westmoreland County Federation of SNPJ Lodges has been honored to host this event for the past 15 years. Everyone is invited! We are proud to carry on the legacy of my mother, who gave so much to so many. We hope that you will join us on July 26 to honor her and to support this cause.

Important figures to consider...

29%... people who would purchase more life insurance if they were asked

62%... people who own coverage, but don't know what they have or why they have it

82%... people who are under-insured

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

PROSVETA Crossword

FATHER'S DAY (#0626) solution

A	G	R	A			C	W	T				L	S	D
P	R	O	D		A	R	Y	A		E	D	U	C	E
R	O	S	A		G	E	A	R		N	A	T	A	L
	G	E	P	P	E	T	T	O		D	R	E	G	
			T	E	N	E	T		P	O	L			
M	A	S	S	E	D			M	I	N	I	B	A	R
I	V	Y		L	A	C	E	U	P		N	O	N	O
L	I	N	T	S		R	E	T		E	G	R	E	T
N	A	O	H		P	O	L	E	A	X		I	L	O
E	N	D	E	M	I	C			P	I	N	C	E	R
			R	Y	E		E	C	O	L	I			
	S	H	O	O		T	U	R	G	E	N	E	V	
C	H	E	A	P		A	L	O	E		E	L	A	N
H	O	R	D	E		P	E	R	E		T	U	N	A
A	P	E				E	R	E			Y	L	E	M

SNPJ Membership Anniversaries

July 2026

70-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
5	Anthony J. Leskovec	723	Joanna L. Farrage
31	Jo Ann Cameron	749	Wanda R. McAllister
216	Sylvia K. Provenza	749	Evelyn Dimpfl
721	Eleanor L. Nemeth		

60-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	John W. Rigg	158	Jacqueline R. Berkheimer
6	Richard J. Mur	218	Bill E. Wooten
6	Betty L. Leibler	371	Louis M. Vidic
6	Peggy A. White	562	Linda A. Steffl
6	Joseph A. Pelan	562	Kathleen L. Wheeler
6	Carol J. Ghelarducci	584	Ronald L. Weinhart
33	Celine Clouse	584	Jon G. Smanz
87	Edward C. Razorsek	771	Carol J. Penwell
87	John H. Goodish	771	Rosemary A. Capan
126	Joanne E. Pengov	771	Donald E. Melonio
138	Helen S. Kubacki	A01	Thomas M. Martin
142	Doris A. Kirschling		
158	Kenneth J. Adams		

50-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Mary S. Super	223	George Marcinko
8	Sonja Tudor	257	Rita M. Hofmann
41	Mary A. DiCocco	257	Joyce M. Meyer
87	Cynthia M. Ciarolla	562	Kathleen S. Allen
89	Janet L. Gubanish	564	Carl A. Modetz
106	Cynthia L. Schnatterly	576	Anita J. Zak
113	Albert R. Vuksinick	581	Andrew Striefsky
138	Robert P. Cantaral	581	Joseph A. Kaluza
138	Philip C. Elish	584	John A. Berger
138	Mark E. Craig	584	Sharolyn A. Drane
138	Nancy K. Margiotta	604	Laurie A. Jazbec
142	Julianne Ellingson	677	Shirley J. Schaschl
174	Kimberly R. Zakraysek	677	Deborah S. Budzinski-Gebhardt
218	Ivan L. Stonich		
218	Geoffrey W. Stark	749	Darlene L. Mehall
218	Kenneth M. Boelens	776	Larry E. Long
223	Linda M. Russ	A01	Robert J. Faller
223	David T. Gutman		

SNPJ Recreation Center
2026 Fraternal Events Schedule

July 10-12	**SLOVENEFEST 2026**
July 26-Aug. 1	**SNPJ Family Week**
Aug. 17	**SNPJ 33rd Quadrennial Convention**
Sept. 4-6	**National SNPJ Days**

SNPJ National Balina Tournament

WOMEN: Saturday, Sept. 5, 2026
MEN: Sunday, Sept. 6, 2026
at the SNPJ Recreation Center, Borough of SNPJ, Pa.

Name	Lodge Number
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

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

$40 per team entry fee for men's and women's competition.
ENTRY DEADLINE is Aug. 28, 2026
Return this form, along with entry fees, to:
Denny Brand
405 Forbes St., Bridgeville, PA 15017
Make checks payable to SNPJ
Tournament Secretary:
Denny Brand, SNPJ District 2 Athletic Director
e-mail: dhbrand3517@gmail.com
The Home Office will verify all memberships.

SNPJ National Bean Bag Toss Tournament

MEN/CO-ED: Saturday, Sept. 5, 2026, starting at 4 p.m.
WOMEN: Sunday, Sept. 6, 2026, starting at 3 p.m.
at the SNPJ Recreation Center, Borough of SNPJ, Pa.
Select Entry Division:
Men's/Co-ed ☐ Women's ☐

Name	Lodge No.
1. (Team 1 captain)	
2.	
1. (Team 2 captain)	
2.	

Team 1 captain's name, phone number & e-mail address:

Team 2 captain's name, phone number & e-mail address:

Entry Fee: $20 per two-man team
Return this form, along with entry fees, to:
Gary Smrdel
4251 Oregon St., Perry, OH 44081
Make checks payable to SNPJ
Tournament Secretary:
Gary Smrdel, SNPJ District 4 Athletic Director
e-mail: garysmrdel@gmail.com
The SNPJ Home Office will verify all memberships.

82nd SNPJ National Golf Tournament

at Black Hawk Golf Course
644 Blackhawk Rd., Beaver Falls, PA 15010
Phone: (724) 843-5512 • www.blackhawkgolfcourse.com
Saturday, Sept. 5, 2026
Morning tee times or shotgun start time TBD

Individual Event

Name	Lodge No.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Team Event

Name	Lodge No.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Entry fee for team and individual events is $60 per member.
For individual event only, entry fee is $55 per member.
Optional skins entry: $5 per person.
Entry fee includes greens fees, golf cart, prize fund.
Return this form, along with entry fees, to:
David Sankovich, SNPJ District 3 Athletic Director
P.O. Box 485, Bessemer, PA 16112
Make checks payable to SNPJ
ENTRY DEADLINE IS AUG. 22, 2026
The Home Office will verify all memberships.
Complete tournament rules are available by contacting the SNPJ Home Office, 247 W. Allegheny Rd., Imperial, PA 15126

Chicago Fed hosts its 92nd Memorial Day service

by TINA RIGLER (8)
Federation Secretary/Treasurer

CHICAGO — The Chicago District Federation held its 92nd annual Memorial Day services on May 25 in the SNPJ Section of Woodlawn Cemetery, Forest Park, Ill. A program booklet prepared by Tina Rigler was distributed that lists the names of those buried at Woodlawn.

SNPJ Lodge 8 members Alenka and Jake Rus from BSA Troop 33 participated in the flag ceremony. Youth members in attendance led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by Vince Rigler who sang the American and Slovenian national anthems. Federation President Edward Dabrowski (8) then welcomed family and friends who had gathered for the service.

BSA Troop 33 Scouts and SNPJ Lodge 8 members **ALENKA** and **JAKE RUS** participated in the flag ceremonies.

The guest speaker was Dr. Janez Vidmar, a member of SNPJ Lodge 559 and the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Slovenia for the State of Illinois.

Vince Rigler followed with some musical selections, and he and Susan Rus (8) led everyone in the singing of "God Bless America" and "My Country, 'Tis of Thee."

Closing remarks were made by Edward Dabrowski, who also thanked everyone for attending and those who volunteered to help keep the tradition of the Memorial Day service. The service concluded with the Boy Scouts retiring the flag. Family and friends gathered at a nearby Olive Garden restaurant for lunch following the ceremony.

Please join us next year. The services will be held Monday, May 31, 2027.

SNPJ members in the Chicago area joined in the Memorial Day services hosted by the Chicago Federation on May 25.

Youth members from the local SNPJ Lodges led the Pledge of Allegiance during the service.

Slovenefest offers a variety of Heritage Center presentations

SLOVENEFEST 2026
FROM PAGE 1

On Saturday, Joe Valencic will be in the Heritage Pavilion from 2 to 5 p.m. with a display of posters featuring Slovenians residing in different regions of the U.S., and Lucija Lindav from the Slovenian Consulate in Cleveland will be in the Heritage Center museum on Saturday from 2 to 5 p.m. discussing Slovenian citizenship, language and travel.

On Sunday, Vida Kosir will be in The Alpine Room at 2 p.m. hosting a baking demonstration of Bled cake. Lorri Kaup, president of the Slovenian Genealogy Society, Inc., in Cleveland, will be also be available on Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m. in the Heritage Center gift shop to answer your questions about genealogy.

I hope you've made your reservation for a cabin or hotel room in Boardman, Ohio, or New Castle, Pa. – Slovenefest will be a great weekend at the SNPJ Recreation Center that you won't want to miss.

We enjoyed a great Slovenian Heritage Center weekend at the Recreation Center from June 5-7. Patty Candela and The Guys played our favorite toe-tapping polkas and beautiful waltzes in the Gostilna Friday night. We welcomed a nice crowd, all of whom enjoyed the music.

The Saturday balina tournament started in the morning and finished in the late afternoon. Our thanks to Den and Lisa Brand for organizing the 13-team tournament. The winning team was ClePa (Diane Horabik, Peggy Cushman, and Liz and Jan Smrdel). The team was undefeated in their pursuit of the title.

The paint-and-sip activity didn't have quite the participation as in past years, but those attending enjoyed the project. Thank you to Sarah Loudon and her mother, Kathy, for organizing this event.

We had a beautiful summer day for the Sunday picnic in the Heritage Pavilion. Our thanks to Julie Wagner from Johnstown, Pa., who shared two Slovenian cookie recipes with those in attendance.

Thanks as well to "Mr. Slovenia" Joe Valencic for the information (via flyers) about Slovenian activities taking place in Cleveland.

We shared a cake with the picnic attendees to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center. We also had apple strudels made by Kathleen Sinan and potica donated by Kathy Paulenich available for purchase.

Our thanks to everyone who purchased 50/50 drawing tickets, to the Frank Stanger Band and the Western Pa. Button Box Club for the wonderful music, and to SNPJ Recreation Center Director Megan Spieler for ensuring our needs were met throughout the weekend.

The SNPJ Heritage Center is open every Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m. during the summer months. Our last scheduled Saturday date is Sept. 5, the weekend of Labor Day.

Team ClePa, *[from left]* **DIANE HORABIK**, **PEGGY CUSHMAN**, **LIZ SMRDEL** and **JAN SMRDEL**, were the Heritage Center Weekend balina tournament champions.

Team OhMi, *[from left]* **DAN** and **JULI BOSEK**, and **TERRY** and **MARLENE SKOVENSKI**, the runners-up in the Heritage Center Weekend balina tournament.

Several Heritage Center Committee members will be welcoming the Family Week campers during our annual wine and cheese get-together on July 29. We will also be attending the annual American-Slovene Day on Sunday, Aug. 2, in Strabane, Pa.

On Saturday, Sept. 19, committee members will attend our final festival of the year, the Slavic Festival in Johnstown. We will set up our traveling museum and have items from our gift shop available for purchase.

It's sure to be a busy summer for the SNPJ Heritage Center Committee, but we do love sharing the Slovenian culture with everyone. Let's keep it going by attending these various festivals!

Slovenian Genealogy Society International, Inc.

Genealogy Tour to Slovenia
September 15 – 26, 2026

There are still a few spaces left on the Slovenian Genealogy Society International's September 2026 tour to Slovenia.

Participants will be escorted by experts from SGSI. We will research the ancestry of your family with the help of our professional genealogists in Slovenia and take you to your ancestors' villages. Our program includes visits to church archives and consultations with Slovenian legal experts regarding citizenship. The tour also includes stops in Kranjska Gora, Kobarid, Nova Gorica, Vipava wine country, Trieste, and Slovenia's capital Ljubljana.

Act now and experience the iconic attractions and hidden gems linked to your ancestry!

For more information
CONTACT SGSI PRESIDENT LORRI KAUP
(419) 905-3577
Trip brochure available at:
www.sloveniangenealogy.org

Photo submitted by Amy Mavrich (138)

FrankFest 2026: In Memory of Frank Mavrich

Pictured are **AMY MAVRICH**, **KATIE GREEN** and **JIM GREEN** during the ninth annual FrankFest, a tribute to the late Frank Mavrich which was held May 22 at the SNPJ Recreation Center. Due to the weather, the celebration was held in the Gostilna instead of the at the Tiki Bar.

After Frank and Amy's daughter Katie gave a speech, everyone was offered a drink to toast Frank, heart-shaped balloons were released, and pizza was served.

Thank you to everyone who celebrated with us. To those who couldn't make it, thank you for posting or texting a picture of you toasting to Frank – it means so much to us. A great big thank you to SNPJ Recreation Center Director Megan Spieler and Nick Dundics. Please join us next year on the Friday of Memorial Day weekend for FrankFest. Frank was a great guy we will never forget!

Plan now to attend the *43RD ANNUAL*

Slovenefest®

July 10-12, 2026

Slovenefest is hosted by the

SNPJ Recreation Center

270 Martin Road
Borough of SNPJ (Enon Valley), PA 16120
(724) 336-5180 • Toll-free: 1-877-767-5732
website: www.slovenefest.com • email: snpj@snpjrec.com

Admission: $15 Friday/$20 Saturday/$15 Sunday/Three-day Pass: $40
Children ages 16 and under admitted *FREE*
Festival admissions payable at the gates
Scan the code for presale gate and wine tasting admissions on Eventbrite

Friday, July 10

Outside Stage

5 to 6 p.m.	Klancnik & Friends
6 to 7 p.m.	Chardon Polka Band
7 to 8 p.m.	Klancnik & Friends
8 to 9 p.m.	Chardon Polka Band
9 to 10 p.m	Garrett Tatano Band
10 to 11 p.m.	Chardon Polka Band
11 p.m. to Midnight	Garrett Tatano Band

Heritage Pavilion

7 to 11 p.m.	The Wrangler Band

Gostilna

1 to 5 p.m.	Open Jam Session
6 to 9 p.m.	Mikey Dee Tamburitzans
10 p.m. to 1 a.m.	Mike & Dan Wojtila
1 a.m. to Close	Open Jam Session

Crafters Bazaar

Located near the Main Building

FRIDAY:	SATURDAY:	SUNDAY:
5 to 9 p.m.	Noon to 7 p.m.	Noon to 5 p.m.

Saturday Evening Fireworks Display
presented by
Sky King Fireworks
(weather permitting)

More information and full performance schedule online at *www.slovenefest.com*

Saturday, July 11

Outside Stage

2 to 2:45 p.m.	The Zolkas
2:45 to 3:30 p.m.	Jeff Pecon
3:30 to 3:45 p.m.	SMS Marela Dance Group
3:45 to 4:30 p.m.	The Zolkas
4:30 to 5:15 p.m.	Jeff Pecon
5:15 to 5:30 p.m.	SMS Marela Dance Group
5:30 to 6:15 p.m.	Polka Classics with Culkar
6:15 to 7 p.m.	Eddie Rodick Orchestra
7 to 7:15 p.m.	SMS Marela Dance Group
7:15 to 8:15 p.m.	Polka Classics with Culkar
8:15 to 9 p.m.	Eddie Rodick Orchestra
9 to 9:45 p.m.	Klancnik & Friends
9:45 to 10 p.m.	Ron Likovic Band
10 to 10:20 p.m.	*FIREWORKS DISPLAY*
10:20 to 11 p.m.	Ron Likovic Band
11 p.m. to Midnight	Klancnik & Friends

Heritage Pavilion

3 to 6 p.m.	Wine Tasting + Mädel Jäger
8 to 11 p.m.	Decades

Gostilna

Noon to 2 p.m.	Pool Party @ the Tiki Bar featuring the Garrett Tatano Band
2 to 5 p.m.	Zero Pressure
6 to 6:45 p.m.	Vince Rigler & His Polka Pals
7 to 7:45 p.m.	Western Pa. Button Box Club
8 to 8:45 p.m.	Matt Sepesy
9 to 9:45 p.m.	Open Jam Session
10 p.m. to 1 a.m.	Patty C & The Guys
1 a.m. to Close	Open Jam Session

Sunday, July 12

Outside Stage

1 to 2 p.m.	Garrett Tatano Band
2 to 3 p.m.	Patty C & The Guys
3 to 4 p.m.	Garrett Tatano Band
4 to 5 p.m.	Ron Likovic Band
5 to 6 p.m.	The Zolkas
6 to 7 p.m.	Ron Likovic Band
7 to 8 p.m.	The Zolkas

Heritage Pavilion

1 to 2:15 p.m.	Frank Moravcik
1:30 p.m	Address by Miss SNPJ 2026 Ellen Koci
2:30 to 4 p.m.	Veseli Fantje *Darryl & Frank Valencic and Dave Pendel*
4:15 to 5:30 p.m.	Frank Moravcik

Gostilna

1 to 2:30 p.m.	Open Jam Session
3 to 5 p.m.	Rex Taneri

SNPJ Heritage Center
"Closer Look at Slovenia" Presentations

Saturday Presentations

2 to 5 p.m.	Make It/Take It Craft (Sarah Loudon) *[next to Heritage Center Marketplace sales]*
	Slovenians Across the U.S.A. (Joe Valencic) *[Heritage Pavilion]*
	Slovenian Travel & Language (Lucia Lindav) *[Heritage Center Museum]*

Sunday Presentations

2 p.m.	Baking Demonstration (Vida Kosir) *[The Alpine Room]*
2 to 5 p.m.	Slovenian Genealogy Q&A (Lorri Kaup) *[Heritage Center Gift Shop]*
2 to 5 p.m.	Make It/Take It Craft (Sarah Loudon) *[next to Heritage Center Marketplace sales]*

Please support our generous 2026 Slovenefest sponsors!

PLATINUM LEVEL SPONSORS

Heritage Life Insurance Co., Chicago • **Parkway Advisors, LP**, Abilene, TX • **Westmoreland County Federation of SNPJ Lodges**

GOLD LEVEL SPONSORS

Sky King Fireworks, Hillsville, PA • **Slovenian Savings & Loan Assoc.**, Strabane, PA
SNPJ Lodge 138, Strabane, PA • **Visit Lawrence County**, New Castle, PA

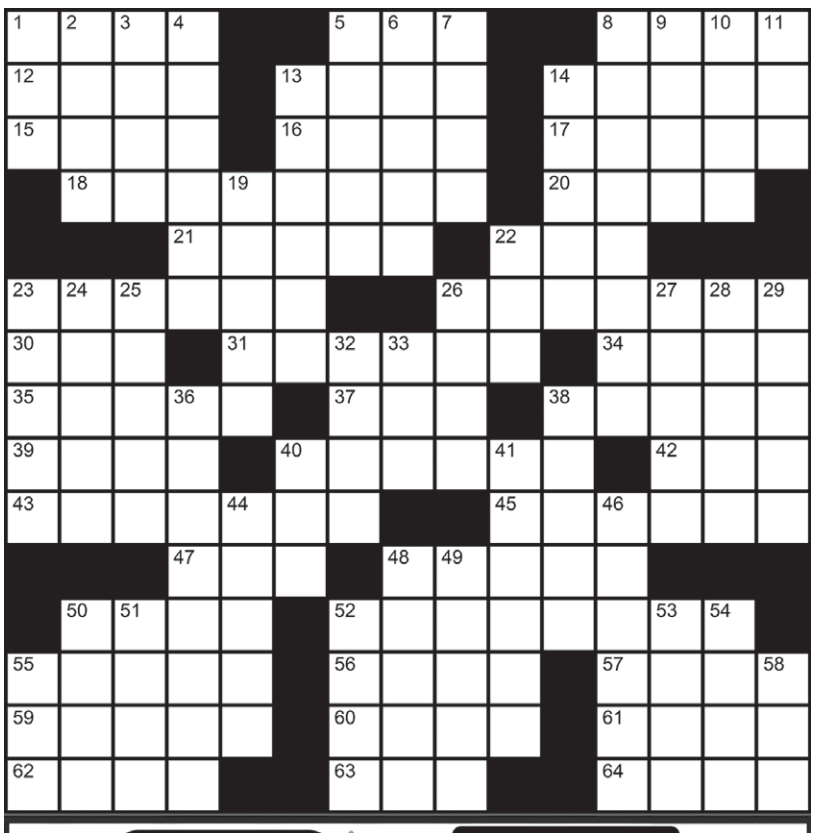
SILVER LEVEL SPONSORS

Dunbar, Bender & Zapf, Inc., Pittsburgh • **Energy Independent Solutions**, Carnegie, PA • **H2R CPA**, Pittsburgh • **iCover**, Chesterfield, MO
JD Engraving & Awards, Canonsburg, PA • **Johnson Club**, Hillsville, PA • **Just Fences**, Harrison City, PA • **Mitchell Insurance, Inc.**, Butler, PA
National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame, Euclid, OH • **O.T. Beight & Sons**, East Palestine, OH • **PNC**, Pittsburgh
Performance Roofing Associates, Irwin, PA • **Reed Oil Company/21st Century Energy Group**, New Castle, PA
Seubert & Associates, Inc., Pittsburgh • **SNPJ Lodge 106**, Imperial, PA • **SNPJ Lodge 174**, Krayn, PA
SNPJ Lodge 715, Universal, PA • **SNPJ Lodge 782**, Glenshaw, PA • **Westmoreland County Federation of SNPJ Lodges**

PROSVETA Crossword

Fourth of July (#0726) by StatePoint Media

ACROSS
1. Croat, e.g.
5. Reverential respect mixed with wonder
8. Island near Java
12. From where to eternity?
13. *"Land of the ____"
14. Rowed
15. Diabolical
16. Mideast bigwig
17. Unleashes
18. *Star-spangled banner (2 words)
20. Type of ski lift
21. *Day before Independence Day
22. Quilting party
23. Sherlock Holmes' confidant
26. Formal dinner
30. U.N. working-conditions agency
31. Sextet plus one
34. Cancel
35. Holey confection
37. Electric swimmer
38. Frame job
39. Comparison word
40. Type of deodorant
42. Skater's field
43. *Like "America the Beautiful" skies
45. Covered with a ceiling
47. Tennis do-over
48. Surfer's stops
50. Not guilty, e.g.
52. *Yankee Doodle's feather
55. *"To Freedom!", e.g.
56. Tel ____, Israel
57. Bébé's mother
59. Pseudonym
60. *Cup at a picnic
61. Do like exhaust pipe
62. Late George Wendt on "Cheers"
63. Give it a go
64. *Betsy of #18 Across-related fame

DOWN
1. "He said, ____ said"
2. Russian left
3. Pomegranate seed
4. South African grasslands
5. Knight's protection
6. Odd and unusual
7. Like ghostly howls
8. *July 4th culinary tradition
9. ____ 51 in Nevada
10. Lecherous look
11. Dog tags
13. Felidae family member
14. As a rule
19. Casper, e.g.
22. Cricket club
23. Measurement
24. Hello, to Mr. Hand
25. Opposite of atonal
26. *Philadelphia's Liberty ____
27. "____ death do us part"
28. Draw out a conclusion
29. Drank too much
32. Lowly laborer
33. What lintel and mantel have in common
36. *Personification of the U.S. (2 words)
38. Show contempt
40. Decompose
41. In eighth, book format
44. "The Second Coming" poet
46. Chemical cousin
48. Relish
49. In an unfriendly manner
50. Horseback sport
51. Bear's hang-out
52. Sail holder
53. "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" captain
54. Part of an eye
55. Sun kiss
58. "The Extra-Terrestrial"-inspired toys

The solution to puzzle #0726 will run in the Aug. 3 issue.