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Heritage Center draws a crowd during Slovenefest

by KATHY PAULENICH (776)
SNPJ Heritage Center Director

BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa. — Slovenefest 2026 is over. It was a great weekend to share our Slovenian culture with everyone in attendance. The Heritage Center museum and gift shop were quite busy all weekend. We thank you for visiting our museum and making purchases in the gift shop.

We also thank the presenters for our “Closer Look at Slovenia” program. On Saturday, Joe Valencic displayed posters about Slovenians across America in the Heritage Pavilion, while Lucija Lindav was in the museum answering

questions about Slovenia. Lucija works at the Slovenian Consulate in Cleveland.

On Sunday, Vida Kosir was in The Alpine Room demonstrating how to make Lake Bled cake. She provided samples which were enjoyed by all. Lorri Kaup, president of the Slovenian Genealogy Society, Inc. (SGSI), was in the gift shop to meet with those interested in finding relatives who reside in Slovenia.

And last but not least, Sarah Loudon and her mother, Kathy, had a table next to our outdoor sales table, welcoming young and old to choose a button design and create their own buttons. They were quite busy both Saturday and Sunday.

The Heritage Center was just one of the venues hosting activity. The entertainment tent featured great bands all weekend for the dancing crowd. The Heritage Pavilion was the location of a first-ever wine tasting (which I’m sure will return in the future), along with a country band on Friday night, a rock band on Saturday night, and a button box marathon on Sunday.

This year’s KidFest was excellent, with the energetic Margaret Cadez in charge, and the Gostilna was packed most of the weekend. It seemed everyone wanted to get into the air-

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briefly

August meeting planned for Sharon Lodge 31

SHARON, Pa. — SNPJ Lodge 31 will hold their next meeting on Thursday, Aug. 27, starting at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Slovenian Hall, 1037 Baldwin Ave. in Sharon. Members attending should walk up the handicap ramp in the back of the building.

Lodge business, the SNPJ Convention and our dinner honoring members will be discussed. If there are any questions, please contact Barb Bogolin at (724) 347-1197.

BARB BOGOLIN
Lodge 31 Secretary/Treasurer

Society sympathies for Lodge 225 secretary

IMPERIAL, Pa. — The SNPJ Home Office has been notified of the June 18, 2026, passing of Sis. Linda L. Scales, secretary/treasurer of Lodge 225 in Girard, Kan.

On behalf of the entire Society, the members of the Executive Committee and Home Office staff extend their condolences to Sis. Scales’ family and friends on their loss.

Policy owners, register to access the SNPJ Portal

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

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

We hope you enjoy your SNPJ Portal experience!

THE DEADLINE

The next two *PROSVETA* issue dates are Sept. 1 and Oct. 1. All material must be received by noon on Monday, Aug. 17, for the Sept. 1 issue, and by Monday, Sept. 14, for the Oct. 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.

St. Marys Lodge 581 announces 2026 Troha Scholarship recipients

by MARCIA KLANCER BLEGGI
Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer

ST. MARYS, Pa. — Jerome “Jerry” Troha was an SNPJ Lodge 581 member and officer until his passing in 2020. Jerry shared his love of accordion music with everyone, including nursing home residents, and at parades, Polka Masses, and many area homes and parties.

Both Lodge 581 and the North Central Pennsylvania Slovenian Polka Boosters raise money each year to sponsor two music scholarships in Jerry’s name. The requirement to receive the scholarship is that the student share his or her musical talent with the people of the community.

Both of our recipients this year have made music a big part of their lives. Antonio Brouse is remarkable in both music and the arts. He participates in the St. Marys Area High School

Band and Theater, and is proficient on several instruments, including mallet percussion, clarinet and accordion.

Until I was writing this, I didn’t realize that both of our scholarship recipients’ initials are “AB.” Anna Biondi attends Elk County Catholic High School and has been an outstanding student in both singing and dancing. Anna has been involved in competitive dance since the age of three. As she commented, “Music isn’t something to perform; it’s a bridge that connects my heart to others.”

Lodge 581 is so very proud to present this year’s Jerry Troha Music Scholarships to these exceptionally talented students. We plan to introduce both recipients to our members at a dance this summer.

SEE LODGE 581 SCHOLARSHIP
ON PAGE 2

PERIODICAL MATERIAL

Following their summer break, Lodge 603 gets back to business in September

by JEANNETTE HUMPHREY
Lodge 603

SAMSULA, Fla. — Even though Samsula Lodge 603 is taking a break for the summer with no business sessions scheduled, many repairs and updates at the Lodge hall have been completed. Our new chairs have arrived and the dining room is arranged.

Our next Lodge meeting is scheduled Monday, Sept. 14. A covered dish meal is planned at 6:30 p.m., followed by a business session at 7.

Billy Gilmore’s Bluegrass Band is returning to our Lodge hall on Friday, Aug. 7. The doors open at 5:30 p.m.; music will follow from 6 to 9 p.m. Admission is \$10 per person. Food will be available for purchase from the kitchen. Ashley Benedict will be serving as chairperson for this event, which is open to the public.

Be sure to mark your calendar as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of SNPJ

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ON PAGE 6

Family, fun and lasting memories at KidFest 2026

by MARGARET CADEZ (138)
Youth Circle 19 Director

BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa. — Now that the dust has settled after another wonderful Slovenefest, I wanted to take a few minutes to look back at everything that made KidFest 2026 such a special weekend. It was especially exciting – this was only the second year of KidFest, and seeing so many children and families enjoying everything we worked so hard to put together made all of the planning worthwhile.

From sign painting and sand art to tie-dyeing T-shirts, making bracelets and necklaces, bubbles, bounce houses, jousting, axe throwing, and sweet treats, there was never a shortage of things to do. It seemed like every time I looked up, another group of kids was running off to their next adventure. Seeing the KidFest area filled with smiling faces all weekend made the months of planning, shopping, fundraising and organizing completely worth it.

We kicked things off on Friday evening with our Slovenia Scavenger Hunt and SNPJ/Slovenia Crossword Challenge. It was fun watching families work together to search for clues while learning a little more about Slovenia and our SNPJ heritage.

Saturday was exactly what I hoped it would be: organized chaos! If you’ve ever been to a Youth Circle 19 event, you know that’s kind of our trademark. It only seemed right to bring a little of that organized chaos to Slovenefest.

The KidFest tent was buzzing all day with various crafts. Nearby, our Bubble & Water



Two young Slovenefest attendees take a break from the KidFest activities to enjoy an ice cream cone during the Ice Cream Social.

Fun area next to the bounce houses gave kids a chance to cool off between bouncing, jousting and trying their hand at inflatable axe throwing. Giant bubbles floated through the air as kids laughed, ran and cooled off from the summer heat. It was hard not to smile watching them.

One tradition, our Ice Cream Social, looked a little different this year. Instead of serving ice cream ourselves, we partnered with the Slovenefest food vendors so every child could

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Maggie Lynn Richmond

Born April 23, 2025
Euclid, Ohio, Lodge 158

Loyalites Lodge 158 welcomes Maggie Lynn Richmond as their newest member. Maggie is the daughter of Cory and Emily Richmond, sister of Logan (158), granddaughter of Steve and Marge Mackanos, and great-granddaughter of Barbara Mackanos (158). We welcome Maggie to the Society and extend our best wishes to her entire family.

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

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

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Lodge/Organization _____

Type of Event _____

Site _____

If a concert or dance, who is
performing? _____

Date _____

Time _____

Who to contact _____

Phone () _____

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Complete and return to:
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Lodge 715 introduces the Virtual “Strike-Tember” Challenge

by ALYSSA URBAN
Lodge 715

UNIVERSAL, Pa. — SNPJ Lodge 715 invites all Comets Lodge members to participate in the first-ever Virtual “Strike-Tember” Challenge, a bowling tournament for all Lodge 715 members to join no matter where you live.

How does a virtual bowling tournament work exactly? Easy! Head to a bowling alley in your local area

between Sept. 1-30 and snap a photo of your name and overall score with a “thumbs-up” in the frame. You may bowl as many games as you’d like, so be sure to take a picture after each game.

When your bowling fun is complete, comment your photo(s) on the official event post in the SNPJ Lodge 715-Universal Comets Facebook group.

There are several prizes to com-

pete for:

High Roller (\$50 prize): The ultimate winner with the highest single-game score.

Sniper (\$25): The bowler with the most strikes in a single game.

One-Pin Wonder (\$25): For those who seem to find the gutter more often than not, this prize goes to the person with the most single pins bowled in a single game.

Only Lodge 715 members are

eligible for prizes.

Although Lodge 715 is based in Universal, many active Lodge members reside across the country, from Pennsylvania to Virginia, Florida, Colorado and Utah. The virtual bowling challenge is an innovative event to encourage activity for all Comets Lodge members, near and far.

Best of luck to all “Strike-Tember” participants!

Lodge 559 members enjoying some local summertime events

by MELANIE J. MATIASEK
Lodge 559 Secretary/Treasurer

CHICAGO — Happy summer! We’ve had a stormy start to summer in our region.

The most recent Lodge 559 meeting was in May, and we again held a food drive. The collected items were delivered by Geri Matiassek to St. Cletus Church in La Grange, Ill.

We missed seeing members Anne Cretnik and Frank Mihalek, both of whom were on the sick list. We hope they’re feeling better.

Our delegates to the Convention are Kaitlyn Chiappetta and Geri Matiassek. We wish all delegates the best for a successful Convention!

Several Lodge members attended the Chicago Federation annual Memorial Day Services. This was the

92nd year that the Federation has held this service. Lodge 559 member Dr. Janez Vidmar was the guest speaker. His speeches are always enjoyed by the group attending the ceremony.

We’re looking forward to our summertime events. As one of our Lodge activities, we plan to attend the Slovenian Catholic/Cultural Center annual picnic. This event is scheduled Aug. 9 in Lemont, Ill.

Everyone is invited to attend and join us as we enjoy the fresh roasted pork, side dishes, bakery table, local honey, children’s games and dancing. Live polka music is performed, and often a presentation of Slovenian dancing.

While not hosted by the SNPJ, we’re glad to gather with other Slovenians in the area to enjoy the weather



Lodge 559 members held a food drive during their May meeting, delivering the non-perishable items to St. Cletus Church in La Grange, Ill.

and the Slovenian heritage.

Our next meeting will be held Friday, Sept. 11, starting at noon at the McCook Family/Bohemian Restaurant. To join us at our meetings or

for more information on any of our activities, please contact Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Melanie J. Matiassek by calling (708) 715-0131 or by e-mail to mjmatiassek@gmail.com.

Lodge 581 awards the 2026 Troha Music Scholarships to promising young performers

LODGE 581 SCHOLARSHIP
FROM PAGE 1

Lodge 581 co-sponsored our annual picnic with the North Central Pennsylvania Slovenian Polka Boosters on Aug. 2 at the Kersey Firemen’s with music by the Garrett Tatano Band. The catered dinner and Chinese auction were a great attraction, drawing local polka music fans together.

The Polka Boosters have Sunday dances scheduled on Aug. 16 at the Kersey Firemen’s featuring the Vagabonds, and on Aug. 30 at the Wildwoods with the Polka Classics entertaining.

On Aug. 30, Lodge 581 will hold a quarterly meeting starting

at 12:30 p.m. prior to the dance at Wildwoods. All Lodge 581 members are invited to attend the meeting. Bring your ideas with you!

Remember, our last meeting of the year will be held Sunday, Nov. 29, at the Kersey Firemen’s, and our Christmas party is scheduled Sunday, Dec. 20, from 2 to 6 p.m., also at the Kersey Firemen’s.

For more information about Lodge 581 activities, SNPJ scholarships, and SNPJ life insurance and investment opportunities, contact Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Bleggi at (814) 335-4983 or Lodge President Pat Moore at (814) 589-2269.



[Above]
Anna Biondi, a 2026 Jerry Troha Music Scholarship recipient, is flanked by Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer **MARCIA BLEGGI** and Lodge auditor **JOHN TROHA**.

[Right]
JOHN TROHA presents a 2026 Jerry Troha Music Scholarship award to recipient **Antonio Brouse**.



photo submitted by Bill Krzysnik (518)

Groceries Galore, Courtesy of Lodge 518

This summer, SNPJ Lodge 518 collected non-perishable food items for the Willow United Methodist Church food pantry in New Boston, Mich. The pantry prepares large grocery bags for recipients filled with a variety of canned goods, boxed items and cereal. Specific items requested included canned tuna and chicken, and peanut butter. More than 100 items were collected by Lodge 518 members. In appreciation for the donation, Willow United Methodist Church sent the Lodge a beautiful thank you card. Pictured are [from left] Lodge 518 auditor **MARY BETH KRZISNIK** and President **IRENE KOVAC**.

Annual picnic and a Scrappers baseball game on the Lodge 776 August schedule

by RICH DOMBROSKY
Lodge 776 President

BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa. — Lodge 776 will hold a meeting on Sunday, Aug. 9, starting at 2 p.m. at the SNPJ Recreation Center. The annual picnic will follow the meeting.

On Wednesday, Aug. 12, Lodge members will be attending the Mahoning Valley Scrappers baseball game. Game time is 7 p.m. We will meet in the parking lot at 717 Credit Union Field (formerly Eastwood Field) at 6:30. Admission is free for active military and veterans, and tickets for Lodge 776 members will be paid for by the Lodge. Non-members will pay for their tickets.

Lodge 776 recently enrolled two new members, Mia Iorfido and Joseph Trosky. We welcome both to the Lodge.



Lodge 776 welcomes two new members, **MIA IORFIDO** and **JOSEPH TROSKY**.

Up-and-Coming...

A look at events planned by the Slovene National Benefit Society

• **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.

• **AUG. 28**Oldies dance hosted by the Westmoreland County Federation of SNPJ Lodges at the Yukon Slovenian Hall, Yukon, Pa., 7-10 p.m. Music by That Oldees Band from Johnstown, Pa. Bring your own snacks. The bar will be open – no BYOB. For more information contact Mary Ann Bebar at (724) 244-4986.

• **SEPT. 4-6** National SNPJ Days weekend at the SNPJ Recreation Center. For more information phone the SNPJ Recreation Center toll-free at 1-877-767-5732 or e-mail snpj@snpjrec.com.

We've Got You COVERED



by DAVID GOMBKOTO
SNPJ Sales Director

When was the last time you reviewed your life insurance?

August often feels like a fresh start. Families prepare for the back-to-school season, vacations begin to wind down, and many of us return to familiar routines after a busy summer. While we're checking off school supply lists, scheduling doctor appointments and preparing for the months ahead, it's also a perfect time to ask ourselves an important financial question: *When was the last time you reviewed your life insurance?*

Many people purchase a life insurance policy with the best intentions, place it in a safe location and rarely think about it again. While having coverage is an excellent first step, life doesn't stand still – and neither should your financial planning.

Over the years, our lives change in ways we never expected. We get married, welcome children and grandchildren, purchase homes, retire, pay off mortgages, or sadly lose loved ones. Each of these milestones can affect whether your current life insurance coverage still meets your family's needs.

One of the simplest – and most important – things you can review is your beneficiary designation. Ask yourself:

- Are the people you've named as beneficiaries still the individuals you want to receive your policy benefits?
- Have you experienced a marriage, divorce, birth or death since you last reviewed your policy?
- Do your beneficiaries know your policy even exists?

These are questions many people don't consider until it's too late. Keeping your beneficiary information current helps ensure that your wishes are carried out as intended.

It's also worth considering whether the amount of coverage you purchased years ago is still appropriate today. Many of our members joined with the minimum face amount possible and don't realize there is a bigger need for life insurance than simply membership with SNPJ. Even a policy that adequately protected your family 20 years ago may not provide the same level of protection today. Inflation, changing financial responsibilities, and shifts in your family's circumstances can all impact your insurance needs. Some of you may have a term policy that increases in premium and eventually terminates. Whether it's with SNPJ or not, policies purchased 20-plus years ago may be totally outdated for what you need today.

For those who are retired, reviewing your coverage remains just as important. While your mortgage may be paid off and your children financially independent, life insurance can still help provide funds for final expenses, leave a legacy to children or grandchildren, support charitable organizations, or simply provide additional financial security for those you leave behind.

The same principle applies to annuities and other retirement assets. Retirement plans are not "set-it-and-forget-it" financial tools. Your income needs, beneficiaries, and financial goals may evolve over time. Periodically reviewing your retirement strategy helps ensure it continues to align with your objectives and provides peace of mind for the future.

A policy review doesn't necessarily mean you'll make changes. Sometimes the review simply confirms that everything is still exactly as it should be. Other times, it identifies small updates that can make a significant difference for your family in the future.

Fortunately, reviewing your coverage doesn't have to be complicated. In many cases, it simply involves gathering your policy information, confirming your beneficiaries, discussing any major life changes, and asking a few questions about whether your current coverage still aligns with your goals. Even a brief conversation with your insurance representative or the Home Office can provide valuable reassurance, even if you lost your policy or have no clue how the specific policy you purchased works in the long run.

If it's been several years since you've looked at your life insurance or annuity, consider making August the time to do so. Pull your policy out of the filing cabinet or safe, verify your beneficiary information, and think about whether your current financial plan still reflects your family's needs and your long-term goals. If you can't find your policy, this is even more of a reason to schedule a review.

Life changes. Families grow. Priorities evolve. Taking just a little time to review your financial protection today can provide confidence and peace of mind for tomorrow.

Sometimes the most valuable financial decision isn't purchasing something new, it's making sure what you already have is still working exactly as you intended.

To schedule a personal review of your life insurance policy, contact SNPJ at 1-800-843-7675.



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New U.S. ambassador to Slovenia takes office

LJUBLJANA (STA) — On June 15, Asel Roberts, the new U.S. ambassador to Slovenia, presented her credentials to President Nataša Pirc Musar to officially assume office. As she arrived in Slovenia, Roberts announced in a press statement that she would work on strengthening ties between the U.S. and Slovenia.

In a video released by the embassy upon her arrival in Slovenia, the new ambassador spoke in Slovenian, which she said she had been learning since March. Roberts, who was nominated for the post in February, said she will continue to learn Slovenian as she looks to have direct contact with people and explore the culture, language and customs. She added that she is assuming office at an important time for the partnership between the two countries, and described Slovenia as a trusted friend and strong partner of the U.S.

A career diplomat, Roberts was approved by the Senate on May 19. She told the Senate committee that she would strive for Slovenia to remain a key player in deterrence and defense of NATO, and that Slovenia's strategic role between Central Europe and the Western Balkans provides opportunities to deepen transatlantic trade. She also said that Slovenia was an important NATO ally, a friend and partner to the U.S., and that the two countries share interests, democratic values and economic ties, and cooperation in defense.

Roberts had previously served in the Office of the Chief of Protocol for more than two decades and as the Acting Chief of Protocol in the Biden administration.

Born in Kazakhstan in 1976, Roberts emigrated to the U.S. following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. She studied international law and international organizations at the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She succeeds Jamie Harpootlian, who served as U.S. ambassador to Slovenia from 2021-2024.

New supercomputer will assist with AI research

LJUBLJANA (STA) — In mid-June, the University of Ljubljana unveiled "Frida," a new high-performance computing infrastructure designed to support artificial intelligence research, scientific computing and industry collaboration. The new supercomputer will also support the development of Slovenian language models.

Located on the rooftop of the university's Faculty of Computer and Information Science, Frida is the first academic AI-specialized supercomputing facility of its kind in the region. It will be available to researchers, students and companies.

According to university faculty, Frida delivers twice the AI training performance and energy efficiency of Vega, Slovenia's existing supercomputer, and represents a significant technological leap forward in the training and application of AI models.

Rather than replacing Vega, the new system is intended to complement it. "Frida specializes in calculations that are crucial for artificial intelligence, while Vega remains highly effective for high-precision scientific calculations," Iztok Lebar Bajec, associate professor and the lead architect of the Frida project, explained. Along with its computing capacity, Frida combines seven generations of graphics processors, providing flexibility for a wide range of research applications.

University officials described the project as a major step forward for Slovenia's research ecosystem. Faculty Dean Mojca Ciglarič said Frida "expanded opportunities for international collaboration and positioned the faculty among leading global academic and technology institutions."

One of the key features of the facility is its focus on data sovereignty. "By enabling advanced AI models to run locally, organizations can process sensitive data without relying on foreign or commercial cloud providers, improving both security and control over information," researcher Rebeka Kropivšek Leskovar explained.

The system also incorporates advanced direct-source cooling technology, reducing energy consumption by cooling hardware components directly rather than cooling entire server rooms.

Frida is expected to support projects ranging from Slovenian-language AI models and medical image analysis to climate modeling, industrial optimization, speech recognition, and real-time



translation technologies.

Professor Marko Šikonja pointed out that the infrastructure will allow the continued development of Slovenia's domestic large language model, "GaMS;" within the country rather than relying on foreign supercomputing resources. It will also "enable Slovenian companies and public institutions to develop and test AI solutions in a local environment," he said.

Both government and university representatives described Frida as a strategic addition to the country's research infrastructure, strengthening its capabilities in high-performance computing and AI while creating new opportunities for collaboration between academia and industry.

Snežnik Regional Park is finally established

ILIRSKA BISTRICA (STA) — The municipal council of Ilirska Bistrica in southwestern Slovenia has approved the creation of Snežnik Regional Park, marking a milestone in efforts to protect one of the country's largest stretches of unspoiled forest and karst landscape.

The new park will cover nearly 22,000 hectares (approx. 54,360 acres), an area equivalent to one percent of Slovenia's territory and almost half of the municipality's total area. The majority of the protected zone is sparsely populated wilderness.

The ordinance establishing the park seeks to balance nature conservation with sustainable economic activity while guiding tourism, recreation, transportation and infrastructure development. "To ensure this would be a park tailored to the local community, we worked openly with residents, farmers, landowners and experts throughout the process," Ilirska Bistrica Mayor Gregor Kovačič said.

The park area excludes all settlements and adjoining areas earmarked for potential future expansion. Following consultations, they also removed some of the most productive agricultural land, reducing the park's planned size by 852 hectares (2,105 acres). The ordinance leaves existing forestry practices largely untouched.

The Ilirska Bistrica municipality will initially manage the park, with work now set to begin on a management plan and visitor infrastructure designed to steer tourism while preserving sensitive habitats.

The idea to protect the Snežnik area dates back to the early 20th century. In 1907, Slovenian naturalist and conservation pioneer Albin Belar proposed that the Snežnik area be protected alongside the Valley of the Triglav Lakes. While the Valley of the Triglav Lakes was designated as a protected area in 1924 and the broader area became a national park in 1961, it has taken more than a century to protect Snežnik.

Morigenos research group receives award

BRDO PRI KRANJU (STA) — Morigenos, the Slovenian marine mammal association best known for its dolphin research, was awarded the Rado Smerdu Prize for exceptional merit in nature conservation. The association, which is marking its 25th anniversary this year, significantly contributes to the understanding and protection of marine ecosystems in Slovenia and abroad, the jury said.

Morigenos, which received the award at an event hosted by the Slovenian Environment Ministry in Brdo pri Kranju in mid-June, has been focusing on marine mammal research as well as efforts to preserve the maritime environment since it was founded in 2001.

As the jury wrote, Morigenos "elevated the paradigm of Slovenia as a maritime country to a completely new level. Its exceptional scientific and professional work, education, and the promotion of civic science and the strengthening of active citizenship" makes Slovenia a highest-ranking maritime country, one that "respects, researches and protects its marine ecosystems."

According to Morigenos group leader Tilen Genov, the Rado Smerdu Prize is an exceptional honor for the association and an important confirmation of 25 years of activity in research and

protection of the marine environment. "We are particularly pleased that the explanatory statement of the award recognizes the broader significance of our work and the roles that science, education and public participation play in nature conservation. This recognition belongs to everyone who has co-created the story of the Morigenos association over the years," he said.

Morigenos largely consists of volunteers who monitor and study dolphins in Slovenian and surrounding waters. Thanks to the association, the dolphin population in the Gulf of Trieste is considered one of the most researched in the entire Mediterranean Sea.

The Idrija Lace School celebrating its 150th year

IDRIJA (STA) — The Idrija Lace School, the world's largest and oldest continuously operating lace school, is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. Every year, instructors pass on the craft of bobbin lace-making to more than 650 students.

The oldest known written record of bobbin lace-making in the Idrija area dates back to 1696. For nearly 200 years the craft was passed down through generations by word of mouth.

In the second half of the 19th century, merchants from Idrija selling lace broke onto the European market, and the demand for skilled lace-makers surged. "The large number of lace-makers in Idrija showed the authorities in Vienna that Idrija lace could be an important product on the market, but only if it was well made," said Metka Fortuna, the head of the Idrija Lace School.

The school was founded in October 1876 and lace-making was taught by young local lace-maker Ivanka Ferjančič. As many as 180 students attended the school in its first year. Ferjančič died at age 29, but the school kept growing with the teachers she had trained.

Throughout its 150 years, the Idrija Lace School has maintained its original mission to teach children and young people the craft of bobbin lace-making. Every year, more than 500 children and young people learn the craft in Idrija and eight other locations around Idrija, Cerklje and the Vipava Valley. This is unusual for lace-making; in other lace-making hubs around Europe, it is mostly the elderly who take up the craft. The school in Idrija also teaches adults, reaching some 150 every year.

In addition to lace-making, the students also learn how to draw lace designs and use the internationally recognized system of lace-making charts.

Today, the school is a comprehensive center for the preservation, development and promotion of bobbin lace-making. It cooperates in projects with other lace-making centers around Europe, issues manuals on lace-making, awards certifications for the vocational qualification of lace-makers, and sells lace products created by only the most skilled lace-makers. The school also organizes part of the program for the annual Idrija Lace Festival.

In 2013 the art of lace-making was listed in the Ministry of Culture's register of intangible cultural heritage. Since 2018, Idrija lace-making has been included on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This May, Idrija bobbin lace became the first Slovenian craft product to be included in the protected geographical indication program at the EU level.

The Cleveland Orchestra visiting Ljubljana in Oct.

LJUBLJANA (STA) — Cankarjev Dom, Slovenia's largest arts center, will host a gem-packed 2026-2027 season, the highlight of which includes the first-ever appearance of the Cleveland Orchestra in Slovenia.

The Cleveland Orchestra, recognized as one of the world's top-10 symphony orchestras and often described as the "most European" of American orchestras, will open the classical concert season at Cankarjev Dom. The orchestra's program will feature works by Liszt, Mozart and Strauss.

What will make the Cleveland Orchestra appearance in October extra special is that the concert is part of the farewell tour of Franz Welser-Möst, who is entering his 25th and final season as the orchestra's music director.

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

SNPJ fraternal sympathies

Sis. PAULINE J. BETON
• LODGE 584 •

MILWAUKEE — The members of Lodge 584 sadly report the Feb. 25, 2026, passing of Sis. Pauline Josephine Beton, 100, of Gilbert, Minn., at Essentia Health-St. Mary’s Medical Center, Duluth, Minn.

Sis. Beton was born March 26, 1925, in the former Elcor, Minn., a daughter of the late Frank and Mary (Mezek) Beton. She graduated from Gilbert High School in 1948, then furthered her education at the University of St. Mary’s where she earned a degree in nursing.

Pauline enlisted in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, where she served as a nurse and achieved the rank of lieutenant. She returned home following her honorable discharge to care for her aging parents, and helped raise her nieces and nephews.

An 82-year SNPJ member, she was also a member of St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Gilbert.

Pauline enjoyed picking berries, reading, and watching “Forensic Files” and the news. She took the most pleasure in spending time with her family and friends.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by two sisters, Mary and Evelyn; six brothers, John, Frank, Stanley, Edward, William and Fred; a niece; and a great-niece and great-nephew. Survivors include numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

A memorial service for Sis. Beton was held May 16 at Ziemer-Moeglein-Shatava Funeral Home, Gilbert, with nurses honors conducted by the Northern Range Nursing Honor Guard. Inurnment followed in Gilbert Cemetery with military honors accorded by the Gilbert VFW Color Guard.

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

BRO. FRANK MOZINA
• LODGE 277 •

STRUTHERS, Ohio — The members of Lodge 277 sadly report the March 8, 2026, passing of Bro. Frank Mozina, a man whose life was defined by a full heart and a spirited soul, in Salem, Ohio.

Bro. Mozina was born Aug. 6, 1929, in Slovenia, a son of the

late Frank and Agnes (Pintar) Mozina, and came to America as an infant.

Frank was a man of quiet brilliance and a graduate of both Salem High School and Youngstown State University, where he earned his degree in engineering. He brought his sharp mind and dedicated work ethic to Mullins Mfg. and General American Transportation Co., along with several other establishments throughout his career.

Beyond his professional life, Frank was a man who truly savored the simple joys that bring a family together. He was perhaps happiest on the water, captaining his boat at the Salem Reservoir and inviting his family along to share in the “catch of the day.” At home, he was a master of tradition, whether he was smoking meats, crafting his own wine, or cooking up a healthy meal for those he loved.

He had a passion for the rhythm of polka music, a good book, and the excitement of “betting on the ponies” at the Mountaineer race track. A sharp poker player in Youngstown, Ohio, and a life-long fan of Cleveland Browns football, Frank’s energy was infectious.

A proud 78-year SNPJ member, he was also a member of the Salem Slovak Club and the American Fraternal Union (AFU), now Catholic Financial. Above all, Frank was a man of abiding faith and a dedicated member of St. Paul’s Catholic Church in Salem.

He was the last of his immediate family, preceded in death by his siblings, Jennie Jackson, Mary Birchak and Edward Mozina – but his legacy lives on in the warm smiles of his nieces and nephews, and his many great-nieces and great-nephews. His life was a testament to the values of hard work, kindness, and the enduring warmth of a life well-lived.

A Funeral Mass was celebrated for Bro. Mozina on March 14 at St. Paul’s Catholic Church. He was laid to rest in Grandview Cemetery, Salem.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 277 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we offer our condolences to Bro. Mozina’s family, relatives and friends on their loss.

BRO. FRANK R. SKIDDLE
• LODGE 138 •

STRABANE, Pa. — The members of Lodge 138 sadly report the March 26, 2026, passing of Bro. Frank Robert Skiddle Jr., 87, a resident of

Avon, Ohio. He was a 71-year SNPJ Lodge 138 member.

Bro. Skiddle was born Oct. 7, 1938, in Houston, Pa. He lived a life marked by dedication, quiet strength and deep love for his family.

Frank built a long and accomplished career as a civil engineer with the Department of Transportation, where his work helped shape the roads and communities around him. After retiring in 2005 from Ford in Lorain, Ohio, he continued to share his knowledge and strong work ethic, later working at Toyota in Evansville, Ind.

Beyond his professional life, Frank found great joy in the simple pleasures. He loved to travel and took pride in relaxing by his pool, often enjoying the peace it brought him. A loyal fan, he could always be found cheering on Penn State and the Pittsburgh Steelers with unwavering enthusiasm.

Above all, Frank’s greatest love was his wife, Virginia.

Frank will be deeply missed by his children, Frank “Bob” Skiddle III (Wendy Brown) of Erie, Pa.; Lisa (John) Fitzpatrick and Sharon (Roger) Thrash, both of Lorain, Ohio; and Keith (Olga) Skiddle of Prosper, Texas.

He also leaves behind his cherished grandchildren, Amanda (Chris) Huddleston, Jacob Fitzpatrick, Taylor (Hunter) Talkington, Erica (Mitchell) Smith, Aly Skiddle and Ethan Skiddle; and his adored great-grandchildren, Paige Nolan, Gracie Huddleston and Layton Smith, all of whom brought him immense pride and joy.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 62 years, Virginia Skiddle; and his parents, Frank Sr. and Angeline (Frankovich) Skiddle.

A funeral service for Bro. Skiddle was held March 28 at Hempel Funeral Home, Amherst, Ohio.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 138 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our condolences to Bro. Skiddle’s family, relatives and friends on their loss.

BRO. MARTIN YOSKOVICH
• LODGE 729 •

YUKON, Pa. — The members of Lodge 729 sadly report the April 10, 2026, passing of Bro. Martin Yoskovich, 92, at his home in Masontown, Pa., surrounded by his family.

Bro. Yoskovich was born Aug. 11, 1933, in Nicholson Twp., Fayette County, Pa., a son of the late John and Mary Roman Yoskovich. Marty, affectionately known as “Pap,” established Pioneer Machine Company in the mid-1960s in his home garage. After purchasing the Crucible Mine tippie in Greene County, he disassembled the steel structure and reassembled the building onto his property next to his home. Pap serviced many local coal mines, including the Nemaocolin, Clyde, Emerald, Homer City and Isabell mines.

An expert machinist, he was known for his ability to rebuild or remanufacture many defective mining machine components to a better-than-original standard. While servicing the Emerald Mine in Waynesburg,

Pa., he devised a water spray system that was added to the continuous longwall miner to bring the mine’s dust level into Federal compliance.

Pap enjoyed deer hunting, operating his family farm, taking hundreds of trout fishing trips to Bear Creek in Maryland, and making homemade wine. In the early 1970s, he and his son Marty started a polka band, the Slovenian Knights, and played many local weddings and dances.

In addition to his SNPJ membership, he was also a member of Greene Valley Presbyterian Church in Carmichaels, Pa.

On Aug. 28, 1954, he married Cecelia Cihon of Nemaocolin, who died March 20, 2009. Pap cherished his grandchildren and assisted in raising and providing for them.

After his wife’s passing, Pap married Irene “Renee” Gallen on July 28, 2010. She lovingly cared for Pap until his passing.

Also surviving are two children, Martin J. (Janice) Yoskovich of Carmichaels, and Cheryl R. (Joseph) Shaw of Louisville, Ohio; three stepchildren, Bairbre Kelly of

Ireland, Cara (Obed) Zuleta of Guatemala, and James (Desiree) Curran of Brighton Twp., Pa.; 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews and cousins.

Pap was the 12th of 13 children and was the last surviving member of his immediate family. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his siblings, Elmer Yoskovich, who died onboard ship returning from Europe during World War II; John Joskovic; Joseph Yoskovich; George Yoskovich; Stephen Yoskovich; Michael Yoskovich, who died in childhood; Edward Yoskovich; Mary Sachs; Anna Yustick; Margaret Morsehead; Elizabeth Poirier; and Agnes “Pudge” Roman.

A funeral service for Bro. Yoskovich was held April 15 in Greene Valley Presbyterian Church. Interment followed in St. Mary’s Cemetery, Leckrone, Pa.

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

DEATHS REPORTED
For the month of May 2026

LODGE	NAME	DATE OF DEATH	CITY, STATE
A02	Maria Wagner	01-18-2018	Pittsburgh, Pa.
6	Claire T. Wapinsky	08-24-2024	Bridgeville, Pa.
6	Nancy J. Cushey	03-06-2026	Bridgeville, Pa.
6	Linda M. Fruecht	04-13-2026	Lebanon, Pa.
6	Lucille A. Gazda	04-17-2026	Mt. Pleasant, Pa.
6	Dolores F. Rastetter	04-28-2026	Oakdale, Pa.
6	Margery Barnett	04-28-2026	Verona, Pa.
8	Nancy J. Dettling	04-21-2026	Venice, Fla.
34	Robert L. Killam	04-19-2026	Springfield, Mo.
41	Joseph W. Sircely	04-23-2024	Export, Pa.
89	Ernest Stucin Jr.	04-24-2026	Wellsburg, W.Va.
113	Elsie H. Holmes	03-02-2020	Woods Cross, Utah
120	Dolores J. Michutka	04-14-2026	Albuquerque, N.M.
174	Christopher Smay	06-06-2003	Johnstown, Pa.
174	Nancy L. Buckles	08-13-2024	Bolivar, Pa.
174	Donna J. Peterman	10-11-2025	Latrobe, Pa.
174	George L. Ceglar	04-24-2026	Early, Texas
198	Anton P. Slemec	03-04-2026	Willard, Wis.
218	Dorothy A. Prelc	01-14-2026	Fountain Valley, Calif.
225	David G. Lepo	05-11-2024	Tucson, Ariz.
225	Domenic C. Bertoncino	01-21-2026	Pittsburg, Kan.
257	Mary J. Rohrbach	02-10-2026	Brunswick, Ohio
562	Pauline Tebbetts	10-16-2024	Fort Myers, Fla.
564	Mary J. Pearce	11-16-2022	Macomb, Mich.
603	Lenora A. Cole	09-08-2024	Clearwater, Fla.
715	Robert A. Samsa	01-27-2026	Turtle Creek, Pa.
721	Nora L. Pittser	10-15-2025	Industry, Pa.
729	James F. DeCarlo Sr.	03-25-2026	Uniontown, Pa.
749	Joseph L. McCloskey	05-19-2026	Beaverdale, Pa.

For the month of June 2026

LODGE	NAME	DATE OF DEATH	CITY, STATE
A01	Irmengard Schmidt	10-30-2012	Conway, S.C.
A01	Ralph Bosetti	02-24-2026	Coraopolis, Pa.
5	Joseph G. Ursini	07-26-2022	Cleveland, Ohio
6	Anna M. Knez	09-16-2013	Bridgeville, Pa.
6	Bonnie Lorenzato	04-30-2026	Pittsburgh, Pa.
6	Alvin Chervon Jr.	05-27-2026	Summersville, S.C.
31	Roland L. Messett	05-30-2026	Sharpville, Pa.
34	Heather K. Kacin	04-10-2024	Fenton, Mo.
34	Terri A. Long	10-15-2019	Russiaville, Ind.
41	Marylou Crouse	03-28-2026	Irwin, Pa.
41	Margaret J. Oplinger	06-11-2026	Jeannette, Pa.
87	Shirley L. Biancheria	05-29-2026	Irwin, Pa.
106	Jane F. Quasey	02-24-2021	North Ridgeville, Ohio
106	Michael D. Jones	05-14-2026	Carnegie, Pa.
120	Phyllis A. Casuse	01-02-2026	Gallup, N.M.
138	Nancy L. Borsuk	04-15-2026	Glen Dale, W.Va.
138	Bernard Schultz	03-13-2026	Canonsburg, Pa.
174	Gary Lee Bertoncini	05-31-2026	Tire Hill, Pa.
198	Lyle T. Huiras	05-29-2019	St. Paul, Minn.
218	Angie Federico	10-02-2015	Pueblo, Colo.
223	Benton R. Hart	04-22-2026	Hunker, Pa.
371	Robert Duganz	07-09-2017	Anaconda, Mont.
518	Jolene D. Slapnik	11-14-2026	Flat Rock, Mich.
559	Thomas D. Hegner	04-17-2026	Chicago, Ill.
559	Kathleen A. Gorman	05-10-2026	Chicago, Ill.
562	Carol S. Brown	05-30-2026	Dillonvale, Ohio
576	Patricia J. Stout	10-03-2025	Canton, Ohio
581	Angeline Wolfe	12-10-2025	Melrose, Mass.
584	Thomas R. Holland	09-11-2022	Milwaukee, Wis.
584	John E. Osep	05-15-2026	Glendale, Ariz.
584	Douglas J. Cankar	03-12-2017	Kenosha, Wis.
603	Elizabeth A. Birk	04-19-2026	Gainesville, Va.
604	Mary Stermole	07-05-2010	Cleveland, Ohio
604	Kenneth Zalar	11-14-2025	Timberlake, Ohio
629	Louis E. Vodopivec III	06-09-2025	Schaumburg, Ill.
643	Esther C. Bogatay	05-03-2026	Canal Winchester, Ohio
715	Donald T. Kroesen	05-10-2026	Edinburg, Pa.
715	John G. Fedon	05-26-2026	Lower Burrell, Pa.
723	Roger A. Zorko	04-19-2026	Fort Collins, Colo.
729	Martin Yoskovich	04-10-2026	Masontown, Pa.
771	Frances M. Spalvieri	02-26-2025	Copley, Ohio
776	John W. Fox	04-09-2026	Enon Valley, Pa.
782	David P. Russell	02-19-2026	New Middletown, Ohio

KAREN A. PINTAR
National Secretary/COO

PROSVETA 2026 Publication Dates

JANUARY 2026										
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SNPJ Lodge 34 Vice President **JOZEF WATSON** on the tee box. The Lodge sponsored two holes for the Indianapolis Slovenian National Home golf outing played in July.



Lodge 34 readies for Sept. Slovenski Festival

by JERRY WATSON
Lodge 34 Secretary/Treasurer
INDIANAPOLIS — *Dober dan!* Lodge 34 held its second quarterly meeting on June 19 at the Slovenian National Home (SNH).

After the meeting we participated in a celebration marking the 35th anniversary of Slovenian independence. The SNH served an outstanding Slovenian dinner that included three different kinds of klobasa and potica for dessert. Our Lodge provided the bread and potica.

Lodge members agreed to sponsor two holes for the annual SNH golf outing in July. This outing is a great way to promote our Lodge. Vice President Jozef Watson represented our Lodge.

Our Lodge also agreed

to take part in the SNH Slovenski Festival on Sept. 6. Max's Oberkrainer Express will provide the music, and Marela, a group of young dancers from Lemont, Ill., will perform. Outstanding Slovenian food will be available. A new feature for this event will be a bike ride on the B&O trail. Please check out the "Ride for the NASH 2026."

Our third quarterly meeting will be held Friday, Sept. 18, at the SNH starting at 7 p.m. Your delegates to the SNPJ Convention will provide convention news.

In addition to the meeting, our Lodge has committed to providing the Friday Night dinner. Please attend the meeting and enjoy some of Mary's famous chicken salad.

Heritage Center Committee elections slated in August

SNPJ HERITAGE CENTER
FROM PAGE 1

conditioned building for a bit and enjoy the music there. The food trucks served a variety of items. I sampled a few; the ice cream, in particular.

The Slovenefest planning committee starts coming up with new ideas in August since many bands, food trucks and crafters must be booked by the end of the year. It takes a lot of work to put this festival together, and thank goodness we have so many volunteers to help at this event. Thank you to everyone!

As I draw the history of the SNPJ Slovenian Heritage Center to a close, I'll pick up

with the year 2012. The officers at the time were Director Maury Sinan, Secretary Joan Gaspersic and Treasurer Kathy Paulenich. Committee members included Patty Candela, Anna Evanish, Seph Kumer, Sarah Loudon, Kathy Loudon and Mark Petkovic. Three members dropped off the committee in 2015, and we added Tracey Belle, Sue Mals, Ed Robich and Megan Sinan.

The officers changed again in 2020 when Kathy Paulenich became director and Ed Robich became treasurer. Joan Gaspersic remained as secretary. The committee included members Tracey Belle, Patty Candela, Mary Jo Hartman,

Sue Mals and Dawn Zabicki.

Our present committee, as of 2024, includes Director Kathy Paulenich, Secretary Joan Gaspersic, Treasurer Ed Robich, and members Tracey Belle, Patty Candela, Mary Jo Hartman, Kristina Hartman Lickert, Sarah Loudon, Sue Mals and Lynn Romeo.

Our term is coming to an end and a new committee will take our place in January 2027. Some of us will be retiring from the committee, others will be returning. I have been a member of the SNPJ Heritage Center Committee since 1998, and it's time for me to be done.

The notice to apply for a position on the Heritage Center

Committee has been advertised in the past two *PROSVETA* issues. The deadline to apply is Aug. 6, and the election of committee members will take place at the Aug. 16 National Board meeting. We need some younger members to step forward and join the committee.

Ed Robich and Patty Candela will be in Johnstown, Pa., on Saturday, Sept. 19, attending the Slavic Festival. This is a great festival showcasing a variety of Slavic nationalities. It's a nice way to spend a beautiful fall day. Yes, summer is coming to an end...

Don't forget National SNPJ Days weekend, scheduled Sept. 4-6 at the Recreation Center!

Expanded KidFest adds to the excitement of Slovenefest

KIDFEST 2026
FROM PAGE 1

choose either an ice cream cone or a snow cone. It was a great way to support our vendors while giving the kids a sweet treat.

Because of the generous support shown through our fundraisers, we were able to provide every KidFest activity, except face painting, at no cost to the children. One of my favorite parts was watching the kids move from activity to activity without parents having to worry about pulling out their wallets.

As the kids made their way from one activity to the next, they could also stop by our prize area near the axe throwing game. Instead of having a traditional prize table, the prize selections were laid out for the kids to browse and choose from throughout the day. There were inflatable hammers, silly aliens, inflatable animals, microphones and guitars. Watching the kids carefully inspect all of their options before making the big decision was almost as entertaining as the activities themselves.

Some of the kids immediately started swinging their inflatable hammers, others proudly carried their new aliens and animals around the festival, and a few couldn't resist grabbing the microphones and guitars.

And then there were the horns... They seemed like a perfectly innocent prize choice at the time! Within minutes, the festival had its own soundtrack. The inflatable rock stars were putting on concerts, while the newest members of the horn section made sure everyone else knew they were there. Judging by the smiles on the kids' faces, the horns were definitely a hit.

To all the parents who had to listen to them on the ride home, thank you for being such good

sports. What made me laugh even more was seeing a few parents later in the weekend tooting the horns right back at me every time I drove by on my golf cart. I quickly realized they had declared an acoustical war with their children, and I may have accidentally been the one who started it!

If anyone needs to quietly retire one of those horns, there may or may not be an anonymous collection bin waiting on the porch of my trailer. Next year I'll try to find something a little less noisy... like a drum set.

The photos included with this article capture only a small glimpse of the weekend. You'll see families gathered around the tie-dye station, children concentrating on their colorful sand art creations, and smiling faces enjoying a sweet treat during the Ice Cream Social. While those moments make for wonderful pictures, they don't fully capture the excitement that filled KidFest all weekend long.

As I zipped from one activity to the next on my golf cart all weekend, my favorite part wasn't any one craft or game — it was watching families simply enjoy being together. Parents helping with tie-dye, grandparents admiring their grandchildren's artwork, older siblings encouraging younger ones, and children making new friends they may never have met otherwise. Those are the moments that make all of the planning, fundraising, shopping, organizing and volunteer hours worthwhile.

When I first envisioned KidFest, my hope was to create a place where children would be excited to spend time, parents could make memories with them, and families would have even more reasons to enjoy everything Slovenefest has to offer. Watching that vision continue to grow in

just its second year has been incredibly special.

At the end of the day, the crafts, games and prizes are just the bonus. The best part is watching families make memories together and seeing the excitement on the kids' faces all weekend long.

Before I wrap this up, I have to thank the volunteers who gave up part of their Slovenefest weekend to help make KidFest happen. Whether you spent your time tying T-shirts, helping with crafts, keeping bubbles going, handing out prizes, cleaning up, or simply jumping in wherever you were needed, I truly appreciate every one of you. KidFest takes a lot

of hands, and I couldn't have done it without all of you.

I'd also like to thank everyone who donated supplies, supported our fundraisers throughout the year, the Slovenefest food vendors who partnered with us for this year's Ice Cream Social, and every family who joined in the fun. Your support is what allows us to continue growing KidFest and making it a special part of Slovenefest.

Thank you for helping make KidFest 2026 another unforgettable weekend. I hope the memories made this year last long after the festival is over, and I can't wait to do it all again next year!



Champion of the Hard Court

JAMES BAKER, a member of Samsula Lodge 603, won the United States Tennis Association (USTA) National Hard Court 85 Singles Tennis Championship in Laguna Woods, Calif., in May. As a result of his win, he is now ranked number one in the United States, number one in Slovenia, and number three in the world according to the International Tennis Federation (ITF). For more than a decade he has led Slovenia's Senior Mens Team in international competition, and will do so again in October when the ITF World Team Competition takes place in Crete. James is pictured holding the Gold Ball awarded to USTA National Champions.



Crafts, sand art, tie-dye T-shirts, inflatable axe throwing, sign painting, bounce houses, jousting and sweet treats all combined to make KidFest a popular activity during Slovenefest.

PROSVETA Crossword

Back to School (#0826) by StatePoint Media

ACROSS

- *Report ____
- One on the beat
- Put on the payroll
- Fan sound
- Buckeye State
- Indy entrant
- Table mountain
- 2021 movie "The Harder They ____"
- Carry away, in a way
- * ____ Readers
- Weary walk
- Basketry stick
- * ____ time for preschoolers
- Plums and cherries genus
- Allegiance
- Crew propeller
- Rh in Rh disease
- Your majesty
- Miss of the Muppets
- Band event
- Asci, sing.
- Olympic castaway
- *Didn't fail
- Frozen H2O
- Took a penny-farthing, e.g.
- *Punctuation marks for famous words
- Maltese or Havanese, e.g.
- *Use Play-Doh
- Cheap trinket

- *3+X=10, e.g.

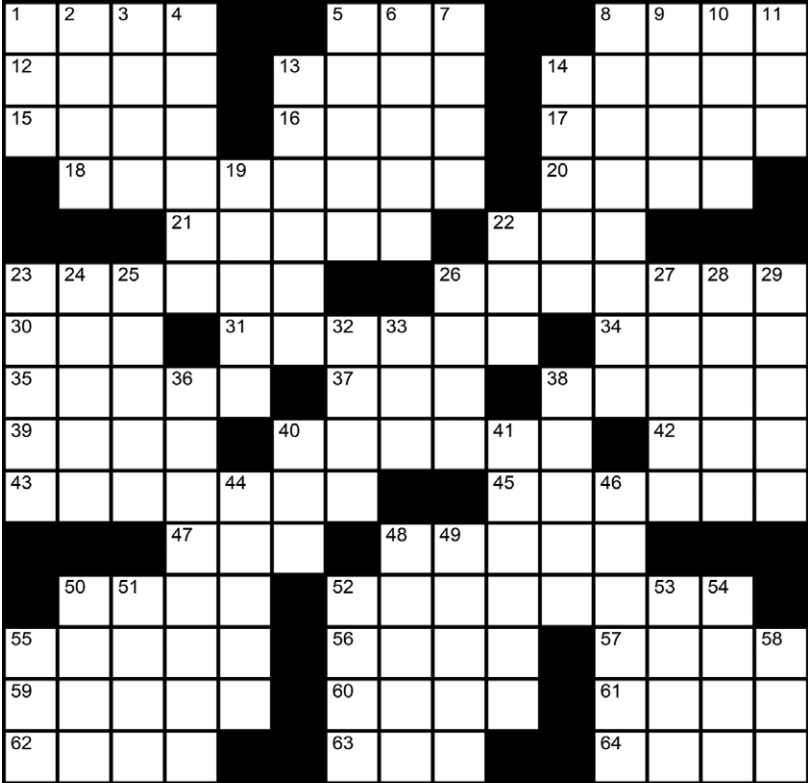
- Soviet place of exile
- Curtis, to friends
- Beehive state
- *Olden-day notebook
- Honey-producing facility
- Sushi restaurant soup
- Location of altar
- Type of poem
- Sing like Ella Fitzgerald

DOWN

- Mountain basin
- Attention grabber
- Reduced Instruction Set Computer
- Hiccup's Toothless, e.g.,
- Irritate by rubbing
- Persian Gulf ship
- Multi-
- *"Get out of classroom" permit (2 words)
- International Civil Aviation Organization
- Retired, shortened
- Bard's before
- Lacking cordiality

- Settle a debt
- Unethical loaner's practice
- Us, in Mexico
- Temporary store
- Reason to strike
- Prodged
- Totes or tugs
- Permissible
- Cease-fire
- Many affirmatives
- "Good grief!"
- Bro's counterpart
- *School alum
- Next step for juvenile
- Margaret, for short
- Describe as similar
- Elks' hangout
- Poppy derivative, pl.
- Marine cephalopod
- *Grading arch
- Big one at 7-Eleven
- Regrettably, exclamation
- Sound reflection
- Auditory
- U.S. space agency, acr.
- Geological Society of America
- *Van Halen's " ____ for Teacher"

The solution to puzzle #0826 will run in the Sept. 1 issue.



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Lodge 518 hosts their fifth annual summer picnic

by BILL KRZISNIK
Lodge 518 Secretary/Treasurer

MELVINDALE, Mich. — On June 14, SNPJ Lodge 518 members enjoyed another summer picnic, for the fifth year, complete with authentic Slovenian food.

Due to the weather, most activities were held indoors and included an SNPJ picnic-themed word search, Charlie Brown inspired bingo, and Po-Ke-No. A few members managed to play a game of balina as the weather cleared. Prizes of lottery tickets and theater box candy were awarded to the champions of each event.

The picnic was hosted at the country home of Lodge President Irene Kovac. Chicken was provided by the Lodge, and each member brought various dishes to share. Authentic Slovenian food served included potato salad, coleslaw, *burek*, *potica* and apple strudel.



Despite the inclement weather, SNPJ Lodge 518 members enjoyed gathering for their annual picnic held in mid-June at the country home of Lodge President Irene Kovac.



Plans for the Samsula Lodge 100th anniversary underway

SAMSULA LODGE 603
FROM PAGE 1

Lodge 603. The festivities begin at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 5, with a social hour. A program will follow, led by past presidents Bill Tomazin and George Benedict. Several additional activities, including balina games and a bounce house for the kids, are planned throughout the afternoon. Lunch will be provided by the Lodge.

Christian Razpotnik has booked a Slovenian band, Karl Lukitsch and The Autobahn Trio, to entertain. The music and jam sessions are scheduled from 2 to 6 p.m.

An apple strudel-making session is planned, and we'll have Slovenian *potica* and apple cakes available. A cake to celebrate the anniversary is also planned.

Josephine Vogrin taught many Lodge members about the Slovenian heritage, and as

tribute, we are using her apple cake recipe. Pat Hagemeier taught Slovenian language lessons for several years and helped out with many activities at our Lodge hall.

The 100th anniversary celebration planning committee will be meeting again on Aug. 20 at the home of Marcy Galbreath.

Please make reservations for the anniversary celebration by e-mail to snpjldodge603@gmail.com or phone the Lodge 603 Hall at (386) 428-3983 and leave a message.

Ruth Benedict, Rhonda Tesauo and yours truly are serving as Lodge 603 delegates to the SNPJ 33rd Quadrennial Convention, scheduled Aug. 17 at the SNPJ Recreation Center in Enon Valley, Pa. Christian Razpotnik designed the Lodge ad for the convention program book. Be sure to check out all the Lodge ads.

Get well wishes are ex-



In preparation for the 100th anniversary of SNPJ Lodge 603, members have unpacked and arranged dozens of new chairs in the Lodge hall.

tended to Johnny Reichel, and to George Benedict who underwent hip replacement surgery in May. Lodge Vice President Jerry Hafner underwent several major surgeries in May and is now home being cared for by his wife, Jane.

Jeanie Pleterski and yours truly enjoyed a two-week trip to Slovenia in May. We stayed in Dolenja Vas at the home of cousins Jože and Ksenja Krek. We toured most every day, taking in the sites of our beautiful homeland.

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!

SNPJ Membership Anniversaries August 2026

80-Year Members

Lodge	Member
6	William R. Yakopin
89	Erma Raggi
629	Edna M. Yunkun

70-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
106	Nancy A. Rank	721	Suzanne Krehling
142	Jean Pisano	721	Patricia Kleber
225	Sandra J. Diem	723	Darryl E. Bartolotti
581	Geraldine O'Mahen	729	Barbara L. Quashnock
584	Etta M. Rajkovich		
677	Margery J. Obel		

60-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Jacquelyn Dower	584	Cynthia D. Herr
3	Glenn R. Heym	603	Ronald J. Birsas
33	David J. Pavlakovich	604	Jean Brantner
142	Jo Ann S. Miller	715	Robert A. Penich
216	Frances Bostjancic	729	Joann Krance
225	Clifton R. Spacek	729	Larry R. Krance
564	Patricia J. Briggs	771	Rose M. Stec
576	Nancy A. Horton	776	Nancy J. Trube

50-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Lynn A. Victor	584	Grant E. Kozera
6	Leslie H. Helbig	584	Brian J. Sagadin
34	Michael J. Davala	584	Ruby J. Ewer
41	JoAnn Raspotnik	584	Thomas L. Schweiger
87	Karen A. Kulik	603	Rhonda R. Tesauo
106	Edward M. Papiack	604	Ronald J. Slabe
106	Trina L. Gorenc	604	Robert S. Tomsic
138	Joseph A. Chico	604	Judith M. Ponzio
138	Susan J. DeLost	643	Robert L. Dunn
138	Karla S. Cain	665	Joseph L. Thomas
138	Cindy L. Pastovich	715	Kathleen M. Olean
158	Diane L. Gardner	715	Louis D. Zupancic
174	Nancy A. Tursic	723	Colleen M. Brown
174	Thomas M. Utnik	749	Philip Gacka
223	Donald A. Sever	771	Richard F. DelPrincipe
225	Jacob W. Petrich	776	Richard L. Byers
581	Steven E. Bizzak		
584	Brenda J. Baldur		

A CENTURY in the making

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

\$17.50 EACH (INCLUDES POSTAGE)
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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.

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	

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.

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.