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In preparation for the Utah Slovenian Day Picnic:

Has apple strudel gone AI?

by GAYE BABCOCK
Lodge 689 Secretary/Treasurer

HELPER, Utah — These days, it seems like everyone is talking about artificial intelligence (AI) and how it's taking over mankind and the world itself.

I was curious about how AI would tackle the process of making apple strudel, so I typed "How to make apple strudel from scratch?" into my computer. This was the response:

"To make authentic apple strudel from scratch, you must create an ultra-thin, hand-stretched pastry dough that wraps around a spiced apple filling, completely bypassing store-bought puff pastry or phyllo dough." That sounds simple enough, right?

AI also displayed some lovely

SEE **UTAH STRUDEL**
ON PAGE 2



Helper Lodge 689 members **JONA GONZALES** and her sister, **BARBARA JEWKES**, are "hardcore" apple peelers.

Your opt-in required to continue receiving *PROSVETA* by mail

IMPERIAL, Pa. — As published in the September and October issues, SNPJ is asking all members to determine whether or not they would like to receive *PROSVETA* by mail. While *PROSVETA* readership has continued to change over the years, SNPJ recognizes that many members appreciate reading the monthly *PROSVETA* in its physical, printed format. SNPJ will continue to print and mail *PROSVETA* to those members who choose to opt-in and continue home delivery.

On Dec. 1, 2026, the *PROSVETA* mailing file will be reformatted to include ***ONLY*** the addresses of SNPJ members who have chosen to opt-in and receive *PROSVETA* by mail. Starting with the January 2027 issue, members who have not selected to opt-in will no longer receive print copies of *PROSVETA* in the mail. The opt-in does not pertain to members who have previously selected to receive notifications by e-mail for the online *PROSVETA* issues, nor to non-member *PROSVETA* subscribers.

To ensure delivery of the print copy of the January 2027 and future *PROSVETA* issues, the opt-in process must be completed no later than Monday, Nov. 30, 2026, by phoning the SNPJ Home Office at 1-800-843-7675 ext. 136 or sending an e-mail to ***optin@snpj.com*** with "OPT-IN" in the subject line and providing your name, current mailing address and phone number in the message. Please keep in mind that although opt-ins will be accepted after Nov. 30, mail delivery of the printed *PROSVETA* issues will cease until your opt-in request is received.

Three choices are available to all SNPJ members:

1.) Opt-in to continue receiving *PROSVETA* print copies by mail;

2.) Opt-out of receiving *PROSVETA* in the mail, but provide an e-mail address and request to receive notification when each *PROSVETA* issue is posted to the SNPJ website;

3.) Make no reply and opt-out completely, which means your address information will be automatically removed from all future *PROSVETA* print copy mailings until an opt-in is received.

Lodge 745 plans a change of venue for their annual holiday celebration

by JOHN MLAKAR
Lodge 745 Secretary/Treasurer

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — In February, Lodge 745 members traveled 80 to 100 miles to support the San Francisco Lodge 304 annual Pust dinner dance. Members from all of the California Lodges were in attendance. It's always a pleasure to get together with San Francisco, Orange County and Fontana SNPJ members.

Youth members served the family-style dishes to the patrons at their tables. Our musicians also joined in to provide music. Everyone pitched-in to do whatever was needed to maintain the flow of the event.

SEE **LODGE 745 HOLIDAY**
ON PAGE 5



Golden Valley Lodge 745 members, along with Miss SNPJ 2026 **ELLEN KOCI** and SNPJ Region 5 Vice President **FRED MLAKAR** *(seated on stage, holding his accordion)* at the San Francisco Lodge 304 Pust dinner dance in February.

Meeting date rescheduled for Lodge 581 in November

by MARCIA KLANCER BLEGGI
Lodge 581 Secretary/Treasurer

ST. MARYS, Pa. — SNPJ Lodge 581 is rescheduling the November meeting to Sunday, Nov. 1, starting at 12:30 p.m. at Wildwoods in St. Marys, when officers for 2027 will be elected. Following the meeting, The Heritage Band from Pittsburgh will be performing from 2 to 5 p.m.

The Lodge 581 Slovenian language class resumed Oct. 15 after a summer vacation. During our first class, everyone was eager to talk about their experiences, especially trying to understand and speak the language. They all agreed that they are ready to take another 10 weeks of class and need to study hard.

Four members of the class visited Slovenia this summer. Everyone who went to Slovenia had the opportunity to visit with the class instructor, Lea, and expressed the hope that she could come to visit here, maybe during Slovenefest.

The annual Christmas party jointly hosted by SNPJ Lodge 581 and the North

SEE **LODGE 581 SCHEDULE**
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PERIODICAL MATERIAL

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briefly

Home Office closed as we celebrate Thanksgiving

IMPERIAL, Pa. — The SNPJ Home Office will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27, in celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday. Regular office hours, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., will resume Monday, Nov. 30. We wish all SNPJ members and friends a very happy Thanksgiving.

Santa visiting the SNPJ Recreation Center Dec. 5

BOROUGH OF SNPJ, Pa. — Santa is coming to the SNPJ Recreation Center on Saturday, Dec. 5! The SNPJ Heritage Center and Recreation Center are hosting the children's Christmas party in The Alpine Room starting at noon. Lunch will be served at 1 p.m. while we await the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus.

This party is for SNPJ members only. Parents and grandparents may register their children ages 10 and under to attend and visit with Santa. A donation of $5 will be asked for adults in attendance.

Please register your children prior to the deadline of Monday, Nov. 23, so that Santa can have a gift for each child. Phone the Recreation Center toll-free at 1-877-767-5732 to make a reservation.

We will also be accepting Toys for Tots donations at the party. Feel free to bring an unwrapped gift with you so that we may donate some toys for children who are in need this year.

Please don't forget the Nov. 23 registration deadline. Seating is limited, so it's first to call and register, first to see Santa.

SUSAN ZARELLA
SNPJ Recreation Center

Lodge 771 secretary extends her appreciation

HILLSVILLE, Pa. — I want to thank all loyal Lodge 771 members who paid their Lodge dues faithfully and kept our Lodge going for many years. I have served as Lodge 771 secretary for 41 years, but now feel it's time to retire. I have enjoyed doing our Christmas letters, and have also enjoyed reading all the replies I received.

Lodge 771 will be merging with another Lodge, and you will receive a letter from SNPJ National Secretary Karen Pintar giving you all the information you will need. Once again, thank you. I wish each and every one of you a healthy and happy future.

CAROL PENWELL
Lodge 771 Secretary/Treasurer

Have you recommended a new member lately?

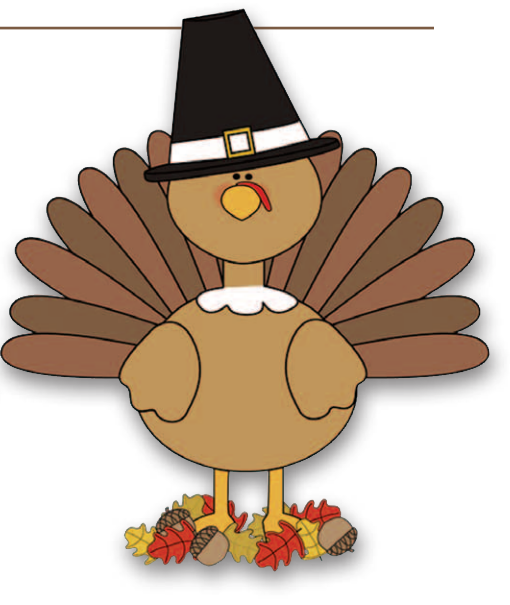
IMPERIAL, Pa. — Take advantage of SNPJ's Recommender Program! Every valid referral earns the recommender $10, plus an entry in the quarterly drawing for a chance to win $100. Pay a visit to the SNPJ website, *snpj.org*, to complete an online Recommender form and get a head start on your reward.

THE DEADLINE

The next two *PROSVETA* issue dates are Dec. 1, 2026, and Jan. 1, 2027. All material must be received by noon on Monday, Nov. 9, for the Dec. 1 issue, and by Monday, Dec. 7, for the Jan. 1, 2027, 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*.

Happy Thanksgiving

from the SNPJ Home Office staff



follow SNPJ on **Facebook**!

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e-mail: *snpj@snpjrec.com*

Have something for
Up-and-Coming?

Lodge/Organization _____

_____

Type of Event _____

_____

Site _____

_____

If a concert or dance, who is performing? _____

_____

Date _____

Time _____

Who to contact _____

_____

Phone ( ) _____

E-mail _____

Complete and return to:
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A Friendsgiving lunch on the Lodge 8 schedule in November

by TINA RIGLER
Lodge 8 Secretary/Treasurer

CHICAGO — Lodge 8 members held their recent meeting on Sept. 20. President Justin Rigler called the meeting to order, and Sergeant-at-Arms Lanie Maresh reported that there were 14 members in attendance either in person or by phone. Secretary Tina Rigler read all correspondence and gave the financial report, and a moment of silence was held for all deceased members.

Since our last meeting held in August, Vince Rigler reported that he attended the annual Slovenian Catholic Center picnic along with Tina Rigler, Marija Rigler, Edward Dabrowski, and Sue and Alenka Rus. However, terrible storms blew in later in the afternoon that cut the picnic short.

Edward Dabrowski reported that he attended the annual Honey Picnic that was held indoors this year due to the weather. Also attending were members Vince and Tina Rigler, Marija Rigler, Justin Rigler, and Sue and Alenka Rus.

Robert Rigler reported on his summer trip to Europe which included Slovenia, where he celebrated his 30th birthday with his cousin.

Justin Rigler reported on the SNPJ Convention he attended as a Lodge delegate. Justin was selected chairman of the Credentials Committee. Also attending the Convention were Carmella Smidl as a Lodge delegate, and Tina Rigler as a member of the National Board. Vince Rigler and Edward Dabrowski attended as guests. Vince Rigler sang the National Anthems at the beginning of the Convention.

Tina Rigler also reported on the recent National Board meeting that was held prior to the Convention. A new Board will meet in April 2027 that will consist of nine members, and there will no longer be Regional Vice Presidents as approved at the Convention. Tina also circulated the Convention program booklet that displayed the Lodge ad.

Tina discussed the options of receiving *PROSVETA* either by mail, or receiving an e-mail when the new issue is published online. All members must opt-in to receive *PROSVETA* by mail.

Congratulations to Meredith Maresh who was recently engaged! Vince Rigler and Marija Rigler won the meeting awards.

Members brought their collection of pop tabs to the meeting; these will be dropped off at the Ronald McDonald House. After the meeting, members played card bingo and won prizes.

Our next meeting will be held Sunday, Nov. 15, starting at 1 p.m. at the Rigler home. This is our annual meeting, and we will also enjoy a Friendsgiving luncheon.



[Above] Lodge 8 members presented their collection of can tabs that were donated to a local Ronald McDonald House, then played several games of card bingo at the conclusion of their September meeting *[below]*.



AI feedback clearly no match for the annual Utah strudel making tradition

UTAH STRUDEL
FROM PAGE 1

photos of perfectly prepared strudel. It included a recipe and step-by-step instructions.

At the end of the article, AI asked: "Would you like a recipe for a traditional hot vanilla sauce to serve alongside the strudel, or would you like some tips on which apple varieties hold up best during baking?" Everything I needed to know, right?

While AI is a great tool, there is none better than learning to make strudel from our fellow humans. Our grandparents, parents, siblings and friends are the best teachers because they teach us with love: love for us, love for the craft of making strudel, and love of tradition – all things of which AI is incapable.

For the 44th year, a group of "real" people from Utah SNPJ Lodges 113, 689 and 757 met on Oct. 10 at the Slovenian Home in Spring Glen to make strudel. Most of the Utah apple crop froze this year, so we felt fortunate to get the apples.

The strudel is made in the fall and frozen fresh until the Slovenian Day Picnic in August. The day before the picnic we bake the strudel, which is then sold to support our donations to local charities.



Stretching the dough:
[Above] **ALLISON** and **SHELLEY WRIGHT**, a mother-daughter team from Price Lodge 757; and **TAMARA GRAY** (689) and her sister, **Lisa Davis** *[below]*.





Getting ready to roll:
Joanne Sharpe at one of the strudel rolling stations.

A change of date for the Lodge 581 November meeting

LODGE 581 SCHEDULE
FROM PAGE 1

Central Pennsylvania Slovenian Polka Boosters will be held Sunday, Dec. 20, from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Kersey Firemen's Hall in Kersey, Pa. Because we're having dinner, if you plan to attend call Pat Moore at (814) 598-2269 a week prior to the party to make a reservation.

Music at Christmas party will be performed by the Frank Moravcik Band. Remember to bring an unwrapped item for the Chinese auction!

The North Central Pennsylvania Slovenian Polka Boosters are hosting Sunday dances on Nov. 15 with music by Bobby Kravos, and on Nov. 29 with the Larry Lewicki Band. Both dances will be held at the Kersey Firemen's from 2 to 5 p.m.

If you are seeking information about SNPJ Lodge 581, contact Lodge Secretary/Treasurer Marcia Klancer Bleggi at (814) 335-4983 or President Pat Moore at (814) 598-2269.



Judy and **BILL GROLEMUND** (581) dance to the music of The Vagabonds during the Oct. 18 dance at the Wildwoods in St. Marys, Pa.

Johnstown Slavic Fest completes Lodge 749 summer events

by EVELYN DIMPFL
Lodge 749 Secretary

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. — As autumn is upon us, it isn't too late to recall the fun times of summer, especially at the SNPJ Recreation Center.

Back in mid-June, as we were enjoying a wonderful weekend celebrating Heritage Center Weekend, we discovered that there was a large family reunion at the Recreation Center that weekend. Several family members staying there were from Johnstown, and Bob Felton and I stopped to talk to them for a while; they were having fun. We ended the day playing bingo, and as usual we didn't win, but it was fun. It was a nice event, and I would probably do it again.

Next on the SNPJ agenda was Family Week in July. My sister, Joanne Vasilko, joined Bob Felton and me for the week. As usual, Annemarie Finch had activities planned for those who were interested – something for everybody. The weather was great once again.

It was nice to meet up with friends Janet, Caroline, Chris, Ed, Gayle, Jim, Beth, Bart, Lois and Fay. We also met new friends Keith and Heidi from the Cleveland area who were attending Family Week for the first time.

We really enjoyed our evening bonfires by the cabin. Keith and Heidi joined us one evening, and Gayle dropped by one evening with her sparklers. It doesn't take much to make us happy. We also played in the balina tournament, but lost the first game. Oh well, it was fun while it lasted.

Ed and Kathy from the Heritage Center once again hosted the wine and cheese reception, which is always so nice. The museum displays look really nice.

Before we left on Friday, we drove to Dawson's for a box of delicious peaches, then led Keith and Heidi to the Dutch Haus Restaurant in Columbiana, Ohio. Very nice. We made our way back to Johnstown safely with great memories of the week.

There is always news and memories of members who have passed away, and while I personally know many Lodge members, others I don't. Sympathies are extended to the families of Ronald Rightnour, Frances White and Faye Lear. I remember meeting Fay Lear several years ago when her husband Ralph passed away. She was a lovely and lively lady, and had a great sense of humor as I recall.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Lodge members who have attained 50, 60 or 70 years of SNPJ membership. Those being honored this year include 50-year members Kimberly Kopler, Darlene Mehall, Philip Gacka, Victoria White and Mark Petrich; 60-year members Donna Barton, Shirley M. Gall, Gary P. Nastase and Sylvia P. Wagner; and 70-year members Wanda R. McAllister and myself. Congratulations to all of you faithful SNPJ members!

The Society held its 33rd Quadrennial Convention on Aug. 17 at the Recreation Center. James Vasilko, Joanne Vasilko, Steve Yuhas and I represented our Lodge.

When the delegation arrived on Sunday, we saw what the high winds and rain did to the decorations in the pool area. Chairs and palm trees were blown into the pool, tents were blown over, and it was a mess. But the staff quickly reorganized, brought most everything inside, and made the dining rooms just beautiful. They did their best to accommodate everyone, and it was greatly appreciated.

David Jones and the staff prepared wonderful and delicious appetizers that were displayed in amazing arrangements. Thank you! We did feel like we were on a cruise ship.

I guess the important news from the Convention is that SNPJ National Secretary Karen Pintar will be retiring at the end of this year, and National President Joseph Evanish will be retiring next summer. They have served SNPJ well for more than 30 years and they deserve retirement, like the rest of us. Congratulations and best wishes!

On another note, Johnstown celebrated the 11th Slavic Fest Sept. 18-19. The festival was well attended, and SNPJ had a booth from the Heritage Center. Ed and Kathy looked great in their ethnic outfits as they displayed items from Slovenia, cookies, noodles and various T-shirts. Thanks for coming.

Lodge 749 member Julie Wagner is a member of the committee that puts the Slavic Fest together. She works very hard for weeks, and even serves up a little *slivo* from time to time.

That's about it for now. Just as a reminder to members, look over your policies to make sure your beneficiaries are up to date. Is there someone in your family who isn't a member? Give me a call, and I will be glad to give you information on insurance, IRAs and annuities.

We've Got You
COVERED



by DAVID GOMBKOTO
SNPJ Sales Director

Thankful today, prepared for tomorrow

November is a time to give thanks as we gather with loved ones, share traditions, and reflect on the blessings in our lives. Around the Thanksgiving table, we're reminded that what matters most has little to do with material possessions. It's the people beside us, the memories we create, and the comfort of knowing our families are cared for.

Thanksgiving is also an opportunity to think beyond today. As we appreciate what we have, it's worth asking a simple question: *What steps can we take now to help protect those blessings in the years ahead*?

Turn Gratitude Into Action

We show our appreciation for family in a variety of ways: spending time together, lending a hand, and being there when someone needs us. Planning for their financial well-being is another expression of that care.

Consider how your household would manage if an unexpected death or major change in income disrupted your plans. Would your family have enough to cover the mortgage, everyday bills or funeral expenses? No one enjoys imagining difficult circumstances, but having a plan can make an enormous difference during an already challenging time.

Life insurance is one way to help provide that financial safety net. A policy's death benefit can help surviving loved ones address immediate costs, manage debts, or preserve longer-term goals. For families with children, it may help protect plans for education and other future needs.

Whole life insurance offers coverage intended to remain in place for life. It also builds cash value over time, which policy owners can potentially access under the terms of their contracts. Choosing the right type and amount of insurance depends on your circumstances, responsibilities and budget. We're here to help navigate those questions.

At SNPJ, we offer life insurance options to support members through different stages of life from ages 0-85. Whether you're welcoming a new child, approaching retirement or thinking about your legacy, reviewing your coverage periodically can help ensure it still reflects your priorities.

Preparing for Your Own Future

Protecting loved ones through life insurance is important, but financial planning also means preparing for the retirement you hope to enjoy yourself. After years of working and saving, retirement should allow more time for family, travel, hobbies, and the activities that bring you happiness.

However, retirement can bring uncertainties or even anxiety. Market volatility, inflation, rising expenses and longer lifespans may affect how far savings stretch. A thoughtful strategy often includes several sources of savings and income, each serving a different purpose.

For some individuals, an SNPJ fixed deferred annuity may be worth considering. It can provide interest credited under the contract, tax-deferred accumulation, and protection from direct stock market losses. For those who already have an SNPJ annuity out of the surrender period, you can take advantage of our new Promise Series Annuity with higher interest rates.

SNPJ's annuity offerings give members another option to consider when planning out retirement goals. The objective isn't to find one solution that does everything; it's to build a financial plan that fits your needs and helps you feel more confident about tomorrow. Annuities are simply a part of the overall strategy.

A Year-End Financial Checkup

With the end of the year approaching, November is a good time for a brief financial review. You don't have to make major changes to make meaningful progress.

Start with your beneficiaries. Are the people listed on your life insurance policies and retirement accounts still the individuals you want to receive those benefits? Life events such as marriages, births, deaths and divorces can make older designations outdated. Do we have your correct phone number or mailing address? Most landline phone numbers provided during the application process have long since been disconnected. Have you moved, or have you purchased a policy for a child or grandchild who no longer lives with their parents?

Next, consider whether your life insurance coverage is still appropriate. A new mortgage, a growing family, or a change in employment may alter how much protection makes sense. You can also review retirement savings, emergency reserves, and the goals you hope to reach next year.

Even a short conversation with an SNPJ agent can help identify questions worth addressing before another year passes. It's a practical way to turn good intentions into meaningful preparation.

Grateful for Our SNPJ Family

SNPJ has embraced the fraternal values of family, fellowship, and caring for one another since 1904. Those principles remain at the heart of our commitment to members today.

This Thanksgiving, enjoy the conversations, the traditions, and the moments that make the holiday special. And when the dishes are cleared and the season moves forward, consider taking one small step toward protecting the people and plans you cherish.

From all of us at SNPJ, we wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and safe Thanksgiving. Remember, when it comes to helping protect what matters most, *We've Got You Covered*!

Your Friend... for LIFE! SNPJ 1904



from the source

Triglav Glacier on the brink of disappearing

KREDARICA (STA) — As of the first week of autumn, the main portion of the glacier below Slovenia's highest peak, Mt. Triglav, had been further reduced due to high temperatures, and the glacier now spans just a few square meters. Researchers' projections that the glacier could vanish by the end of this year's melting season seem to be becoming reality.

Researchers from the Anton Melik Geographical Institute have been monitoring Triglav Glacier since 1946. In late August they explained that after being reduced to several separate ice patches, the glacier was likely to become extinct as early as this year.

According to the institute, which is part of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU), the melting season generally lasts half a year – from early May to the end of October, when the average monthly temperature at the Kredarica weather station below Mt. Triglav is still above freezing. But this September, the average monthly temperature was more than three degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average, and the situation was similar in June and August.

At the end of September, daytime highs at Kredarica had reached above 12 degrees Celsius (53.6 degrees Fahrenheit). "This year's melting season will almost certainly be the warmest since 1955, and also the last," said Miha Pavšek, an expert with the Anton Melik Geographical Institute.

Located at an altitude of some 2,470 meters (approx. 8,104 feet), the remaining visible part of Triglav Glacier spanned an area of one hectare (approx. 2.5 acres) a decade ago, but now it is approximately five meters long (16.4 feet), and its thickest part measures only half a meter (1.6 feet).

The surface that was previously occupied by the vanishing glacier has exposed subglacial carbonate crusts, and their presence strongly supports the explanation that this part of the Triglav mountain range remained protected by ice for much of the Holocene, the current geological epoch, which began roughly 11,700 years ago.

As the glacier retreated over the years, it also uncovered man-made items hikers lost during their expeditions – such as hats, and even an Ernemann camera made in 1918 – as well as the debris of a 1989 plane crash. Some of these items are displayed at the Slovenian Alpine Museum in Mojstrana.

Following 80 years of systematic measurements, the glacier is vanishing before researchers' eyes, and what remains are ice caves. A large cave is located nearby, some 250 meters (820 feet) below ground.

The glacier below Mt. Skuta in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps is also shrinking. "In the coming years, it faces the same fate as its counterpart in the Julian Alps," geographer Pavšek said.

Experts warn that the Alps in general are warming two to three times faster than the global average. Temperatures above freezing are more and more common there, even outside the melting season. "In the past 15 years, the median annual temperature at Kredarica was at the freezing point or above a total of 10 times. Since 2022, it has been repeatedly above freezing, and it is likely to stay that way this year," Pavšek added.

Office for Slovenians Abroad budget unchanged

LJUBLJANA (STA) — Funding for the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad will remain largely unchanged under this year's supplementary budget proposal. Following a modest increase of EUR 22,000 ($25,200), the total allocation currently stands at approximately EUR 12.8 million ($14.67 million).

Speaking before the parliamentary Commission for Relations with Slovenians in Neighboring Countries and Abroad as the supplementary budget for 2026 made its way through parliament, Helena Jaklitsch, State Secretary at the Office for Slovenians Abroad, welcomed the fact that the revised budget maintains current funding levels, with a slight augmentation.

However, the office hopes to see continued budget increases in the future, keeping with the trend of recent years. "It is undoubtedly in all our interests that the resources allocated to the [Government Office for Slovenians Abroad], as well as to other ministries supporting the activities of Slovenians living outside the country, are sufficient to provide them with robust support," Jaklitsch said.

She noted that the office's budget has already seen a "highly respectable increase" since 2019. "Naturally, we hope – and intend – for this upward trajectory to continue," she added. Commission Chair Matej Arčon agreed, remarking that it is likely a shared desire across the board to secure more funding next year.

Slovenia launches digital infrastructure for culture

LJUBLJANA (STA) — Slovenia has completed a multi-year project designing a new digital infrastructure for the cultural sector, bringing together platforms for promoting the arts, managing public funding and cultural infrastructure, and making its cultural heritage and creative output more accessible both at home and abroad.

The project encompasses five core ministry platforms alongside websites from four national partner institutions, all of which have been designed to improve access to cultural heritage and services for both domestic and international audiences.

Speaking at a presentation of the project in early September, Culture Minister Ignacija Fridl Jarc stressed that e-Kultura goes beyond basic digitization; it now serves as a new medium to showcase Slovenian creativity to the widest possible public.

A member of the Culture Ministry's digitization department outlined the government's five new tools. The centerpiece is the e-Kultura website, a national hub aggregating events, news and funding opportunities. That website is joined by a redesigned English-language website, *Culture.si*, aimed at promoting Slovenian arts abroad.

Four key cultural institutions have also integrated specialized platforms. The National and University Library (NUK) introduced a publisher's portal to centralize electronic cataloging and legal deposits, while the Slovenian Theatre Institute created Oder (Stage), a performing arts database featuring an encyclopedia, contemporary scene updates, and translated Slovenian drama tailored for research.

Addressing the visual arts, the Museum of Modern Art launched Raz_Ume, a comprehensive exhibition and bibliographic database that serves as the digital backbone for its modern and contemporary archives; and the Slovenian Film Centre (SFC) built SFC PRO to centralize its film funding administration, while also merging its domestic website with the international-facing Slovenian Film Guide and Film In Slovenia sites.

Ljubljana U master's program up in rankings

LJUBLJANA (STA) — The International Master Program in Business and Organization (IMB) at the University of Ljubljana School of Economics and Business placed 29th in this year's rankings of the world's top 100 business management programs compiled by the British newspaper *Financial Times*, marking the program's best result to date.

The School of Economics and Business noted that its IMB program rose 15 places in the *Financial Times* "Masters in Management" rankings compared with last year, gaining 41 places in two years. The program has been included on the list for nine consecutive years, first entering the rankings in 2018. It is the only program in the wider South-East European region to make the list.

Dean Tomaž Turk described the top 30 ranking as one of the most visible international achievements for the university's School of Economics and Business. He pointed out that their IMB program ranked fourth in terms of value for the money, and fourth for career progress of graduates.

"For our school, both [rankings] mean that our graduates receive exceptional value for the time and resources they invest, and that [the IMB] program opens doors on the most demanding international labor markets. This is a recognition of the students, faculty, alumni and partner companies who co-create the program," Turk was quoted as saying in a press release.

The School of Economics and Business points out that students work on real business challenges together with companies which include global corporations, leading multinationals, and established innovative Slovenian businesses. This contact with the business world allows students to test their knowledge in the environment in which they will work, and to build a network of business contacts while still studying.

They also note that 94 percent of graduates find employment within three months of completing the program, and alumni rated the fulfillment of goals students had set upon entry at 87 percent.

The IMB program also ranked 30th for career services and 44th for strength of alumni network.

Summer heat cuts grape harvest by 25 percent

VIPAVA (STA) — This year's very hot and dry summer made a significant dent in grape production. With the situation similar across Slovenia, Vipava 1894, one of the largest wineries in western Slovenia, reports that the amount of grapes it purchased from local growers is a quarter lower than originally expected, but the quality is good.

Due to the high summer temperatures, the contractors of the Vipava Valley-based winery began this year's harvest on Aug. 11, two to three weeks earlier than usual.

"Early grape varieties were most affected, although the mid-August rains mitigated some of the damage," Vipava 1894 oenologist Filip Šinigoj told the press in late September. Red varieties, which were picked at the end of the harvest period, produced slightly better yields.

Šinigoj noted that this year's grapes were healthy, with good sugar and acid content. "We can expect a good vintage, especially for red wines, the quality of which is surprisingly good and which will be suitable for aging," he said.

Vipava 1894, where white varieties represent about 70 percent of production, is expected to produce around one million liters (264,170 gallons) of wine, which means there will probably be no surplus this year. "The truth is that wine sales were lower than usual during the summer, which was probably also due to high temperatures," said Andrej Furlan, director of marketing at the winery.

Around half of the wine produced at Vipava 1894 is sold in Slovenia, and the rest is exported to 20 countries, including the U.S. and Japan.

Agricultural Institute representative Klemen Lisjak added that Slovenian vineyards were under severe pressure due to the extreme heat, with the situation unlikely to change. "Special measures will therefore have to be considered," he said, "such as shading [the] vineyards or irrigation, which would require the construction of additional reservoirs."

Castles partner to host a St. Martin's Day event

NOVA GORICA (STA) — The Vipava Valley and the Kras region are partnering under a new regional brand that will celebrate wine, local cuisine and cultural heritage.

Leading up to St. Martin's Day (when, according to legend, *must* becomes wine), partners in the newly formed brand will host a Martinmas event at five different venues. Dubbed "Martinmas at Castles," the event will be held Nov. 7 at Štanjel Castle, Rihemberk Castle and Lanthieri Castle, as well as in the villages of Gorjansko and Vipavski Križ.

Each of the separate venues will present its history, wine, cuisine and cultural heritage, centered around the celebration of St. Martin's Day. The goal of the Martinmas event is to create a distinctive narrative based on local culture, wine traditions, cuisine, and authentic experiences.

While the project will be open to additional participation in the future, the current partners hope to introduce new opportunities for cooperation among local providers.

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

Entries now accepted for Ninth Annual Slovenian Literary Award competition

Slovenian Union of America
Press Release

JOLIET, Ill. — For a century, the Slovenian Union of America (SUA) has been dedicated to preserving the legacy of our Slovenian heritage. Writing has played an essential role in sustaining our culture and our communities, and the SUA Slovenian Literary Award honors those who continue this vital tradition.

Entries for the Ninth Annual SUA Slovenian Literary Award will be accepted from Nov. 1, 2026, through Jan. 31, 2027, at 5 p.m. EST. The competition is open to first-time writers as well as published authors.

The Slovenian Literary Award competition is open to writers of all genres of creative writing: short stories, novels, poetry, memoirs, creative nonfiction and personal essays are welcome. All work must be submitted in English; translations are accepted only if the translator is the author of the original work.

Work must be in a digital format that can be submitted electronically. All entries must be original work only; no AI-generated works will be accepted. Applicants may submit their work through the SUA website, *https://slovenianunion.org/literary-award/*.

Up to three submissions per writer will be accepted, only one of which may be book-length. Applicants may live anywhere, but must have a connection to the Slovenian culture or heritage. Only individual writers 18 years and older may enter. SUA membership is not required.

All works will be judged blind by a committee that includes writers. The winner will be announced on SUA social media in June 2027.

For more information contact *slovenianliteraryaward@gmail.com*.

SNPJ fraternal sympathies

Sis. Marlene J. Morris • Lodge 518 •

MELVINDALE, Mich. — The members of Lodge 518 sadly report the June 4, 2026, passing of Sis. Marlene Joyce Morris, 93, of Swartz Creek, Mich.

Sis. Morris was born Jan. 21, 1933, in Flint, Mich., the daughter of the late Samuel and Beatrice (Harris) Keast. She graduated from Flint Central High School in 1951 and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Michigan-Flint and a master's degree from Oakland University.

Marlene devoted her career to education, teaching for many years with Flushing Community Schools. Her dedication to her students and passion for learning left a lasting impact on countless young people. She retired from teaching in 1995.

Following her retirement, Marlene began a second career in real estate, working with Gerholz Realty and Banacki Realty, where she continued to serve others with the same professionalism and care that had characterized her teaching career.

In addition to her SNPJ membership, Marlene was also an active member of Zonta International for many years, supporting its mission of empowering women and improving communities through service and advocacy. She valued education, community involvement and helping others, and her contributions touched many lives throughout the Flint area.

Surviving are her son, Samuel (Cheri) Morris of Orlando, Fla.; a grandson, Joseph Morris (wife Erin Reichel) of Orlando; a niece and nephews in Mesa, Ariz.; many cousins in Canada and the United Kingdom; and close family friends. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Richard Keast.

Funeral services for Sis. Morris were held June 10 at Sharp Funeral Homes, Swartz Creek. Burial followed in Crestwood Cemetery, Grand Blanc, Mich.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 518 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we offer our condolences to Sis. Morris' family, relatives and friends on their loss.

Bro. Joseph L. Free • Lodge 138 •

STRABANE, Pa. — The members of Lodge 138 sadly report the July 9, 2026, passing of Bro. Joseph Leroy Free, affectionately known as "Cool Joe," 85, at his home in Cochranton, Pa., surrounded by his family. He was a 30-year Lodge 138 member.

Bro. Free was born Nov. 20, 1940, in Meadville, Pa., a son of the late Joseph H. Free and Ann (Yursic) Free. On July 1, 1967, he married the love of his life, Sally Leigh Walton. Together they shared 52 years of marriage before Sally's passing in 2019.

Joe proudly served in the U.S. Army as a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne Division, specializing in engineering. He enjoyed a long career after his military service, including 18 years with Talon, Inc., and retired from Diamond Custom Homes, Inc., in Washington, Pa.

He was a social and outgoing man who enjoyed local clubs, hunting, fishing, boating and camping. Competitive by nature, he loved horseshoes, bowling, card and board games, and spending time on his side-by-side and trike. He also enjoyed visits to the casino, gardening and canning.

Known for his quick wit and wonderful sense of humor, Joe brought laughter to those around him and always had a joke to share.

He leaves behind his daughter, Sonya (Will) Whitbred; his cherished grandsons, Owen and Ethan Whitbred; his siblings, Betty Rissel, William L. (Roxanne) Free, John H. Free, Paul T. (Doris) Free, and Douglas J. Free; and his beloved fiancée, Sandi Kerschner.

In addition to his parents and his wife, he was preceded in death by his son, Joseph "Little Joe" Free; and four siblings, Barbara J. Kustes, Patricia E. Walls, Charles E. Free, and David R. Free.

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

Bro. Michael Sirochman • Lodge 6 •

SYGAN, Pa. — The members of Lodge 6 sadly report the July 12, 2026, passing of Bro. Michael Sirochman, 94, of Bethel Park, Pa.

Bro. Sirochman was born Aug. 12, 1931, a son of the late Peter and Mary Sirochman. Michael graduated from Bethel Park High School and served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He then graduated from Pittsburgh Technical School of Industrial Engineering and Management, and was employed by Allegheny County for 33 years.

Michael and his wife, Ella, loved to travel and attend polka dances, and both were longtime members of St. Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church in Upper St. Clair, Pa.

A 77-year Lodge 6 member, he was also a member and Past Commander of the former VFW Post #4532 in Bethel Park, as well as a member of VFW Post #764 in McMurray, Pa.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Angeline V. "Ella" (Grobin) Sirochman; three brothers, Peter (Cass), John (Victoria), and George (Minnie); and a sister, Ann (Paul) Popovich. He is survived by many nieces and nephews.

A funeral service for Bro. Sirochman was held July 20 in St. Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church.

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

Bro. Philip M. Samotus • Lodge 782 •

GLENSHAW, Pa. — The members of Lodge 782 sadly report the Aug. 8, 2026, passing of Bro. Philip Michael Samotus, 70, of Fayetteville, Pa., formerly of Shaler Twp., Pa., at Chambersburg Hospital. He was a 47-year SNPJ member.

Bro. Samotus was born May 3, 1956, in Pittsburgh, the son of the late Philip Walter Samotus and Margaret A. (Kacmar) Samotus. Philip was a 1974 graduate of Shaler Area Senior High School. He then earned a degree in surveying from Edinboro University. He was employed as a land surveyor with Ed Tanner and Associates, and later Gibson Thomas Engineers until his retirement in 2018.

A talented athlete, Philip participated in high school track and field, played adult league softball on several Pittsburgh area teams, and also enjoyed coaching his son's sports teams. He enjoyed kayaking, fishing, gardening, following all the Pittsburgh professional and college sports teams, and spending time with his family. He was known for his joyful spirit and will be remembered for his positive approach to life.

He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Marolyn Young Samotus, whom he married in 1988; a son, Philip J. (Caitlin) Samotus of Fayetteville; a grandson, Carter Samotus; two sisters, Phyllis (John) Sharkady of Shaler Twp., and Sandy Schneider Samotus of Illinois; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service for Bro. Samotus was held Sept. 11 in the chapel of Thomas L. Geisel Funeral Home, Chambersburg, Pa.

On behalf of the members of Lodge 782 and the Slovene National Benefit Society, we extend our condolences to Bro. Samotus' family, relatives and friends on their loss.

DEATHS REPORTED

For the month of September 2026

LODGE	NAME	DATE OF DEATH	CITY, STATE
A01	Mary Andrews	01-06-2014	Cupertino, Calif.
1	James O. Barnett	08-08-2026	Esmond, Ill.
2	Linda L. Peterson	09-04-2026	Wenona, Ill.
6	John L. Dernovsek	12-19-2021	Madison, Ala.
6	Anna B. Molnar	07-31-2026	Bethel Park, Pa.
6	Gloria E. Hutchison	08-22-2026	Bridgeville, Pa.
34	Marilyn J. Ulerick	07-13-2019	Russiaville, Ind.
34	Frances A. Kellar	09-01-2020	Mooresville, Ind.
87	William L. Rumshock	09-10-2026	Greensburg, Pa.
87	Marie Yex	09-13-2026	West Newton, Pa.
87	Joseph Kois Jr.	11-02-2025	Greensboro, Pa.
89	Evelyn L. Weaver	08-20-2026	Pittsburgh, Pa.
106	Tracy L. Ambrozic-Happer	09-06-2026	Jacksonville, Fla.
138	Barbara Roney	09-22-2014	Canonsburg, Pa.
138	Brian K. Pastovich	02-28-2022	Washington, Pa.
138	Sheena M. Johnson	03-08-2026	Canonsburg, Pa.
138	Rose Marie Lawrence	08-18-2026	Strabane, Pa.
142	Brian P. Orazen	07-13-2018	Akron, Ohio
153	Jessica E. Smaltz	07-29-2026	Ashburn, Va.
158	Barbara P. Mackanos	07-27-2026	Independence, Ohio
158	Richard L. Summers	08-26-2026	Kirtland, Ohio
174	John J. Rozum	07-20-2026	Johnstown, Pa.
358	Irene F. Pahanish	09-10-2026	Leetonia, Ohio
371	Joseph Kump	08-14-2026	Butte, Mont.
518	Louis Kirn	06-17-2026	Apex, N.C.
559	Mary A. Gregory	02-10-2015	Chicago, Ill.
559	Frank H. Michalek	07-10-2026	Plainfield, Ill.
559	Janice M. Sullivan	08-11-2026	Hackettstown, N.J.
562	John A. Sadar	03-11-2024	Dillonvale, Ohio
564	Mary J. Smith	08-10-2026	Sun City, Ariz.
603	Jennifer A. Luznar	07-27-2026	Falls Church, Va.
629	Caroline E. Bowden	03-03-2025	Trafford, Pa.
629	Frank M. Maljevac	10-01-2025	Ocala, Fla.
677	Dorothea O. Resek	07-20-2026	Fredonia, Pa.
689	Aarene Zajc	08-15-2026	Burlingame, Calif.
715	William R. McCue	07-01-2026	Pittsburgh, Pa.
729	Mary Valko	03-18-2026	Monessen, Pa.
749	Rose Sernell	07-24-2026	Johnstown, Pa.
749	Elizabeth A. Yauneridge	09-20-2018	Portage, Pa.
771	Glenn L. Penwell	09-09-2026	Petersburg, Ohio
776	Gary L. McClain	01-04-2021	Lebanon, Pa.
786	Wesley M. Robideau	04-19-2026	Laguna Hills, Calif.

KAREN A. PINTAR
National Secretary/COO

PROSVETA Crossword

HALLOWEEN (#1026) solution

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

PROSVETA 2026 Publication Dates

JANUARY 2026

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	(19)	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	(16)	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	(16)	17	18	19	20	21
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29	30	31				

APRIL 2026

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26	27	28	29	30		

MAY 2026

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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	(18)	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

JUNE 2026

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28	29	30				

JULY 2026

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19	(20)	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

AUGUST 2026

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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	(17)	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

SEPTEMBER 2026

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	(14)	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER 2026

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	(19)	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

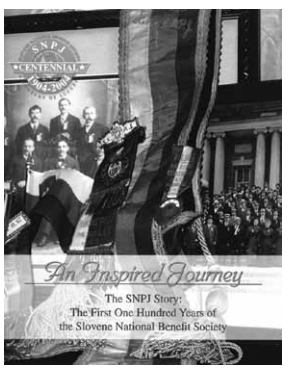
NOVEMBER 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	(9)	10	11	12	13	14
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

DECEMBER 2026

		1	2	3	4	5
6	(7)	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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



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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.

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2026 National Golf Results

Men's Individual: Members

Name	Lodge	Score	Prize
*Ed Caggiano	770	71	$100
**Bill Copich	643	63	$100
Joe Evanish	106	66	$72
Jim Cadez	138	67	$50
Eric Valencic	138	67	$50
John Wagner	138	67	$50
Tom Sedora	138	68	$45
Don Prejsnar	770	70	$40
Tom Vehar	138	70	$40
Alec Brumbaugh	138	71	$35
Brad Stroth	576	71	$35
Dave Belfiore	138	71	$35
Andrew Cropper	158	71	$35
Jason Lowe	138	71	$35
John Grottenthaler	6	72	$30
Bill Lowe	138	72	$30
Mike DeSocio	138	72	$30
David Sankovich	770	73	$20
Jack Evanish	138	73	$20
Ryan Brumbaugh	138	73	$20
R.J. Likovic	158	73	$20
Richard Tomsic	604	73	$20
Bob Russ	158	73	$20
Michael Copich	643	73	$20

Men's Team Event

Team	Lodge	Score	Prize
*David Sankovich	770	305	$152
Ed Caggiano	770		
Don Prejsnar	770		
Lou Presnar	770		
**Ryan Brumbaugh	138	286	$152
Eric Valencic	138		
Joe Graff	138		
Alec Brumbaugh	138		
Tom Sedora	138	287	$84
Mike DeSocio	138		
Jason Snider	138		
Tom Vehar	138		
Richard Tomsic	604	287	$84
Andrew Cropper	158		
Elaine Cropper	158		
John Gottenthaler	6		
Bill Copich	643	287	$84
John Copich	643		
Robert Copich	643		
Mike Copich	643		
Joe Evanish	106	295	$72
Jack Evanish	138		
Jamie Evanish	715		
Dan Bosek	564		

Women's Individual: Members

Name	Lodge	Score	Prize
*Cathy Fisher	138	84	$45
**Tina Seifert	643	69	$45
Sara Tkach	138	71	$23
Elaine Cropper	158	71	$23

Men's Individual: Guests

Name	Score	Prize
*Kevin Madden	*83	$10
**Eric Weatherly	*66	$10

*Indicates Actual Champion
**Indicates Net Champion

Peoria Holes Selected: Front – 1, 2, 6
Back – 10, 14, 18

2026 National Balina Results

Men's Division

Team	Lodge	Prize
Just Here for the Beer	6/138	$372
Rolling Dirty	6/158	$264
Wild Honkeys	277/782	$220
Charlie's Anchors	6/158	$192
(tie-5th) Kelsey's Misfits	6/158/576	$88
(tie-5th) Court Sweepers	138	$88

Women's Division

Team	Lodge	Prize
Dolls with Balls	158/564/715	$264
AOOOOOO's	6/138/782	$180
OG Vortex Ladies	138/158	$160
Kelsey's Krew	126/158/576	$144

2026 Nat'l. Beanbag Toss Results

Men's/Co-Ed Division

(Place)	Team	Lodge	Prize
(1)	J. Randolph/Z. Randolph	715	$160
(2)	D. Fetcko/B.Stroth	138/576	$120
(3)	D. Brand/E.Lorenzato	6	$94
(4)	T.J. Likovic/S. Caronite	576	$80
(tie-5th)	C. Cadez/E. Valencic	138	$70
(tie-5th)	Jason Cadez/Jake Cadez	138	$70
(tie-6th)	D. Belfiore/S. Sutton	138	$60
(tie-6th)	M. Blake/D. Weir	6	$60

Women's Division

(Place)	Team	Lodge	Prize
(1)	Mary Sinan/Morgan Sinan	782	$140
(2)	M. Skovenski/K. Skovenski	158	$100
(3)	Liz Smrdel/Jan Smrdel	158	$66

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

Lodge 31 honoring longtime members at Dec. 5 dinner

by BARB BOGOLIN
Lodge 31 Secretary/Treasurer

SHARON, Pa. — This year, 12 Lodge 31 members are celebrating their SNPJ anniversaries. They include 50-year members Alan D'Amico and Keith Hughes; 60-year members Cyril Furlan, Aleta Kudelko, Robert Sliman, Cynthia Buila, Mary Ann Patrizi, Richard Sinchak and Susan Crisan; 70-year member JoAnn Cameron; and 80-year members Frances Giewont and Louise Vett.

These members will be honored at our holiday dinner on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 3 p.m. The dinner will be at Vey's, 3176 E. State St., Hermitage, PA 16148; phone (724) 308-6167. Members' meals will be paid for by the Lodge; those attending will order from the menu.

During this annual meeting, election of officers will be held and meeting dates for 2027 will be set. Members interested in attending must call Barb Bogolin at (724) 347-1197 by Friday, Nov. 27.

Slavija Lodge 1 electing 2027 officers in mid-December

by MICHELLE HRIBAR-HERNANDEZ
Lodge 1 President

CHICAGO — SNPJ Slavija Lodge 1 enjoyed a wonderful summer and fall filled with fellowship, music, food and Slovenian traditions. Lodge members are looking forward to gathering again in December to celebrate the holiday season.

Following the June 7 Lodge meeting at a restaurant in McCook, Ill., members attended the Slovenian picnic in Lemont, Ill., on Aug. 9. Although stormy weather threatened the festivities, it didn't dampen anyone's spirits! Members enjoyed live polka music, folk dancing, and delicious *čevapčiči* while celebrating Slovenian culture and camaraderie.

At the September meeting, members decided to attend the annual Grape Festival in Joliet, Ill., on Oct. 4. The group was welcomed by beautiful weather, delicious food and great music, making it another enjoyable outing for Slavija Lodge 1.

Our next gathering, scheduled Dec. 13 at the home of President Michelle Hribar-Hernandez in Lemont, will include the electoral meeting. Following the meeting, members will celebrate the holiday season with food, music and good company.

Continuing a cherished tradition, members also look forward to visiting the annual holiday light display at St. Mary's Grotto in Lemont. Once the schedule is announced, our group will make plans to enjoy the festive display together.

For more information about upcoming Slavija Lodge 1 events, contact Secretary Hribar at (708) 598-2570.





[Left] SNPJ Lodge 1 members attended a Slovenian picnic in Lemont, Ill., in August, followed by the annual Grape Festival in Joliet, Ill., in October *[below]*.

Polka stars shine at the 62nd Thanksgiving Polka Weekend

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

CLEVELAND — Polka's stars will shine during the Thanksgiving Polka Weekend, featuring the Polka Music Awards. Hosted by the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame at the Holiday Inn Cleveland South on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 27-28, polka music's grandest event offers two days of priceless memories.

Thrill to the music of celebrity entertainers, including Grammy nominee Alex Meixner, Joey Miskulin, and Canada's Polka King Walter Ostanek. Enjoy the finest polkas and waltzes in a ballroom setting.

The Polka Music Awards salute the newest names entering the Polka Hall of Fame. Spotlight bands are led by Jeff Pecon (Ohio), Hank Thunander (Minn.), Garrett Tatano (Pa.) and Ed Klancnik (Tenn.). Cleveland's Festa Band and The Polka Classics complete the schedule.

Lifetime Achievement Awards in polka music will go to Texas-based bandleader and recording artist Alex Meixner; longtime Cleveland bassist and vocalist Hank Guzel Jr.; Nashville drummer and bandleader Ed Klancnik; Pittsburgh accordionist and bandleader Joe Grkman Jr.; and Pittsburgh accordionist, bandleader and tamburitza artist Mikey Dee.

The Board of Trustees has added three new names to the Honor Roll: accordionist and music arranger Ken Novak; late Cleveland bassist and bandleader Mary Bass Zivoder; and SNPJ Lodge 603, known for its Slovenian Home in Samsula, Fla.

Two All-time Greatest Hits have also been voted in: "Croatian Home Polka," made popular by the Kenny Bass Orchestra, and "Oj, Marička, Peglaj" (Mary's Ironing), an old Slovenian folk favorite.

Admission is $25 each day. Save with a Polka Weekend Pass, offered for $45. Guests age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Free parking is available.

Order tickets from the Polka Hall of Fame, (216) 261-3263, or by e-mail to *PolkaShop@aol.com*. Reduced room rates are offered through the Holiday Inn, (216) 524-8050.

The Holiday Inn Cleveland South is located at 6001 Rockside Road in Independence, Ohio, near I-77 and I-480, 15 minutes from the airport and downtown Cleveland.

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Lodge 745 closing out the year with ice skating and pizza party

LODGE 745 HOLIDAY
FROM PAGE 1

In April, members of our Lodge traveled 400-plus miles to Southern California to support the California SNPJ Day Revival sponsored by Lodges 786 and 723. Once again, members from all of the California Lodges were in attendance. This event was well planned with music, food, dancing and fellowship.

Our summer picnic took place in September, once again at the beautiful Del Webb Sun City grounds. The balina courts and flower gardens, as well as the adjacent grassy field, provided entertainment for both youth and adult members. Lodge President Joe Mlakar has a source for Slovenian-style klobase at a Ukrainian market in West Roseville. So once again, Dan Miller manned the grill as we served up klobase and kraut sandwiches and all of the potluck trimmings.

Special guests Ken and Teresa Koci (786) were in attendance. A special thank you to Dick and Sarah Laux for providing access to this facility.

Lodge 745 community service activity continued this year with more notable service acts. Lodge members continue to donate blood throughout the year. Other members are volunteering work hours at the California State Park Foundation, picking up trash after holiday weekends and removing invasive plant species.

Once again, Mary Saber volunteered in Nevada for the Reno Hot August Nights Foundation. The car show brings in a lot of money for charities in the region. Mary volunteers more than 80 hours each year for this worthwhile event.

Our former youth members have graduated into adulthood and are making us proud. Matthew and Adrianna Mlakar's sons are studying at California universities. Diego Mlakar is in his senior year at Stanford. He is the chairman of the Axe Committee and is looking forward to finishing his degree in communications. He spent the summer working with the Stanford football team on the equipment management staff. He will continue to work with them for the duration of the season.

Philip Mlakar has started his third year at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Last year he spent a quarter abroad, studying computer engineering in Rome. When his term ended, he was able to travel to Slovenia as the country was dressed up for the holidays. Extended family generously hosted him as he explored caves, lakes and a new culture. Philip has earned a few scholarships to help him study abroad, as well as scholarships from SNPJ and a Slovenian Union of America (SUA) educational grant.

Peter Mlakar just graduated from high school this year and has joined his brother at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. He has also earned scholarships from SNPJ, as well as from the Slovenian Union of America. Internships over the past couple of summers have served to fuel his interest in the construction industry. Several construction firms will help him as he works toward his construction management degree.

Four Lodge 745 members are celebrating notable SNPJ anniversaries this year: Janet McMurry and Teresa Mlakar with 50 years, Patricia Ocepek with 60 years, and Mildred Rowe with 80 years.

Our annual Christmas ice skating and pizza party will have a change of venue this year. Ice skating will be held at the Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink (Ali Youssefi Square) on 7th and K Street. The pizza party will follow at Frankie's Pizza in historic Old Sacramento. Additional details will be available very soon on our Facebook page.

Lodge 559 toy donations will benefit Toys for Tots

by MELANIE MATIASEK
Lodge 559 Secretary/Treasurer

CHICAGO — Lodge 559 has had a busy summer!

Lodge 8 member Alenka Rus was our surrogate Young Adult delegate this year, and she provided a detailed report of this year's conference. It was nice to have a representative at this conference so that we can be aware of their projects and activities. It sounds like the delegates had a productive session. It was an honor for them to be able to meet Suzana Češarek, Consul General of the Republic of Slovenia.

Sadly, in July we lost our longtime active member, Frank Michalek. He will be missed, and we send our condolences to his family.

Geri Matiasek and Kaitlyn Chiappetta were our Convention delegates this year. They provided us with their reports during our September meeting. Thank you to both of them for representing us. We were glad to hear of the changes and forward thinking regarding the SNPJ Bylaws. We also want to wish Karen Pintar all best in her retirement.

In August, members also got together during the annual picnic at the Slovenian Catholic Center in Lemont, Ill. This is a wonderful event; we especially enjoy their roasted pork, chicken and lamb, all cooked on open pits.

It was a great afternoon socializing with other members, as well as friends from other Lodges and organizations. Listening to the Slovenian music and watching the dancers was especially entertaining. Unfortunately, for some of us the day was cut short due to a terrible rainstorm.

At our September meeting we conducted the first half audit and discussed that the last meeting of the year will include the annual Christmas Toy drive for donations to Toys for Tots. Any member who cannot attend the meeting but would like to contribute can contact me.



Despite some stormy weather, Lodge 559 members enjoyed the food, music and entertainment at the Slovenian Catholic Center annual picnic in August.

Our next meeting is scheduled Friday, Nov. 13, at noon and will be held at the McCook Family Restaurant in McCook Ill. Please contact me if you would like to attend so that I can make the reservation.

Our Lodge wishes everyone an enjoyable fall!



Photo submitted by Rose Marie Govi (729)

Digging Those Doo-wop Harmonies

SNPJ Silverstars Lodge 729 members gathered at the Yukon (Pa.) Slovenian Hall in October for their fall dance featuring the music of the Pittsburgh Belairs. Those in attendance had the pleasure of listening and dancing to the doo-wop harmonies and Motown music performed by an outstanding group of local musicians.

The belle of the ball, in Slovenia

by PAMELA RICHTAR PANDŽA
Lodge 723

FONTANA, Calif. — What do you envision when you think of the occasion of a ball? Gowns and tuxedos? Cinderella stepping out of a giant pumpkin carriage?

Slovenia, at the end of each summer, hosts a ball in the heart of Triglav National Park on the banks of Lake Bohinj. However, the belle of the ball is not a lovely lady, but an outstanding example of the country's finest among bovine beauties, specifically among the only Slovenian native breed called *Cika*.

And the September runway is a path down onto level land from higher elevations where the cows enjoyed green grass and cooler temperatures during the hottest months. They parade alongside their human escorts to the lower pastures at the end of summer after ascending to the alpine heights in June. The farmers consist of individuals, couples, and a few families. They walk alongside their cows with their *basenga*, which is the term for the alpine gear bundle carried on the shoulders by herdsmen.

The occasion is cause for a big celebration, including guests from around Slovenia and also international visitors. Experts examine the Cika breed "contestants" to choose one cow to be an exemplary specimen. She is the "queen" among more than 500 cows owned by around 270 farmers.

The Cika is the only Slovenian native breed of cattle. It has been crossbred with the Pinzgauer which resulted in partial white coloration with its brown base. It is well suited to hilly and mountainous areas where pasture and basic feed production are more limited. In the Gorenjska area around Lake Bohinj, the average elevation is 3,648 feet with the lake itself at 1,726 feet. The famous Triglav peak reaches 9,396 feet in height.

The Cika indigenous breed is resistant to disease, fit for high altitudes, has a high fertility rate, has good milk production and maternal instincts, and lives a long life.

For the novice in the world of this bovine species, a question arises: What makes for an ideal Cika cow? Here are the qualities on which the contestants are judged:

- In the 300-450 kilogram range with 115-125 cm height.
- Has a short and noble head and a long, narrow neck.
- The eyes are big, dark and heavily pigmented.
- Feet are small boned, therefore stable on all terrains.
- The "*biclji*" (milkbags) are solid.
- The hooves stand high.
- The coat is healthy with distinctive chestnut brown color with a narrow white stripe running along the back, and a white tail and white bands of color on the upper legs.

At this year's ball, the 67th event, the winner was Ruža! She was presented with a large bell affixed to a leather collar and greenery surrounding it.

The Cow Ball festivities provide much entertainment and sustenance for the crowds who attend. The narrative from the stage uses Slovenian and English to describe the goings-on. Musical groups perform, which this year included the internationally revered Avsenik Ensemble. Folklore dance groups perform.

Foods of many varieties are available for purchase, along with rich cheeses and, of course, Laško and Union pivo. If your beverage taste leads elsewhere, wine and gin and tonic drinks are available, as well as a variety of waters, juices – and yes, milk!

At the 67th event, the alpine sun was bright and hot, in spite of rain in the days prior, so cold drinks were extremely popular.

If you are planning a trip to Slovenia in September, the Cow Ball in Bohinj would be a good recommendation. Bohinj is a half hour drive from Lake Bled through the beautiful Julian Alps. There are many types of accommodations, and bus service is available.



KRSTE and **PAMELA PANDŽA** at the 67th Cow Ball held in Bohinj this past September.

Here is a little poem by Ivan Cindric in honor of the Cika breed of cattle:

CIKA S PLANINE

LE ENA MED NJIMI
JE PRAVA BILA,
NAŠA JE CIKA MIS
CEL' GA SVETA.
PONOSNO TELIČKA
MULJIT TRAVO UČI,
DA B'ZRASEL V ORJAKA
V TEH SONČNIH SI DNI.



Ruža, the belle of the ball for 2026.

SNPJ Membership Anniversaries
November 2026

70-Year Members

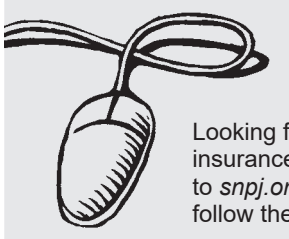
Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
2	Edrise L. Sievers	643	Kathleen Nail
5	Raymond Vehar	643	Andrew J. Kocjan
5	Joanne Kitchen	721	Patricia A. Golding
559	Judith A. Nelson		

60-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
8	William Siminski	304	Christine Costagli
31	Mary A. Patrizi	564	Ermando Volpe
31	Richard D. Sinchak	576	Sandra L. Polsak
31	Susan R. Crisan	581	Diana Wraight
34	Cynthia J. Hovey	584	Kathy J. Halfaker
106	Nancy J. Kreis	603	James L. Heaton
106	Barry J. Vidrick	721	Sandra Reback
126	Michael Kuzmic	721	Sandra A. Bazyk
138	Terri Buckholtz	749	Sylvia P. Wagner
218	Mary L. Harnish	776	Carol J. Bryan
225	Sheryl G. Keller	776	Joyce A. Beadling
257	Jean M. Miadich	782	Joseph G. Povhe

50-Year Members

Lodge	Member	Lodge	Member
1	Ludwig A. Leskovar	225	Robbi A. Pazzie
3	Jayne M. Usery	371	John E. Jones
5	Susan A. Kokish	559	Eugene J. Zell
5	Frank A. Kosec	559	James H. Nichols
5	Linda J. Evans	581	David P. Kumetis
6	Donald W. Celin	581	Crispin Koren
6	Tama D. Ward	584	John S. Bolka
6	Keith E. Schwartz	584	Carol J. Kuznacic
6	Bryan K. Refosco	584	Linda A. Blazek
106	Sandra L. Carioto	603	Nancy C. Bass
138	Donna M. Dittmar	643	Kathryn A. Banks
138	Diane L. Lyda	677	Amy P. Skubitz
138	Patricia Milan	677	Robert C. Sovinski
142	Donna M. Motsch	749	Mark E. Petrich
142	Cindy A. Apathy	776	James R. Colaluca
142	Kevin A. Kocur	782	David M. Kern
174	Louis Ferry	A01	James Yambor
216	Joseph A. Falso	A01	Timothy J. Wolgemuth
223	Douglas C. Smartnick		



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

PROSVETA Crossword

Thanksgiving (#1126) by StatePoint Media

ACROSS
1. Fresh Prince: "___ ya later!"
6. Say "no"
9. "Nana" author Émile ____
13. Capital of Vietnam
14. The home of the brave, acr.
15. Increase rpms (2 words)
16. Like yesteryear
17. Rejuvenating spot
18. Like a solder at attention
19. *Pumpkin pie or pecan pie, e.g.
21. *Plymouth ____
23. Seek damages
24. Light on one's feet
25. Like The Beatles
28. Certain blast's origins
30. *What tom said
35. Iranian money
37. Precedes GPT
39. Water nymph
40. Wisconsin's western neighbor
41. One tenth
43. Mountain, in Germany
44. The Statue of Liberty island
46. Cat sound
47. Instinctive motive
48. 1970s dance clubs
50. Do like buffaloes
52. Distress acronym
53. Opposite of genuine
55. Bow or bolo
57. *Moisturizing kitchen tool
60. *Turkey prepared certain way
64. Bottom line
65. Pub offering
67. Alley cat, e.g.
68. Extreme suffering
69. International help, e.g.
70. Bullwinkle J. ____
71. Fitness facilities
72. July-August sign of Zodiac
73. More so than #12 Down

DOWN
1. Not barefoot
2. Gender checkbox
3. Peters out
4. Loamy deposit
5. Form a queue (2 words)
6. Head and shoulders sculpture
7. Venomous snake
8. Civil rights organization, acr.
9. Whole number between -1 and 1
10. *Biscuit baker
11. *She took away the football from Charlie Brown
12. Mentally quick, e.g.
15. Put trust in (2 words)
20. Respond
22. Website address ending
24. Eminence
25. *Deep-____, turkey prepared certain way
26. White condiment
27. Sheds tears
29. *Mayflower
31. Hindi courtesy title
32. Coffin holders
33. One of Florida Keys
34. Ruler sides, e.g.
36. Not of the cloth
38. Through, to a poet
42. Muse of love poetry
45. "Killing Me ____ with His Song"
49. Fraternity letters
51. Unwholesome atmosphere
54. Cattle enclosure in African village
56. Bar, legally
57. Unidentified aircraft
58. Niels Bohr's study object
59. Without, à Paris
60. Overhaul
61. *Turkey ____, 5K run
62. "At ____!" military command
63. Indigo user
64. "You're it" game
66. Rest in state

The solution to puzzle #1126 will run in the Dec. 1 issue.

