



SPRING ISSUE: APRIL 2019 EDITOR: HELEN E. FROHNA

NEWSLETTER OF THE UWM SLOVENIAN ARTS COUNCIL SLOVENIAN ARTS PROGRAM

WELL, JUST WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

PRESIDENT: CHRISTINA M. CARROLL

Who Do You Think You Are, is the name of a TV program shown on the cable TLC channel. The show features famous celebrities who discover their background and roots, although there's a lot more involved in researching and discovering your family history than can be wrapped up in a 60-minute episode. Although the subject of Genealogy is quite the buzzword these days, many people have been doing their family histories for years, unlike myself who just started this project upon retirement three years ago.

The Slovenian Arts Council will be hosting an introductory Slovenian genealogy workshop on Saturday, October 12, 2019, for the Milwaukee-area Slovenian-American community, so save the date! It may be that you already have a polished, completed family tree dating back to Austrian Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780), or, like me, only hand written notes and copies of birth and death certificates enclosed in a Rubbermaid bin.

Since becoming involved with the Slovenian Arts Council, I have been exposed to programs featuring the many members of the intelligentsia class of the Slovenia lands (Austro-Hungarian Empire), Slovenia as a state of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and, since 1991, the Republic of Slovenia. Although my father was proud of being a Slovenian and later an American, he never told me of Ivan Cankar, France Prešeren, Ivan Grohar, nor Rihard Jakopič. If these were the greatest poets, writers, and painters of "Slovenia", why did I not know about them? And why were there so few of these great, talented people? And why would they leave home and travel to Graz, Salzburg, and Vienna to receive a higher education? On the other hand, my father's family comes from a very rural area in southern Slovenia. Dating back to the mid-1800s, families were subsistence farmers in this region, and before the Revolutions of 1848, were considered serfs of Austrian noble landowners. There obviously was a class disparity between the farming/village communities of the backcountry and the upper classes and/or nobility from Ljubljana and the northern regions. There was no university in Ljubljana until 1919. People who sought higher education had to attend a university in Austria or Italy. It was a difficult life for these villagers, and not much available free time for farmers to write poetry about their contemplations or to paint the surrounding landscape. In compiling my family's stories and documents, I discovered many things that gave me a better understanding of my origins. No great artists among my Slovenian forefathers but there definitely is a business acumen that can be traced back through four generations.

So, gather your family stories, do some research, and maybe even get your DNA tested. I've searched the parish register of the church in Stari Trg ob Kolpi, written both in German and Slovenian, for my family's house. I've gone online to look at US censuses of 1920, 1930, and 1940, passenger lists from Europe to New York City and Boston, and US draft registrations. I've reached out to second cousins in Michigan to compare names and dates of births and marriages. I've actually done a DNA test and uploaded results to Genesis/GEDmatch to find DNA "matches". Other resources that I have discovered are from Facebook group pages for Slovenian Genealogy, Slovenian DNA Genealogy Matching, and Ōmomelj, Dragatuš, Vinica, & Stari Trg ob Kolpi Family Root Research. If you're a member of the Slovenian Union of America, you might have read articles in the past issues leading up to their Convention in June 2019, describing their Slovenian DNA project. Milwaukee has its own Family History Center on 9600 W Grange (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) where volunteer staff will assist you in your efforts to search for documents (free). The Milwaukee Co. Federated Libraries have computers available to tap into some of the Ancestry.com databases (free) and sometimes library staff may be able to assist.

If you are interested in pursuing and creating your Slovenian family history, here are some tips that I can share with you. Take notes when the older generation feels like chatting, or just ask them your questions outright. Expand and tweak family tree forms and outlines that another family member may have already started. Make a cross-reference list of Slovenian cities and towns and family names, in both German and Slovenian; the Austrian Empire administration Germanized people's names and locations until after WWI. Use an archival quality, acid-free pen to write down names and dates on the backsides of all those old (and even recent) photos.

With all this information, you can better prepare over the next few months for the upcoming Slovenian Genealogy Workshop that the Slovenian Arts Council will be hosting on October 12. Any artists, musicians, or architects in your background?

NEWS FROM SLOVENIA

Trans Slovenia Bike Trip

By Uli Stanciu, pioneer of Bike Magazine



Trans Slovenia 01 (TS1) is a trans-alp tour for mountain bikers that connects three countries: Slovenia, Italy and Austria. In just seven days, it offers almost everything—from snow, to wine, to the sea. The trail starts with winding ascents to the Julian Alps in Kranjska Gora, across the Vršič pass and a descent along the emerald wild Soča River (passing Bovec, Kobarid and Tolmin). Along the way, memories of the First World War are uncovered, stops at the wine cellars in Brda and Collio are enjoyed, along with extraordinary culinary delights, and the enchantment of the Karst region and its underground caves and intriguing Lipizzan horses. The tour ends with a dip in the warm Adriatic Sea while enjoying relaxing Mediterranean evenings.

HOW A TREE BECAME A SLOVENIAN SYMBOL

Jaka Bartolj

In the late 1980s, the Slovenian Spring was in full bloom. It was a time of a renewed national consciousness and ever-louder calls for human rights. During this period, one symbol soon took the country by storm: The linden leaf became a proud emblem of Slovenian national aspirations as Yugoslavia and Communism began to crumble.

The appearance of the linden leaf as a symbol had its roots in history. For centuries, the linden trees had a profound significance to the Slovenian people and could once be found in almost every village. Locals would gather under its shady canopy and discuss the issues of the day and even to make political decisions. “Under the Linden” became a common name for traditional village inns, and new lindens were planted to mark major historical turning points.

The linden branch also had a special role in Slovenian traditions. Each spring, during Pentecost, households would place a linden branch in their windows. According to tradition, the branch welcomed the Holy Spirit on its return to Earth on that very special day.

In the modern era, the significance of the linden tree as a symbol became less prominent, but it always remained an important national symbol. Many Slovenian organizations in foreign countries adopted the name “*lipa*” - meaning linden - to mark their ties to the Old Country. Unexpectedly, the 1980’s saw a revival of the linden - particularly the linden leaf - as one of Slovenia’s most beloved symbols. It was first featured in an advertising campaign that promoted the virtues of tourism. Even Slovenia’s first - still unofficial and unsanctioned - national currency was known as “*Lipa*.”

When Slovenia became independent, many called for the linden leaf to appear on the country’s new flag. The proposal wasn’t adopted, but the linden lives on as a national symbol. Several linden saplings were symbolically planted on independence day - in the old tradition of marking historic events - and have since grown into mature trees. And each year, prominent Slovenian politicians gather under Slovenia’s oldest linden tree - the *Najevnik Linden* - keeping alive a tradition that has survived for centuries.





Slovenian Genealogy Workshop
Saturday, October 12, 2019 1:00pm—3:30pm

Location: To Be Determined

Presenter: Jeffrey A. Bockman of Naperville, IL Genealogist & Writer

Topics to be covered: Where Did They Come From?

Records & Availability

DNA Testing



*Sponsored by the UWM Slovenian Arts Council,
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Did you know they are Slovenian?

Melania Trump: First Lady of the United States,
born in Novo Mesto on April 26, 1970.

Amy Klobuchar: US Senator from Minnesota, Democratic Presidential Candidate.
Her grandparents, on her fathers side was of Slovene descent, from the Bela Krajina region.

Goran Dragic: Point Guard, #7, for the NBA basketball Team, the Miami Heat.
Born in Ljubljana on May 6, 1986, his mother is Slovenian and father Serbian.

Luka Dončić: Point Guard, #77, for the NBA basketball team, the Dallas Mavericks.
Born in Ljubljana on February 28, 1999.

Katrina Kozar: Master Chef, born in Madison, on Dec 1, 1980.
Appeared on Master Chef season 6, grandparents were born in Slovenia.



Judith R. Price (nee Verbick), a member of the Slovenian Arts Council, passed away January 23, 2019 at age 74 after combating a serious illness. Judy served on the Council after her father, Anton Verbick, who previously had served on the Council, passed away. Judy was the niece of Mary Ermenc who donated funds to the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee that established the Frank and Mary Ermenc Slovenian Arts Fund.

Judy was active not only in the Slovenian-American community in Milwaukee, but spent many hours volunteering for the Annual PBS Channel 10/36 Auction Fund Drive. She and her husband, LeRoy, loved dressing up in Edwardian fashion while attending the Somewhere in Time Weekend held annually at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, Michigan.

Rest in peace, Judy.

You can now once again dance the night away with your love, LeRoy, up in heaven.

Christina M. Carroll



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MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Slovenian Arts Council, in collaboration with the UWM Peck School of the Arts, is to plan and implement programs of Slovenian arts, artifacts, dance, literature, music, and theatre that promote the fine arts.

Websites to keep you informed:

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