

SLOVENIAN ARTS PROGRAM

NEWSLETTER OF THE UWM SLOVENIAN ARTS COUNCIL

Spring Issue: April 2013 Editor: Helen E. Frohna



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Pozdravljeni! Greetings!

In my column today I'd like to share with you some experiences which reminded me how grateful we can be for our Slovenian heritage.

The Slovenian Arts Programs has brought to our attention the poet, France Prešeren. The country of our ancestors has declared a national holiday on February 8, to observe and celebrate not only Prešeren, but also all Slovenian creative artists. This is unique! Did you know that some of Prešeren's poems have been translated into English?

We have also sponsored several sing-a-longs. The words of these melodious folk songs speak straight to the heart. They tell us who the Slovenians were, and how they expressed their feelings about everyday living. Have you sung a Slovenian song lately?

We've had a wonderful response to Slovenian 101 with our instructor, Milly Mursec. I recently spoke with a cousin who lives on my grandfather's homestead. Since he speaks no English our conversations are short because I simply run out of vocabulary. On our last telephone visit I was able to stay on the line a little longer. I think Slovenian 101 was most helpful.

Have you thought about researching your family history? There are several websites available to you: www.slovenianguenealogy.org; www.ellisland.org; www.familysearch.org. You can visit the Family History Center at 9600 W. Grange Avenue in Hales Corners, WI. Call 414-425-4182 for hours of operation. Volunteers will help you and it's free. How thrilled I was to see my father's name on the ship's manifest when he arrived in America in 1913. I learned that he came here with a cousin, which resulted in my connecting with a cousin who lives in the Milwaukee area. Maybe you, too, can find a "new" relative.

A "pustna veselica" is a Mardi Gras celebration, Slovenian style. I invited three non-Slovenian friends to join me in this pre-lenten celebration. Josephine Janežič, our local Slovenian "kuharica" (cook) helped me with recipes and ingredients. My friends and I enjoyed a meal of kranjske klobase (Slovenian smoked sausages), pražen ali tenstan krompir (fried potatoes), and kislo zelje (sauerkraut, which I'm told should "shine"). What a good celebration it was.

I encourage you to renew and enjoy that which is Slovenian in you. The Slovenian Arts Program will continue to present programs and events to help us celebrate that which is uniquely ours. *Živeli Slovenci! Dolores Ivanchich*

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Slovenian Arts Council is to plan and implement programs of Slovenian arts, artifacts, dance, literature, music and theatre that preserve the ethnic heritage in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Peck School of the Arts.



VESELO VELIKO NOČ!

UWM's Slovenian Arts Program celebrates "Prešeren Day"!

The UWM Slovenian Arts Council (SAC), representing the UWM Slovenian Arts Program (SAP), is proud of its efforts to make Slovenia's National Day of Culture - France Prešeren Day - recognized and celebrated in the Greater Milwaukee area as it is celebrated in the Republic of Slovenia each year on February 8th. This national holiday is celebrated around the world wherever Slovenians live in great number. Our UWM -SAP recognition started in 2010 and each year we've tried to build on this cultural arts highlight of our Slovenian heritage.



*Jeff Martinka, Dolores Ivanchich,
Milly Mursec and Denise Bartlett*

Thirty-seven Slovenians and their guests attended a traditional Milwaukee fish fry at Meyer's Restaurant in Greenfield on Feb. 8th, followed by the main event - a short program of poems and educational trivia about Slovenia's most distinguished poet, France Prešeren. As the evening came to a close, the group sang the seventh verse of his poem, "Zdravljica (A toast)", which is the Republic of Slovenia's national anthem. The UWM-SAC hopes that readers will be able to join us next year for another cultural arts recognition of Slovenia's most distinguished poet.

France Prešeren 1800 - 1849

France Prešeren was born in the small village of Vrba. His parents were well-to-do-farmers. At the age of eight, he was sent away to be educated. Two uncles, who were priests, helped in his pursuit. He received a law degree in Vienna and went to Ljubljana to work and live. As a Slovene under the Hapsburg Austrian monarchy he was considered a second-class citizen. He remained a law clerk until 1846 when he was finally allowed to open his own office and law practice in Kranj. He died three years later at the age of 49 and is buried in that city.

Prešeren was not recognized for his poetry during his lifetime. The discovery and appreciation of his work came 20 years after his death. He lived a life riddled with sadness, much of which is reflected in his poetry. Prešeren often wrote about his dream of a free nation. He was an advocate for a pure Slovenian language and wrote in a literary style that was comparable to European poets of the day.

Each year Slovenia celebrates a cultural, national "no work" holiday on February 8th, the date of the death of France Prešeren. This holiday was established in 1945, and in the year 2000, the holiday also came to be known as "The Day of Culture". The Prešeren Award, the highest award an artist in Slovenia could ever receive, is given annually to one or two individuals who through their creative achievements have contributed to Slovenian art and culture.

Poet France Prešeren believed in freedom and independence for all nations!

Denise P. Bartlett

Welcome Jacquelyn Kovach Smith: Our newest Council Member

Jackie was born and raised on the west side of Cleveland. Her father and aunt were her strongest Slovenian influences. Her father, Louie Kovach was a musician, and their home was the designated spot for polka band practice. Jackie grew up enjoying the West Park Slovenian Home with other fellow Slovenians. She moved to Milwaukee in 1986, and found our city to be very similar to Cleveland in its ethnic celebration. In 2009 she had the wonderful opportunity to travel to Slovenia and meet her relatives who lived in Lokavec, in the province of Primorska. Needless to say, Jackie is very proud of her Slovenian roots and we are very happy to have her as part of the Slovenian Arts Council.

The SAC would like to thank Judy Price for her many years of service as Vice-President. As Judy steps down, we are very pleased to have Mary Cay Freiberg fill the position.

Minister Ljudmila Novak, (Minister of Slovenians abroad), visited Slovenians in Milwaukee on November 29th. She toured the UWM Library, Triglav Park, and the West Allis City Hall where she presented President D. Ivanchich, with a "priznanje za delo". This is a proclamation that SAP received for recognition of 30 years of preserving culture here in Milwaukee.



Slovenia Nominates Missionary Opeka for Nobel Peace Prize

Peter (Pedro) Opeka was born in Argentina of Slovenian refugee parents on June 29, 1948. Opeka joined the Lazarian missionary society in 1966. He studied theology in Ljubljana, but completed his studies at the Catholic Institute in Paris. He has been living and working in Madagascar since 1976.

He exemplifies a new type of missionary: not someone committed to converting and preaching, but someone fully dedicated to the poor, helping them to build their future, with help of Slovenian people. Opeka has been often compared to Mother Teresa whom he deeply admires. His sacrifices on behalf of the poor and his determination that no child should ever be hungry and without education, along with his leadership in the struggle for human betterment has lead him to receive this nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Najlepša hvala

Thank you to our **Friends of the Slovenian Arts Program** for your generous donations this past year. In addition to the *Frank and Mary Ermenc Memorial Fund*, your financial support and attendance at events hosted by the U.W.M. Slovenian Arts Council will help perpetuate Slovenian fine arts programming in the Milwaukee Area.

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**A distinctive feature of Bela Krajina,
and one of the most popular souvenirs of
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Websites to keep you informed:

www.slovenianartsprogram.org

www.uspehslovenianchorus.org

www.swua43.org

www.triglavpark.com

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