



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NEWSLETTER

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Welcome Home 2013

For the third successive year, the Government's Office for Slovenians Abroad, together with the Minister for Slovenians Abroad, Ms. Tina Komel, sponsored the annual homecoming event for Slovenians living abroad, entitled "Welcome Home".

This year, the festival was dedicated to the younger generation, aiming to link various youth organizations that are active in the Republic of Slovenia with communities of young Slovenians and their descendants, who live in neighboring countries and elsewhere in the world. The festival featured various events such as workshops, informative



On July 6 the event concluded with a concert on Kongresni trg square.

presentations, a movie evening, and a sports event.

The cultural activities included performances by Trkaj, a famous freestyle rapper from Slovenia, Vesna Zornik, the leading vocalist in the group Katalena, Janez Dovč on accordion, Slovenian Army Big Band Orchestra, and many other artists. A folklore group

of Macedonian students, choirs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, an exhibition from Serbia, Blue Fingers, a music band from Italy, and a Slovenian rock band Zlatorock from Argentina also had the opportunity to present themselves to the Slovenian audience.

In the light of the international gathering, there





Minister for Slovenians Abroad Tina Komel on the photo with one of the folklore groups that performed in the afternoon on Kongresni trg square. Speaker of the National Assembly Veber emphasized that diaspora -- wherever they lived in the world -- were acting as "priceless ambassadors and promoters" of the home country.

was also an exhibition in the National and University Library, entitled »In the embrace of two worlds: Slovenes in

Argentina«, where traditional forms of gathering of Slovenes in organized social activities in Argentina were presented. The

exhibition was made possible by nongovernmental organizations from Slovenia and abroad.

Meanwhile, in accordance with the occasion, the National Assembly hosted the 13th all-Slovenian meeting of Slovenians from abroad on Thursday, 4th of July, where the participants were welcomed by the Speaker Janko Veber, the Minister for Slovenians Abroad Tina Komel and the chair of the Commission for Slovenians Abroad Danijel Krivec. The all-day event was dedicated to the strengthening of ties with the Slovenian descendants living abroad and focused on a series of lectures on the life of the diaspora in Italy, Austria, Serbia, Croatia, and the Americas, and on -- wherever they lived in the world -- their, acting as "priceless ambassadors and promoters" of the home country.

INTERNATIONAL

The Young Bled Strategic Forum Conference

The Challenge Conference of the Young Bled Strategic Forum (Young BSF) brought together on June 27 – 28 to Ljubljana some 50 participants from across the world to identify some of the main challenges faced by the youth today. The conference, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Centre for European Perspective, was opened by the Secretary General of the Bled Strategic Forum, Ambassador Alain Brian Bergant.

The two-day event was the first stage of this year's Young BSF, held as part of the annual Bled Strategic Forum, the biggest international event in Slovenia. The participants



were defining the challenges in discussions dedicated to some of the most significant global changes that have seen a shift in power from governments and

media corporations to individuals and groups of individuals. The seven panels were focused on unemployment and the future of the youth in the E.U., digital

revolution and its effect on politics, as well as the many new and innovative approaches to doing business.

The conference hosted several high-level guests, who contributed to the debates held at the Ljubljana City Hall. Young BSF participants also attended on Friday morning a business breakfast addressed by His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex. For the first time, the Young BSF was stretched out over a longer period this year so as to enable all participants to, first, discuss different situations and define the challenges, then, put forward different ideas and proposals on how to go about the challenges on the table, and, finally, come up with possible directions and solutions. Over the summer, the participants can share and



Young BSF brought together some 50 participants from across the world to identify some of the main challenges faced by the youth today.

debate ideas on-line at www.bledstrategicforum.org/ideas, only to meet again in the lakeside resort of Bled on September 1, 2013, a day before the opening of this year's Bled Strategic Forum.

For further details about the Forum, please visit www.bledstrategicforum.org or follow it via Facebook or Twitter. Should you have any questions about the Forum, please do not hesitate to contact info.bsf@gov.si

TOURISM

GYLC Students Visit the Embassy of Slovenia

On Wednesday, July 10, more than 20 high-achieving students, aged 15 to 18, who are participating in a summer Global Young Leaders Conference (GYLC), visited the Slovenian Embassy as part of the conference program.

At the embassy, they were greeted by Ms. Nuška Zakrajšek, Culture and Public Diplomacy Officer, who presented to the group some general and fun facts about Slovenia and also its geographical, historical and political features. The Economic Counselor at the Embassy, Mr. Gorazd Renčelj, explained to the students how the Embassy operates as he also gave them a brief introduction to the world of diplomacy. The visit concluded with many questions



from the visitors and an interesting discussion.

The aim of the GYLC conference is to give students, who come from diverse ethnical and political backgrounds, a greater understanding of international relations, diplomacy,

international law, human rights, peace, security, economics and the role of the United Nations. They come to Washington from a variety of countries to take part in this program. which gives them a unique approach to leadership training.

Kobarid

Located at the confluence of the Nadiža and Soča rivers, in the far northwest of Slovenia near the Italian border, the town of Kobarid was inhabited as early as the Hallstatt Age. The nearby Tonocov Grad archaeological site contains remains of 5th-century Roman buildings and, later, Kobarid was an important stopover point on the Aquileia-Noricum route. In the 6th century, it was settled by Slavic tribes, but in the Middle Ages the settlement was owned by the Cividale Chapter.

In 1688, a devastating fire swept through the settlement. Turkish hordes prowled this region, and Napoleon's troops marched through these valleys in the 19th century. In memory of those times, a bridge spanning the Soča was named Napoleon's Bridge.



Napoleon's Bridge over the Soča river. (Source: LTO Sotočje; <http://www.dolina-soce.com/>).



Kobarid is dwarfed by towering mountains. (Source: www.slovenia.info)

Kobarid gained world recognition thanks to the greatest highland battle in human history, which took place during World War I. This region was the scene of the first swift, sudden military offensive today known by the German word "blitzkrieg". In October 1917, the Austrian and German

armies dealt a decisive blow to the Italian armed forces near Kobarid. In only a few days, the two armies pushed Italian troops deep into the Italian territory, as far as the Piave river, the Italian retreat was documented by Ernest Hemingway in his novel *A Farewell to Arms*.

The battle also took place on one of the biggest mountains of Julian Alps, Krn. The vicinity of Kobarid is dotted by telling traces of trenches and fortifications and an imposing tomb on the St. Antony's Hill, commemorating the Italian war casualties, reminding us of the ravages of war.

Today Kobarid is a pleasant town dwarfed by towering mountains offering many points of interest and places ideal for hiking, hunting, and fishing. Marked trails lead from Kobarid to the mountaintops of Stol, Matajur, and Krn and to the waterfall Kozjak. Invigorating waters of the Nadiža and Soča attract visitors in summer.



Exhibited artillery shell from World War I in front of Kobarid Museum.



Drežnica. (Source: www.slovenia.info; photographer: Paolo Petrigani).

In winter and in spring, the ski slopes of the Kanin mountain nearby offer excellent conditions for skiing, cross country skiers can discover the spaciousness of the Krn Mountain chain, while alpinists can try out their skills on frozen waterfalls. The range looming over Kobarid marks the fringe of Triglav National Park.

Underneath the overhanging rocks of the mighty Krn Mountain, about 4 miles to

the northeast of Kobarid, lies the village of Drežnica, surrounded by the neighboring villages of: Koseč, Drežniške Ravne, Jezerca, and Magozd. When a traveler drives up from the valley, a wonderful landscape spreads out in front of his eyes. Drežnica is interesting site for all those who not only enjoy long walks, and local alpine dairy farms, where local cheese and curd are made, but also for those

who have an admiration for ethnological objects or events, like the Drežnica Carnival. Most visitors are also fascinated by the mighty Drežnica church and 15th century frescoes in a small church near Koseč.

Not far away is a small mountain village Vrsno, where Slovenian romantic poet Simon Gregorčič was born. As a student, he began writing lyrical poetry, which was published in many Slovenian literary magazines (Slovenski glasnik, Zgodnja Danica, Zvon, Ljubljanski zvon).

His poems, such as the ode Soči (To the Soča River), were patriotic in nature, but he also wrote love poems, such as Kropiti te ne smem (I am not allowed to sprinkle you). His most important works were Človeka nikar (Not the Man), Ujetega ptiča tožba (The Caged Bird's Lament), Moj črni plašč (My Black Coat), Veseli pastir (The Happy Shepherd), Nazaj v planinski raj (Back to the Mountain Paradise).



Kozjak waterfall near Drežnica. (Source: www.slovenia.info; photographer: Bogdan Kladnik).

Xlab Wins the NASA World Wind Europe Challenge Competition

Xlab, IT Company from Ljubljana, Slovenia, won the NASA World Wind Europe Challenge Competition, organized by the NASA World Wind, the Politecnico di Milano, the Hungarian Association for Geo-information (HUNAGI) and Graphitech. The winning team was honored at the plenary awards session of the INSPIRE Conference 2013, which this year took place in Florence, Italy.

Eight teams from all over the world responded to the challenge, including the Xlab team, composed of four members: Vito Čuček, Marko Praprotnik, Marjan Šterk and Gregor Berginc, who was also the project leader. Taking up



the challenge to build a spatial data application, guided by the INSPIRE Directive using NASA's open source virtual globe technology, World Wind, Gaea+ was awarded first place in a competition of software applications addressing a number of issues: city infrastructure, scientific research, vehicle navigation, aviation planning, satellite industry, education, or other. Gaea+ also excels at simplicity of usage and has the possibility of simple adaptation to specific needs of various groups of users.

The developed tools have potential to be used by numerous American NGOs and GOs thus Xlab also had the opportunity to meet through the program potential clients from the E.U. and the U.S.

Xlab is an R&D company with a strong research background in the fields of distributed systems, GRID computing and peer-to-peer networks. More information about the company can be found at: <http://www.xlab.si/index-en.html>.

ANNOUNCEMENT

New Online Class Slovenian 101

In this course, you will be introduced to the Slovenian language in the easiest way possible. You will not learn all that much about grammar and rules, yet you'll be able to acquire the survival knowledge of the language, phrases, etc. From the very start, the course is constructed so that you can use it in everyday situations, with your friends, family and others. The benefit of this course is the link to Tegrity classes, which is found in every online lecture.

Tegrity classes are like the classroom experience, and have the possibility of rewind. You'll be able to hear every single thing multiple times, voiced by both a native speaker and a beginner American speaker. Therefore, you'll know whether you pronounce it adequately well for your stage of learning. The possibility of rewind is exactly what is missing when learning in the classroom.

Classes are offered at Cleveland State University (CSU)

under the name SLN 101. There are no particular days or hours that you need to do these classes. This makes it perfect for someone who can't come to CSU or Lakeland, while still enabling him/her to learn the language.

Classes are offered for credit points (3 CP) or continuing education. People from all around the U.S. can enroll in these classes, so enroll quickly.

Also, there are three normal classes offered at Lakeland Community College and CSU.



At Lakeland CC, there will be a beginners' class (also using the Tegrity program and a completely new way of learning – all the materials for the online class will be offered in the class also). The class (SLOV 1001) meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 to 7:50 p.m. and earns 4 CP.

Lakeland CC also offers an intermediate class, which will also use the new techniques. The class (SLOV 2001) meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 to 9:15 p.m. and earns 3 CP.

CSU's new campus, located just across the road

from Lakeland, offers also a third year of learning the Slovenian language (MLA 396). The class meets on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:00 to 7:50 p.m. and earns 3 CP, OR can be taken it as a continuing education course for just a fraction of the normal cost.

For more information, contact Luka Zibelnik, visiting lecturer from Slovenia at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at CSU. He can be reached by e-mail at: luka_zibelnik@yahoo.com

For a Tegrity class presentation of this course go to: <https://tegrity.com/y/17ky2>

TO DO LIST

SNPJ Slovenefest

Slovenefest, a three-day annual event held the second weekend of July at the SNPJ Recreation Center in the Borough of SNPJ, PA, brings together thousands to enjoy the ethnic food, music, culture and fun of Slovenia.

When: [July 12, 13 & 14, 2013](#)

Where: [The SNPJ Recreation Center, Borough of SNPJ, Enon Valley, Pennsylvania](#)

More information and detailed schedule of events at: <http://www.slovenefest.com/schedule>.



The Theremidi Orchestra WS in NY (Hiršfelder/Spacal/Sebjanic)

Theremidi Orchestra Women's Section is a part of Theremidi Orchestra (TO), formed in 2011 by the participants of theremini / theremidi workshop, organized by Ljudmila - Ljubljana Digital Media Lab. It is essentially an ambient noise orchestra, but its goal is not just the audio performance, but also activist, socially critical, and feminist do-it-yourself ethics. The live acts — indoors and outdoors — resemble experiment-seeking interventions, ongoing workshops or performances. The members of the Theremidi Orchestra WS in New York are Ida Hiršfelder, Saša Spacal and Robertina Sebjanic.

When: [Sunday, July 14, 2013, at 9 p.m.](#)

Where: [The \(OA\) Can Factory, 232 3rd Street, Ground Flr, Brooklyn, NY 11215](#)

More information is available at: http://www.share.dj/share/event_info.php?eventID=936

http://wiki.ljudmila.org/Theremidi_Orchestra

<http://www.3via.org/records/index.php?opt=item&id=68>

Polka! The Movie -- Film Presentation

Twin Cities Slovenians invite you to a special screening of Polka! The Movie -- a documentary about how Slovenians have had an impact on American music. Joe Valencic, President of the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum, wrote and narrated the film for TV Slovenia. On the occasion, he will share behind-the-scene stories on the making of the documentary.

When: [Sunday, July 14, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.](#)
 Where: [Roseville Library, 2180 Hamline Ave N, Roseville, MN 55113](#)
 More information: <http://www.twincitiesslovenians.org/>

Slovenia & Bach on Capitol Hill

Vibrant contemporary chamber music from Slovenia and by J.S. Bach, with guest soprano Patrice Michaels and pianist Jeffrey Chappell, along with composer Brina Jež and violinist Branko Brezavšček, special guests from Ljubljana.

When: [Wednesday, August 3 at 8 p.m., Friday, August 5 at 8 p.m., Sunday, August 7 at 8 p.m.](#)
 Where: [St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Capitol Hill at 3rd and A streets SE](#)
 Suggested donation: \$20, seniors \$17, students \$12. 16 and under free.
 More information: www.chcmf.org.



The Visual Identity of Slovenia – Design for a State exhibition

This touring exhibition presents the range of designs elaborated for the young state and its institutions by one of Slovenia's top designers, Miljenko Licul. Over the course of his artistic career, Licul has created a number of great works of visual culture that are closely related to the identity of the nation and the state, and are, by any means, the most recognizable visual images of Slovenia's identity to have been created over its 22-year history as a sovereign state.

Licul designed the banknotes for Slovenia's former currency – the tolar. Working together with Maja Licul and Janez Boljka, he also designed Slovenia's euro coins. Miljenko Licul is also responsible for the visual image of Slovenia's biometric passport, ID and health insurance cards, and driver's license. Licul also designed a series of postage stamps with ethnographical motifs.

When: [Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., closing in October 2013](#)
 Where: [Embassy of Slovenia, 2410 California Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20008](#)