



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 6, 2014, VOLUME 10, NUMBER 38

## University of Minnesota Alumni Reception at the Embassy

**On Friday, December 6, evening, the Embassy of Slovenia hosted the annual holiday reception for the Washington, DC, chapter of the University of Minnesota alumni. Around 35 guests were addressed by the local alumni association chair, Mr. Susan Heltemes, and by Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar, who in his remarks outlined the ties that link Slovenia with Minnesota.**



Ambassador Dr. Cerar with Ms. Susan Heltemes and Ms. Fran Perpich.

Nowadays, around 30,000 people of Slovenian descent reside in Minnesota, and the Slovenian community there is unwavering in its efforts to preserve their Slovenian culture, history, music and language. He stressed that most Slovenians who immigrated to Minnesota first settled in the Iron Range, but more recently have largely

moved into the Twin Cities metro area, and hence, many of them attended the University of Minnesota.

The ambassador also pointed out that the week of December 1 - 5 is celebrated worldwide as the week of the Slovene language. On the occasion of the World Festival of the Slovene Language, the



embassy displayed in its lobby novels, poems and stories in the Slovenian language, along with children's books, dictionaries, grammars, and books by Slovenian authors and poets translated into English.

Beside admiring Slovenian books and an exhibition of theater posters by Jože Domjan, the guests could enjoy Slovenian wine by producer Dveri - Pax, and delight in traditional Slovenian festive foods.

Group photo.



## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

# Finding Slovenia with ICDC



Presentation by Ms. Jacqueline Widmar Steward.

The Embassy of Slovenia in cooperation with the International Club of DC organized on Thursday, December 4, a public diplomacy event, which featured a presentation of "Finding Slovenia", a tourist guide, and

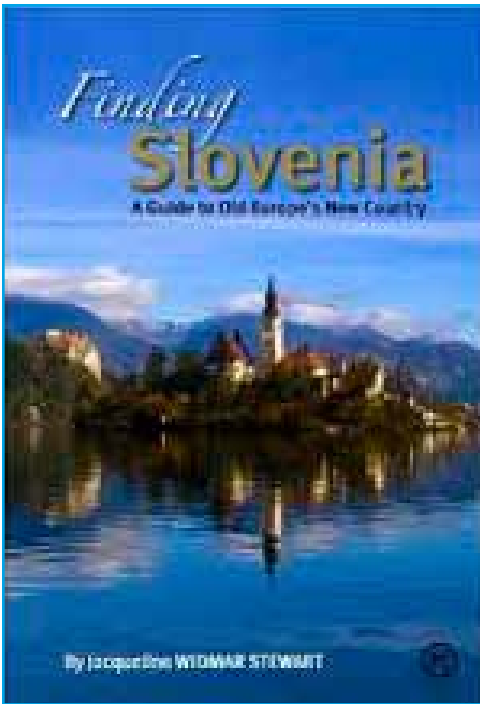
showcased Slovenian wines available in the U.S. market and the introduction of "Pocket Slovene", published on the occasion of the World Festival of The Slovene Language.

First, Ms. Jacqueline Widmar Steward presented to

some 70 guests her "Finding Slovenia", a tourist guide book, which portrays the natural and cultural history of the country. With full-color photographs, maps, charts and illustrations, the 200-page hardcover book was an award-winning Finalist in the National Best Books 2009 Awards Travel Category by USA Book News. Later in the evening, the writer also signed the books, made available for sale, all proceeds from which were to benefit the Slovenian American Educational Foundation.

Afterwards, Mr. Gorazd Renčelj, economic counsellor at the embassy presented the selection of Slovenian wines. He introduced some of the sorts that are distinctive of Slovenia due to its diverse geological composition. Served for the occasion were refošk/refosco by Ludvik Nazarij Glavina from the Primorsko coastal region and šipon by Verus from the





northeastern part of Slovenia. Next to these two brands, the presented selection included malvasia and cabernet sauvignon by Santomas; Merlot Capris by Vina Koper; Rebula/Ribolla Gialla, Pinot Grigio and Cabernet Sauvignon by Bagueri; Colliano Cuvee White and Colliano Ribolla Gialla Sauvignon by the Zanut Kocijančič wine cellar; Giocato and Duet by Edi Simčič; Pinot

Blanc by Ščurek; and Rose by Batič from Vipavska Valley.

Next to the presentation of Slovenian tourist and culinary features, the guests during the evening also learned about the recently published Pocket Slovene - a new pocket guide on the Slovene language for tourists, businessmen, and enthusiasts, which includes an introduction to the language,

alphabet, dictionary and useful phrases. The Žepna slovenščina guide of 125 pages was recently translated, besides English, also to 22 other languages by the Centre for Slovene as a Second Language on the occasion of the Days of the Slovene language, celebrated in more than 50 universities worldwide from December 1 to 5.



Showcase of Slovenian wines available in the U.S. market.



To order Pocket Slovene send an e-mail to: [knjigarna@ff.uni-lj.si](mailto:knjigarna@ff.uni-lj.si)

# Annual Meeting of the Society for Slovene Studies in Texas

The Society for Slovene Studies (SSS), an organization of international scholars interested in Slovenia, had its annual meeting at the ASEES (Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies) convention November 20-23, 2014 in San Antonio, Texas. One of the important topics discussed at the meeting was the Slovene Research Initiative (SRI), established at Ohio State University (Columbus, Ohio) with the collaboration of the Society for Slovene Studies and the Scientific Research Center in Ljubljana. In Spring of 2014, the first scholar from Slovenia, sponsored by the SRI, Dr. Luka Vidmar, researched the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the OSU, and in Fall of 2014, Dr. Gregor Kranjc delivered the SRI inaugural lecture "The Lessons and Legacies of World War II Slovene Collaboration." Also discussed was eligibility of American and Slovenian scholars, researching topics in social sciences, humanities and arts, related to Slovenia, and financial assistance for their work. For more information about the SRI visit: <http://cmrs.osu.edu/rcmss/>

Beside their annual meeting, the SSS members participated in several convention panels as paper presenters, discussants and chairs. Among these, two were dealing exclusively with Slovene themes. In the Young Scholars Panel, sponsored by the SSS, and titled "Finding Slovenia: Folktale Revival,



Literacy Production and Confronting Past Injustices", two graduate students, last year's recipients of the Rado Lenček Award, presented their papers: Veronika Muskhelli (University of Washington) and Olivia Frances Hellwell (University of Nottingham, U.K.). Their papers, respectively "Folk story Revival in Slovenia" and "Production, Promotions and Polysystem: Domestic vs. Translated Literature in Slovenia" were discussed by Dr. Veronika Aplenc, University of Pennsylvania. The Senior Panel, titled "Scholarly Disciplines Regarding Slovenes and Slovenia: Continuity and Change...", featured three speakers: Robert Minnich (University of Bergen, Norway) with the paper "A peasant, citizen and villager

of Žetale - reflections over the transformation of collective identity among Haložani between 1974 and 2006"; Leopoldina Plut-Pregelj (University of Maryland) with the paper "Education in Slovenia after Joining the European Union: A Cause for Pride and Concern" and Peter Vodopivec (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana) with the paper "The Conflicting Politics in History and Memory in Slovenia since 1990". The papers were discussed by Maria Todorova (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) and Patrick Patterson (University of California, San Diego). For more information about the SSS see its website: [www.slovenestudies.com](http://www.slovenestudies.com).



# Slovenian Literature Presented at Guadalajara Book Fair

This past week, the FIL (Feria Internacional del Libro, or International Book Fair) in Guadalajara, Mexico, attracted almost a million people, including three Slovenian writers: Mitja Čander, Gabriela Babnik, and Aleš Šteger, who came to Guadalajara from Slovenia for the occasion. Books by other Slovenian authors: Mojca Kumerdej, Jani Virk, Andrej Blatnik, Drago Jančar, Feri Lainšček, Marko Sosič, and Suzana Tratnik were also presented at the fair.

The first presentation in Guadalajara, including participation by all three Slovenes, took place in the writer's guild (SOGEM) with nearly 70 persons in attendance. Read partly in Slovene, partly in English and partly in Spanish were Šteger's poems and Babnik's prose, whereas Mitja Čander discussed the Slovenian cultural scene.

On Wednesday, within the frame of the FIL, Mitja Čander took



Mitja Čander, Gabrijela Babnik and Aleš Šteger.

part in a roundtable with writers from former Yugoslav Republics of Croatia and Serbia, discussing the literature in times after the disaggregation of Yugoslavia. In a separate venue, Gabriela Babnik gave a lecture on her writings to scholars in a nearby Preparatory School.

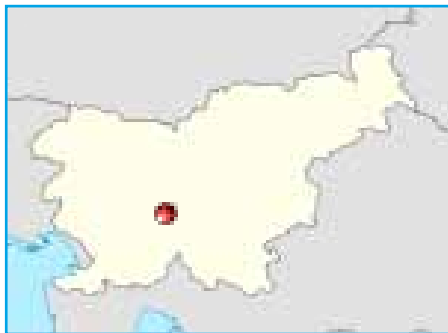
On Thursday, also within the FIL, Aleš Šteger read with great success his poems in

Slovene and in Spanish in two different sessions. In one, taking place in the distinguished room of Tequila Herradura, Šteger not only read the poems in both languages but also explained why he decided to write in both of them. Already on November 26, in Ciudad de Mexico, near the main square Zócalo, Šteger had held another session of his project *Written on the Site*, in which he in only 12 hours wrote a book inspired by the events around him, which at the time also included protests in Mexico's capital.

On their way to Guadalajara, all three Slovenian writers stopped in Mexico City, where honorary consul, Ariel Lopez, hosted for them a reception on the premises of the International House Mexico. Moreover, in Guadalajara, they were assisted by the Alejandro Diaz, former Ambassador of Mexico to the Republic of Slovenia.



# Rakitna



Rakitna, a karst plateau, south of the capital Ljubljana, is known for its soothing climate created by the mixing of the Mediterranean and alpine air streams. The name derives from the Slovene common noun rakita 'willow', thus referring to the local vegetation, unique due to the distinct climate. The plateau includes the hamlets of Na Klancu, Hudi Konec, Hrib, Boršt, Nakličev Konec, Podgora, Jezero, Novaki, Žobov Grič, Pri Cajzli, and Zakotkar. The biggest village, Rakitna, which gives the plateau its name, was first recorded in 1265 as Raqitina, but the settlement already existed along the route of the Roman road from Cerknica to Emona, when locals helped to build the still visible barrier



Rakitna village.

known as the "pagan wall" to protect the road.

The local parish church, dedicated to the Holy Cross, was built in the 17th century on the site of an earlier building, mentioned in written documents dating to 1420. The year 1677 is carved into the door frame of the church. The main altar and the side altar dedicated to Saint Martin are said to have been

brought from Bistra; both are marble artworks dating to the end of the 17th century. The main altar painting is the work of Henrika Langus (1836–1876).

The distinct climate in Rakitna contributed to the foundation of the Rakitna Youth Climatic Health Resort, specialized to cure respiratory diseases and the only climate resort in Slovenia not located in the high mountains. One of the most popular places in Rakitna is the artificial lake, which is surrounded by many walking and biking paths, worth visiting, especially for visitors who seek peace or recreation in nature. The lake is also a popular spot for bathing and fishing. There is a hotel next to the lake, built in 2010, with a modern design which blends in with its surroundings.



Rakitna lake.

**Slovenian film CLASS ENEMY at the AFI–EU Film Festival**

Now in its 27th year, the AFI European Union Film Showcase continues its tradition of bringing the best in European cinema to Washington audiences. This year's selection of more than 50 films includes award-winners, international festival favorites, local box-office hits and debut works by promising new talents, plus many countries' official Oscar® submissions for Best Foreign Language Film, including Slovenia's 2013 Oscar® Selection, Class Enemy (Razredni sovražnik).

When: [Sunday, December 21 at 9:45 a.m.](#)

Where: [AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, 8633 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910](#)

More information: <http://www.afi.com/silver/eushowcase/>

**GRAMATIK in NYC**

Gramatik, an electronic artist from Portorož, Slovenia, is wrapping up the #GramatikLYM tour with the biggest NYC show yet. His current genre falls under a mixture of hip-hop, glitch, electro, and dubstep.

When: [January 23 and 24, 2015](#)

Where: [Best Buy Theater, 1515 Broadway, New York City, NY 10036](#)

More information: <http://www.gramatik.net/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MENTLjubljana/photos/a.234000130134677.1073741828.232984166902940/305337683000921/?type=1&theater>

**PSALMS IN NEW YORK performed by CARMINA SLOVENICA**

"Chorus can take over from us and experience for us our innermost and most spontaneous feelings and attitudes, inclusive of crying and laughing." Žižek.

Choregie project by Karmina Šilec.

When: [January 8–11, 2015](#)

Where: [St. Ann's Warehouse, 29 Jay Street, Brooklyn 11201](#) -- just east of the Manhattan Bridge (aka DUMBO) <http://www.stannswarehouse.org/directions.php>

More information: [http://www.stannswarehouse.org/current\\_season.php?show\\_id=100](http://www.stannswarehouse.org/current_season.php?show_id=100)

[http://www.stannswarehouse.org/current\\_season.php?show\\_id=100](http://www.stannswarehouse.org/current_season.php?show_id=100)

Watch the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qshuAZwC4Kw>