On March 22, 2014, St. Joseph’s Church in Bethlehem, PA, celebrated a mass in honor of its patron, St. Joseph, and its 100th year anniversary. The church was founded in 1914 by the Slovenes who immigrated to America mostly from the Prekmurje region of present day Slovenia. Their memories of the churches of Prekmurje took shape in the stained glass windows of the church that commemorate the parishes of Prekmurje and give St. Joseph’s a very unique Slovenian character.

Over the years, the parish grew and a school was added in 1926 to educate the children in their ethnic customs. Many religious festivities, dinners and parades took place at St. Joseph’s thus providing a fortress of not only faith but also Slovenian culture and identity.

In recent years members of St. Joseph’s helped to establish the sister city relationship between Bethlehem and Murska Sobota in Slovenia. Every year the Slovene community raises the Slovenia flag at city center in Bethlehem in honor of Slovenia’s independence. The church became the centerpiece of this union since all festivities...
and activities were prefaced by Mass at St. Joseph’s Church, thus giving it the status of a Slovenian Shrine.

On May 29, 2008, the parish received a formal decree of suppression from the Diocese of Allentown, announcing that the parish would no longer exist. At the end of July the same year, an activist group of parishioners appealed to the Congregation for the Clergy in the Vatican, requesting a reversal of the suppression decree. The commitment and dedication of the leaders and parishioners put forth brought a success on January 5, 2011, when the petitioners received a decree from the Vatican that the church must remain open to the faithful for divine worship. However, due to the bishop’s decree the church remains open only for the feast of its namesake and funerals.

Magnificent Church of St. Joseph in Bethlehem, PA in the East Fifth Street in Bethlehem, PA.

From left: Mayor of Bethlehem Bob Donchez, Consul General Jure Žmauc and Mr. Žmauc, Mayor of Murska Sobota Anton Štihec and Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar attending the mass.

Stained glass window titled “Slovenska deca” translating to Slovenian children. It represented the brothers and sisters of the parishioners who were not able to come to Bethlehem.

The cornerstone of St. Joseph’s Church says: R.K. SLOV. CERKEV SV. JOZefa – 1914 (Roman Catholic Slovenian Church of St. Joseph – 1914)
Thus St. Joseph’s Slovenian church in Bethlehem, PA, opened its doors only for the third time on Saturday since the church has been shuttered in 2008 along with 57 other churches in the Diocese of Allentown. The service, presided over by Pastor Robert J. Biszek of the Holy Infancy Church in Bethlehem, PA, and concelebrated by Fr. Krizolog Cimerman of the Slovenian St. Cyril’s Church in New York City, Father Milan Dimic from Notre Dame Church in Easton, CT, and Deacon Richard Gergar drew several hundred people, many of them coming from as far as New York and Cleveland.

The ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Božo Cerar, was a guest at the service at the invitation of Mr. Stephen Antalics, one of the founders of the Bethlehem and Murska Sobota Sister-City Association and a leading advocate for reopening of the church. Consul General of Slovenia in Cleveland Mr. Jure Žmauc, Congressman Charles Dent (R), Pennsylvania State Senator Lisa Boscola, State Representative Steve Samuelson, Mayor of Bethlehem Mr. Robert Donchez, and Mr. Anton Štihec, Mayor of Murska Sobota, Bethlehem’s sister city, were also in attendance and joined the celebratory luncheon after the mass at the Lehigh University Mountaintop campus. At the reception held at the Iacocca Hall at Lehigh University’s Mountaintop Campus, Ambassador Dr. Cerar expressed his support to the community and urged to preserve the church for future generations.
While visiting Bethlehem, PA, Ambassador Dr Cerar, Mayor Štihec and members of Bethlehem - Murska Sobota Sister City Association on Saturday afternoon joined faculty and students of the Lehigh University as well as their families, Martindale alumni, and friends of the Martindale Center for the annual Martindale Student Associate Induction Reception and Dinner. At the event, the new cohort of Martindale Student Associates was welcomed and inducted, and the work of the senior cohort that visited Slovenia in May 2013 was celebrated.

Since 1980, the Martindale Student Associates Program at the Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA, has enabled a select group of Lehigh juniors and seniors to actively explore global business and economic issues. In order to extend the scope of learning beyond the pages of textbooks and journals, each year a new group of junior-year Student Associates begins to explore a particular topic about a country outside the United States. To gain first-hand experience of the society under study, the students take part in an extensive educational field trip organized by their faculty advisors in conjunction with faculty from other disciplines.

Last year, a group of students and professors traveled to Slovenia to gain a firsthand experience through travel and interviews and meetings with decision makers, distinguished executives, and scholars as well by visiting various governmental and non-governmental organizations in the country. While in Slovenia, the seniors did research that led to writing papers about business or economic issues in Slovenia. The students’ papers will be published in Perspectives on Business and Economics, the undergraduate journal of the Martindale Center, in November 2014.

Martindale Student Associates 2014 visited, studied and wrote about Slovenia.

Remarks by the Ambassador.
Law Students from Ljubljana at the Embassy

Each year in March, a group of law students from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, come to an educational visit to the United States. Within their trip, they visit various important institutions in New York City and Washington, DC. On Tuesday, March 25, 2014, a group of 30 students, accompanied by Professor of Economics, International Banking and International Economic Relations, Franjo Štiblar, PhD, and Professor of Roman Law, Janez Krajnc, PhD, visited the Slovenian Embassy.

At the embassy, the group was greeted by Deputy Chief of Mission Ondina Blokar Drobič, who outlined basic features of work in the field of diplomacy, whereas the embassy staff acquainted the students with some facts about the mission of the embassy and its range of activities. After the welcoming remarks, the students and the embassy staff started a long discussion about the Slovenian and American foreign policy and the economic cooperation between the two countries.

During their stay in the nation's capital, in addition to visiting the Slovenian Embassy, the group also visited the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Library of Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Department of State as well as the U.S. Congress, where they met Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, who is of Slovenian ancestry.

Prior to their visit to Washington, the group visited in New York City the United Nations HQ and the Slovenian mission to the U.N., the New York Criminal Court, the New York State Supreme Court’s Appellate Division and its Civil Branch, the law firm Seward & Kissel, LLP, and the U.S. Eastern District court of New York. They also met with New York State Judge and Surrogate Frank J. LaBuda, who explained to the students the American legal system. (Jure Mrakič)
On Friday, March 21, 2014, the Embassy of France in Washington hosted a cultural and promotional event, La Grande Fête de la Francophonie. La Grande Fête was the highlight of the 14th annual Francophonie Cultural Festival, which is taking place in Washington, this year from March 1 until April 15. In the spring of every year, the D.C. Francophonie Festival celebrates the diversity and richness of the French language and francophone communities around the world through a series of cultural events and outreach programs presented in the U.S. capital’s region.

With sold-out tickets and over 2000 visitors, La Grande Fête de la Francophonie was the most eagerly anticipated and attended event of the month of Francophonie. More than 35 embassies and other organizations joined to present their culture and cuisine. The evening was accompanied by music from the French-speaking world. This year’s featured artists included Benin’s Jomion and the Uklos, and France’s post-punk, cold wave, electro, surf rockers La Femme.

Slovenia traditionally also participates in the event due to its status as an observer at the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF - Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie). Despite the fact that Slovenia is not a French-speaking country, our embassy recorded a large number of visitors at the presentation of our tourist attractions and cultural characteristics. The visitors were invited to sample Slovenian traditional foods, and a lot of their attention and admiration was also devoted to the Slovenian national costume. (Hana Šanca)
Slovenian hockey star Anže Kopitar, L.A. Kings center, played Washington Capitals on March 25. Kopitar scored in the shootout next to Jeff Carter, and led the Los Angeles Kings to beat the Washington Capitals 5-4 on Tuesday night with the fourth consecutive win. L.A. Kings won over the Capitals yet last week at the Staples Center and are at the moment holding sixth place in the Western Conference with 90 points, 42 wins, 25 losses and 6 losses after overtime.

Kopitar played junior hockey for his hometown team HK Acroni Jesenice before moving to Sweden at age 16 to play in a more competitive league. Kopitar became the first Slovenian to play in the NHL in 2006 and has spent his entire career with the Kings, the team he won the Stanley Cup championship with in 2012. In February, Kopitar joined the Slovenian men’s ice hockey team at the Winter Olympics. The team was stopped by the later silver-medal Swedish team in the quarter-finals.

Goran Dragić, Slovenian basketball player, visited Washington, DC, on Wednesday, March 26, as his team Phoenix Suns played against Washington Wizards. Slovenia’s biggest NBA star was among the leading scorers of the game, winding up with 25 points, six assists and seven rebounds, helping Phoenix beat the Wizards 99-93.

Goran Dragić began his professional career in 2003 at the age of 17 in 2003 with Ilirija Ljubljana. In 2007, he joined the Slovenian League, Adriatic League and Euroleague club Olimpija Ljubljana, where he played for one year, winning the Slovenian League championship. In 2008, he signed with the Phoenix Suns and joined the NBA. In 2011, he was traded to the Houston Rockets; however, point-guard Dragić returned to Phoenix Suns in 2012, signing a four-year contract as the team’s first playmaker.
On Monday, March 24, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce hosted in Washington the event »Central Europe: Innovative and Open for Business«, focusing on the wide range of commercial opportunities in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, the region’s strengths in innovation as well as its priorities for transatlantic trade and investment.

The event highlighted Slovenia as the regional leader in terms of R&D intensity (according to the most recent OECD and E.U. studies), offering a wide network of scientific research institutes covering a broad spectrum of basic and applied research for investors to tap into, along with attractive incentives for investment in R&D. Slovenia was represented at the event by the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Slovenian Embassy in Washington, Mrs Ondina Blokar Drobič.

Slovenia in Central Europe: Innovative and Open for Business

A plaque was unveiled in the village of Andraž near Polzela on Saturday to commemorate the crew of a U.S. bomber that crashed there in WWII. The B-17 was on its way from a military base in Italy to bomb a Steyer plant in Carinthia, Austria, which made equipment for the Nazi forces.

The bomber, dubbed Dark Eyes, was manned by ten members of the U.S. 15th Air Force. Eight were killed in the crash on March 19, 1944, while the other two were captured by the Germans occupying Slovenian territory and spent the rest of the war in POW camps.

The wing-shaped plaque was unveiled by Slovenian Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec and U.S. Ambassador Joseph Mussomeli, as well as Chief of General Staff, Maj. Gen. Dobran Božič. Minister Erjavec outlined in his keynote that Slovenians rescued hundreds of crashed allied aviators during World War II. “Today’s event is a step in the raising of awareness of what peace and security mean,” said the foreign minister. Ambassador Mussomeli thanked for the commemoration, adding that the families of the crew will be very proud of the plaque. (Source: STA)
Črnomelj

Črnomelj lies in the far southeast of Slovenia in a region called Bela krajina (White Region), stretching between the Gorjanci and Kočevski rog mountain ranges and the river Kolpa. Vineyard-covered hills and the warm Kolpa give this region a special touch.

The old town center of Črnomelj, situated on a narrow outcrop high above the confluence of the rivers Lahinja and Dobličica, flourished in medieval times. The town was first mentioned in written sources in 1228 under the name of Schirnomel, and was granted town rights in 1407. Črnomelj, with some more than 6,000 inhabitants, is today the largest town in Bela krajina.

The main square, Trg svobode (Liberty Square), is enclosed between a medieval castle, once an outpost of the German Knights Templar, and the building of the former savings and loan bank. The Municipal Museum Collection Črnomelj tells the history of Črnomelj in the permanent exhibition “Črnomelj in the Winds of Millennia.” The parish center with its archaeological heritage located next to St. Peter’s parish church and the gothic Church of the Holy Spirit are a testament to the town’s long history.

The Church of the Holy Spirit dates back to the 15th century and is located on ancient grounds, which were inhabited during the Neolithic Period. After a complete renovation, the church reopened in 2007 as a cultural venue hosting art exhibitions, choirs, chamber music and weddings. Nearby stands the Primožič House, a ground-floor residential building dating from the 19th century. In Malerič house, one can view a wide variety of items, which are...
interesting for both locals and tourists: Bela Krajina “ pisanice” (decorated Easter eggs) and embroidery, “ drsanice”, various wickerwork products, paper flowers, “ svitki”, “ gudalo” (earthenware contrabass), other earthenware.

Visitors of Črnomelj can also enjoy Črnomaljska klet, a wine-tasting cellar with premium regional wines. Many also visit the impressive monument in remembrance of those killed in Second World War at Griček hill. Bela krajina was the cradle of partisan resistance and memorial plaques on many buildings all around Črnomelj bear witness to the importance of the town in that period. The Museum of Brown Coal Mine Kanižarica located near Črnomelj tells the story of the town’s industrial past. More information about Črnomelj is available at www. belakrajina.si.

On the top picture is a bridge over Dobličica river and bellow the Črnomelj castle. (Photo credit: Robert Glazer)

ANNOUNCEMENT

E.U. Open House -- Volunteers Needed

On May 10, 2014, diplomatic representations of Member States of the E.U. and the E.U. Delegation to the United States in Washington will celebrate Europe Day by organizing the eight annual E.U. Open House day.

The embassies of all 28 member countries and the E.U. Delegation will open their doors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. showcasing their art, culture, and food, and introducing the European Union to the public. Last year, over 3400 people visited the Slovenian embassy, and this year even more visitors are expected.

Since the event has gained extreme popularity and success, we are looking for volunteers to help us welcome the guests and to direct visitors to the embassy at the nearby bus stop.

To register and for more information, please contact nuska.zakrajsek@gov.si. Please sign up by April 25, 2014.

Orientation and training session for first time volunteers will be held at the Embassy of Slovenia on Thursday, May 8 at 5:30 p.m.
**Ana Kučan: Lanscape as Playscape**

Ana Kučan, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, will discuss the work of Studio AKKA, which is dedicated to the public domain. The studio designs landscapes to be built with fairly low budgets. Its effort is oriented toward creation of an open work. AKKA is equally interested in how landscapes look as in how they function; therefore, landscapes are conceived within and formed by three theoretical issues: the social construction of nature, the idea of play, and the character of the site. The method is simple and straightforward: it is the discipline of a method, applied repetitively each time but always leading to different, non-repetitive results, because it is always placed in different contexts. In landscape design, content, form and function are interconnected in a more complex way than in any other visual discipline, because it inevitably deals with the mutability and ineffability of nature. It is precisely nature or its representations as a cultural and aesthetic construct that is the most defining factor of AKKA’s work. Studio AKKA was founded in 2006 by Ana Kučan and Luka Javornik. Organized by AIANY Architecture Dialogue Committee and co-sponsored by ASLANY.

When: Wednesday, April 6, 2014 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Where: The Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Place, NY, NY 10012
Admission: Free for AIA and ASLA members; $10 for non-members

**AMOUR COURTOIS: Performance Workshop as part of CRYSTAL C / Jaša**

AMOUR COURTOIS is an intense performance workshop, held by the artist Jaša, for up to 20 performers who would like to experience an impassioned process of preparation and realization of a group performance. Participants will be rehearsing in preparation of the performance at the opening of Crystal C, a monumental art installation at Pioneer Works Center for Art and Innovation in Brooklyn, NY. Workshops, starting April 1st, 2014 (exact dates will be confirmed), will culminate in a performance as part of the opening event of artist’s project on April 12.

JAŠA (Mrevlje-Pollak, 1978, Ljubljana) frequently works in collaboration: with Crash in Progress from 1999–2005 (Giorgio Andreotta Caló, Simone Settimo, Peter Furlan & Martina de Lugnani), and recently with Kalu, Junzi, Nina Vidrih, Mark Požlep, Jyrki Riekki, and Meta Grgurevič. He lives and works in Ljubljana, Venice and New York. He works with On Stellar Rays Gallery (New York) and Rosa Lux /WEARE.

More information: [http://www.crystal-c.org/open-call/](http://www.crystal-c.org/open-call/)

**SUA NYC – Butarice Workshop**

The Slovenian Union of America’s branch in New York City is organizing a workshop, where one can learn how to make »butarice«. Thereby, the SUA follows a long-standing Easter tradition in Slovenia: the yearly making of butare (literally “bundles”), where sprigs and branches of local greenery are bound up with colored ribbons. Whether you have made a butara before or this is your first try, all are welcome. All the materials will be on hand; however, if you wish to bring some fresh evergreens or ribbons to personalize your butarica, please do!

When: Saturday, April 5, and Sunday, April 6, 2014, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Where: St. Cyril’s Church, 62 St. Mark’s Place, New York, NY
More information: Tanya Vajk, President of the Slovenian Union of America--New York City, Branch 93 at vajkusa@aol.com
Jasmina Cibic: Fruits of Our Land

The film Fruits of Our Land was shot specifically for For Our Economy and Culture, Jasmina Cibic’s project for the Slovenian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennial, which explored issues around national representation and its framing. The film presents a recreation of a 1957 parliamentary debate between politicians, architects and art historians, set up to decide which artworks might be suitable (i.e., nationally representative enough) to ‘decorate’ the newly built People’s Assembly. The exhibit is made possible with the support by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia.

When: April 10 – May 11, 2014
Opening: Thursday, April 10 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Gallery hours: Wednesday – Saturday from 11:00 a.m – 6:00 p.m., Sunday from 12 noon – 6:00 p.m., and by appointment
Where: LMAKprojects, 139 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002

Dialogues Concert – Music by Slovene and American Composers

The Koper Music School of Slovenia and CITE Arts NY will present a collaborative concert featuring Slovene and American composers. The concert will take place both in New York and Koper, during the week of April 8 through April 12, 2014, as part of Koper Music School’s Biennale Contemporary Music Festival, curated by Tatjana Jercog. The New York portion of the concert will take place at The Firehouse Space -- one of the new music venues in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. It will feature three of Slovenia’s new music composers: Uroš Rojko, Larisa Vrhunc, and Matej Bonin. Included in the program will be three American composers: Stuart Diamond, Demetrius Spaneas, and Sandra Sprecher.

When: Saturday, April 12, 2014 at 8:00 p.m.
Where: The Firehouse Space, 246 Frost Ave. Brooklyn, New York 11211
For more information contact: Stuart Diamond, CITE ARTS at studiamond@gmail.com, tel: (917) 861-1937.

Concert by Pianist Irena Koblar

The young Slovenian pianist will play works by Scarlatti, Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms.

When: Sunday, April 13, 2014 at 3:00 p.m.
Where: McEvoy Auditorium, Smithsonian American Art Museum - Smithsonian Institution, Eighth and F streets, NW, Washington, DC
Free.
More information: http://americanart.si.edu/

Navihanke Show at St. Mary’s

Navihanke, the award-winning, all-girl polka band, comes to St. Mary’s Auditorium, Holmes Ave., for a concert and dance.

When: Wednesday, April 23 at 7:00 p.m.
Where: 15519 Holmes Ave, Cleveland, OH 44110
Tickets are $15 each at the door or at the Polka Hall of Fame, 605 East 222nd in Euclid (members $12). Order ahead: (216) 261-3263 or polkashop@aol.com.