



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NEWSLETTER

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Farewell to Deputy Chief of Mission Ondina Blokar Drobič

Ms. Ondina Blokar Drobič, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Slovenia, ended her post in Washington, DC, at the end of August.

Ms. Blokar Drobič undoubtedly stood out among her peers in the diplomatic corps for the quality of her insights, her hard work, her numerous talents and skills, great ideas and creative thinking. Throughout her four years as Deputy Chief of Mission, she devotedly nurtured the U.S.-Slovenia partnership, was active in public diplomacy, cultural and press affairs, was engaged with the Slovenian community members and organizations in the U.S. and built on a dialogue with

honorary consuls. She offered consular assistance to Slovenian citizens when needed and, next to political and legal affairs, with great interest covered the economic and trade portfolio for some time. She substantially broadened the network of the embassy's contacts and contributed to the promotion of Slovenia in the U.S., built on the rapport with the U.S. administration, think-tanks, nongovernmental organizations, schools and universities. Moreover, throughout the past four years, she mentored around 40 interns. As her coworkers, we hold her in high regard for her dedicated work, her spirit of devotion and diligence, which made important contributions to



the development of Slovenia-U.S. relations.

She was an indispensable member of our team, known both for her professionalism and hard work, and, most importantly, to all of us she was a great colleague and friend. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors and greater achievements as she begins a new, challenging and demanding chapter of her professional career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ljubljana.



Her previous assignments include: attaché at the Consulate General of the Republic of Slovenia in Trieste, Italy, Counselor to the Minister at the International Law Department

at Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Secretary and Legal Adviser to the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations. Prior to her post in Washington, DC, she served

as Head of International Law Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, and Director General for International Law and Protection of Interests within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

SLOVENIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN THE U.S.

90 years of Educational and Dramatic Club Slovenia in San Francisco

Educational and Dramatic Club Slovenia (Izobraževalni in dramski klub Slovenija) was organized on October 15, 1922, and incorporated in May 1924 with the intent of eventually purchasing a Slovenian meeting hall. The progress of Club Slovenia was attributed to Lodge Tabor Slovanov, S.N.P.J. Lodge 304, which financially backed the new organization.

Club Slovenia's first endeavor was a play, "Krčmar pri Zvitem Rogu" ("The Innkeeper at the Bent Horn"), presented on January 20, 1923. Further inspired by this Slovene cultural activity, action was taken to organize a Slovenian Library. The first books were donated by the Club founders, Andrew Lekšan and Anthony Kastelic. With monies realized from the play and from the many dances held, and with the help of S.N.P.J. Lodge 304, more books were purchased in Slovene and English along with subscriptions to daily and weekly newspapers. By 1930, the Library boasted a total of 2,000 volumes.

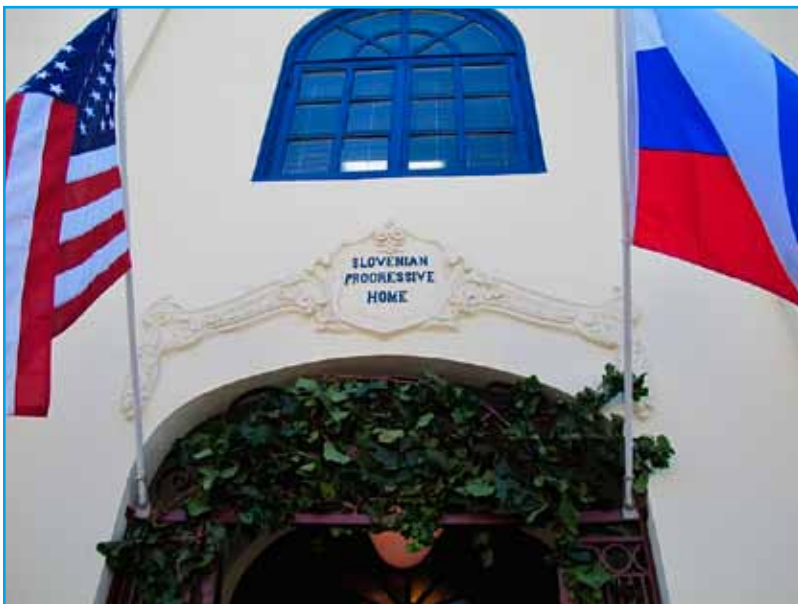
A Slovenian meeting hall was finally purchased in 1927 on Potrero Hill in San Francisco and fondly called "Kranjski Hrib" (Carniolian Hill) and activities at

the hall soon took hold. Plays, concerts, minstrel shows in Slovenian and English were held and a men's chorus was established. Club Slovenia had their first Christmas party for the young children in December 1927.

Club Slovenia organized a sports club, namely a baseball team, for the benefit of the young people. In addition to organizing a youth baseball team, Club Slovenia also furnished athletic equipment to be used in the Club's large meeting hall by young adults, including parallel bars, gymnastic horses, and rings. In November 1930, the club presented an athletic exhibition and invited the athletic club from the University of California at Berkeley. The

exhibition motivated more young adults to join the Club's athletic group.

Club Slovenia continues to promote and preserve its Slovenian heritage. A yearly Grape Festival (Vinska Trgatev), held in the fall, is a happy celebration of Slovenian food, music and dance, which draws members and friends throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. The Club continues to sponsor performances by Slovenian instrumental and vocal groups and conducts Slovenian language classes and a Slovenian study group. Several yearly potlucks are held where guest Slovenes present enjoyable and educational programs to the Club's membership.



Slovenian progressive home in San Francisco.

This year's Grape Festival celebrates the Club's 90th anniversary. On Sunday, September 28, members and friends of Club Slovenia will gather at the venerable Slovenian Hall to enjoy a bountiful buffet of prekajena rebra (smoked ribs), kranjske klobase (Carniolian sausage), piščanec (chicken), kisló zelje (sauerkraut), potatoes, salad, bread, dessert, and wine, all cooked and prepared by members. (By Dave McCormick, President of Club Slovenia)



Grape festival 2013.

CULTURE

Karpotrotter at the 2014 Rural Route Film Festival in NY



A scene from the movie Karpotrotter.

This year, the 10th annual Route Film Festival, which took place August 8 – 10 at the Museum of Moving Image in New York, presented a Slovenian movie, Karpotrotter, directed by a young director from Maribor. Matjaž Ivanišin.

Karpotrotter is a road movie about time, memory and place, as

well as tribute to the Slovenian cinematographer and film director Karpo Godina, who is one of the most important representatives of the Yugoslav cinematic movement, "Black Wave", which between years 1964 and 1973 produced numerous socio-critical films. During that time, Godina made his own road-trip movie

throughout various villages in Yugoslavia, which, however, was never completed.

The director Matjaž Ivanišin 40 years later retraced the footsteps of director Karpo Godina through the same small villages in the rural countryside across the former Yugoslavia and decided to make his own movie that retakes some of Godina's footages and mixes it with his own techniques. Based on Godina's 8 mm footage from this journey, Ivanišin connects this material with landscape footage from his current road trip, and interviews numerous citizens who recall Godina's visit decades earlier.

The movie Karpotrotter was already hosted earlier this year in New York at the Tribeca Film Festival and was recently a highlight of this year's Semi-Feature/New Presentation series at Rotterdam.

100th Anniversary of Slovenian National Home at St. Clair's

The year 2014 marks the Centennial Year of the Slovenian National Home Organization in Cleveland, OH, and the 90th anniversary of the hall. The organization was founded by Slovenian immigrants who came to the Cleveland area and were determined to promote the national, fraternal, cultural and educational efforts of Slovenes in the U.S. Further, the Slovenian National Home itself was built in 1924 by people of Slovenian descent as a gathering place for meetings and celebrations.

For the next two decades, the Slovenian National Home was the focus of cultural and social life on St. Clair Avenue. A Slovenian museum was established and Slovenian school was held where people could learn reading and writing the Slovenian language. Most of the meetings were held there as well. Music and drama were an important part of the hall with a play, concert, or opera taking place almost every



100th anniversary celebration.

Sunday. The singing groups Zarja, Glasbena Matica, and Korotan performed many memorable concerts and operettas at the Slovenian National Home. The dances continued throughout the era of the Second World War when bandleaders like Pete Smick and Pete Sokach performed. In later decades, musicians such

as Eddie Habat, Johnny Vadnal, Kenny Bass, Art Perko and Al Tercek frequently entertained.

In 1962, Tony Petkovsek organized the first of many Thanksgiving polka events held at the Slovenian National Home with crowds of 2000 attending. Polka music and community activities took a turn toward the youth movement, the button box accordion sound, and the influx of the European style music. In 1970, two famous ensembles from Slovenia, Avsenik and Slak, performed there and left their mark on the Slovenian community. The Board of Directors of the Slovenian National Home remained committed to the preservation and vitality of the historic hall. In April of 1985, a city ordinance designated the building as a Cleveland Landmark.

Throughout the following decades, the complex underwent many renovations. Today, the two halls accommodate concerts,



Address by Consul General Jurček Žmauc. (Photos: Phil Hrvatin)

plays, dance performances, banquets, birthday and anniversary celebrations, and wedding receptions.

A grand celebration commemorating these milestones occurred Saturday, August 16, 2014. The festivities began with a tour of the Slovenian Museum & Archives, Diemer Mansion and the Slovenian Genealogy offices. Following the tour, the Jeff Pecon Orchestra provided tableside music during dinner which took place in the main ballroom.

Master of Ceremonies Tony Petkovsek opened the program by introducing Slovenian National Home president Bob Hopkins and his wife Gerri Hopkins. Entertainment was provided by

the joint Slovenian men's cappella choruses Fantje Na Vasi and Mi Smo Mi. The Cleveland based Slovenian youth dance group Folklorna Skupina Kres entertained the crowd with a variety of regional dances.

Presentations were made by Slovenian Consul General Jure Žmauc and Cleveland City Councilman Mike Polensek. Other dignitaries included Rev. John Kumse pastor at St. Mary's Church in Collinwood, Rev. Frank Godec pastor at the Immaculate Conception Church and Rev. Peter Rožič from the University of Santa Clara.

Special acknowledgements are in order for the board of Directors of the Slovenian National

Home and Shelly Slapnik March President of "Friends of the Slovenian National Home Inc." a tax-exempt non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

(Adapted from an article by Phil Hrvatin).



SPORTS

Women's Volleyball Team from Denver in Maribor



This year, students of the volleyball team of Regis University stayed for fourteen days in Slovenia and very much enjoyed the country.

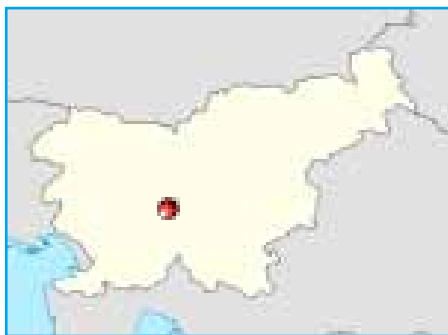
The second largest city in Slovenia, Maribor, is attracting from year to year more athletes from all over the world. This is due to Maribor's attracting location at the foothills of Pohorje and the fact that it offers diverse possibilities of

indoor and outdoor sports, which gives the opportunity to enjoy an active holidays throughout the year. Maribor is getting more popular among professional teams and especially among the college teams from the U.S. This year, the

women's volleyball team of the University of Berkeley and the Regis University from Denver carried out their preparations for the 2014-2015 season at Draš Center, which offers several volleyball courts and all the necessary facilities for athletes to successfully prepare for the upcoming season.

This year's trip was not only about the preparation for the coming season but also about remembering the Slovenian roots for the head coach of the Regis University, Frank Lavriša, who is a son of Slovenian parents. He organizes preparations of his volleyball team every four years in Slovenia when the university raises enough funds from their donators. Consequently, every member of the volleyball team has a possibility to visit Slovenia once during their university studies.

Brezovica



The town of **Brezovica**, the municipal, administrative and supply center of the municipality of Brezovica, was established in 1341, even though a major trade route already passed there at the time of the Roman Empire.

The municipality of Brezovica is only a step away from Ljubljana, and because of its beautiful landscape can be called the land of lake dwellings and karstic forests. The area of the municipality encompasses various protected areas of natural and cultural heritage. The remains of the lake dwellers' society reveal their culture, the heritage of which was studied



Hill of St. Anne with Podpeč quarry underneath. (Photo credit: Kristina Šijanec)

and described by the fiction writer Janez Jalen, who spent a part of his life in Brezovica.

The variety of flora and fauna in the area of Brezovica ranks it amongst the world's wonders and is unique not only in Slovenia, but in Europe as well. Natural beauties like the Podpeč Lake, **the Ljubljana Marshes**, the Ljubljanica River,

the black limestone, the Goričica Marsh, and Rakitna with its distinct climate and artificial lake are all worth visiting, especially for visitors who seek peace or recreation in nature. Biologists, botanists, ornithologists, geologists, fishermen and hunters are common visitors to this area. Due to the many inns with longstanding



Goričica moss. (Photo credit: Kristina Šijanec)



Church of St. Vid at Preserje with its surroundings. (Photo credit: Kristina Šijanec)

traditions, visitors seeking good culinary experiences won't be disappointed. Brezovica is easily accessible by Ljubljana's public bus system or by train, by boat or kayak on the Ljubljanica River, by hot air balloon, and by car.

Podpeč Lake is a small karstic lake below St. Anne's Hill (484 meters or 1588 ft. above sea level). With a depth of 47 meters (155 ft.), it qualifies as one of the deepest natural lakes in Slovenia. The lake and its swampy lowland were proclaimed a natural heritage in 1988. The lake is also a popular bathing spot during the summer, and St. Anne's Hill offers one of the best views of the Ljubljana Marshes.

The black limestone from the Podpeč quarry was a favorite building material of Slovenia's most famous architect, Jože Plečnik. He used it to build the interior stairwell of the National and University Library of Slovenia, as well as in many other buildings which he designed. The altars of the Parish Church of St. Vitus at Preserje were also made from Podpeč black limestone. The church represents one of



Rakitna lake. (Photo credit: Kristina Šijanec)

the most important elements of cultural heritage in the municipality. While it was first mentioned in 1321, the present version was built in 1711 in the Baroque style.

Goričica Moss is the largest and the most intact raised bog in the area of Ljubljana Marshes. It stretches in the area of nearly 25 acres (10 hectares) and it has layers of peat up to nearly two meters thick. The

Ljubljana Marshes offer a home to over a hundred species of birds, many of which are endangered.

Rakitna is a karst plateau, known for its soothing climate created by the mixing of the Mediterranean and alpine air streams. Its climate contributed to the foundation of the Rakitna Youth Climatic Health Resort, which is the only climate resort in Slovenia not located in the high mountains. One of the most popular places in Rakitna is the lake, which is surrounded by many walking and biking paths. 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.

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Podpeč lake. (Photo credit: Kristina Šijanec)

SLOVENIAN ARTIST BETI BRICELJ EXHIBITS IN DALLAS, TX

From Slovenia, Venezuela, and Dallas With Love, an exhibition featuring hard-edge geometric abstractions by artists from three continents. The paintings of Beti Bricelj, Israel Guevera, and work of sculptor Jeff Robinson will be shown through October.

When: [Ongoing - October 2014](#)

Where: [Museum of Geometric and MADI Art, 3109 Carlisle Street, Dallas, TX 75204-1194](#)

More information: <http://www.geometricmadimuseum.org/>

BARBARA JURKOVŠEK EXHIBITS IN ROANOKE, VA

The highlights of the 10th annual edition of the Rural Route Festival include a 50th anniversary The Wilson Hughes Gallery International Artist Series, which brings artists from around the globe to the Roanoke Valley, will in October feature Barbara Jurkovšek. Jurkovšek, a painter, will give an artist talk regarding her work [at 7 p.m. on Friday, October 3, 2014](#), at the [Wilson Hughes Gallery](#) located at [117 Campbell Avenue in the downtown arts district of Roanoke](#).

Jurkovšek's project "Albino United Extended" creates hybrid animals as a central motif and has references in contemporary art, pop culture, kitsch and science. Barbara Jurkovšek was born in 1981 in the capital city of Slovenia, Ljubljana. In 2006, she graduated in painting and art theory (BA) from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana. During 2007- 2008, she studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Lecce in Italy. In 2009, she obtained a Master's degree in painting (MFA) at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana. Jurkovšek has had 26 solo and over 50 group exhibitions at home and abroad and has received numerous awards for her work. She is also a recognized member of Union of Slovene Fine Arts Associations. Jurkovšek was Artist in residence in London, hosted by Ministry of Culture of Republic Slovenia in 2012, and was an Artist in residence at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, France, the following year. Jurkovšek works in the media of painting, sculpture, graphics, calligraphy, and scientific illustration. She lives and works as a professional fine artist in Slovenia.

A WORKSHOP WITH THEREMIDI ORCHESTRA in NY

Use basic electronics to create your own instruments and sounds. Then perform live! The ten members of Theremidi Orchestra (TO) will guide and assist participants during a five-day, hands-on and theoretical workshop.

When: [September 10 to 15, 2014](#)

Hours: [September 10 through 12, 6 to 9 p.m.; September 13, 2 to 6 p.m.; September 14, optional; September 15, TBD](#)

Venue: [Eyebeam, 34 35th St., Unit 26, Brooklyn, NY, 11232](#)

More information: <http://www.eyebeam.org/events/ct-swam-eyebeam-present-sound-happens-in-the-group-a-workshop-with-theremidi-orchestra>

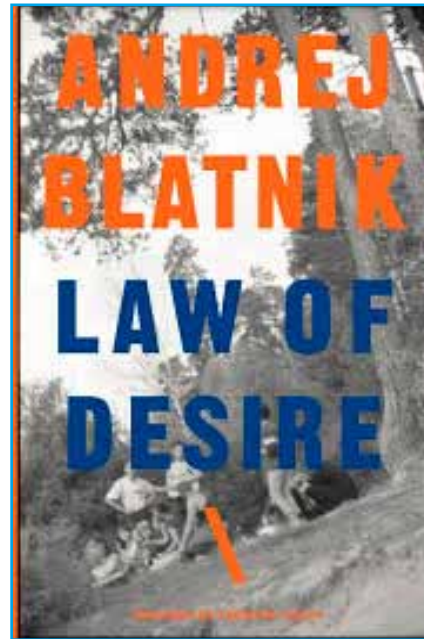
KALORAMA HOUSE AND EMBASSY TOUR

The annual open house walking tour of the gorgeous residences and the Embassy of Slovenia located in the Kalorama neighborhood. More information and ticket buying options to at <http://www.woodrowwilsonhouse.org/events>

WRITER ANDREJ BLATNIK AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The European Division of the Library of Congress, in partnership with the Embassy of Slovenia, will present Slovenian writer Andrej Blatnik, who will discuss his latest book in English, Law of Desire, published by Dalkey Archive Press. Blatnik, an Associate Professor of Publishing Studies at the University of Ljubljana, will also share a few observations on publishing and reading habits in Southeast Europe. You can find more about him at: www.andrejblatnik.com

More information about the event will follow at: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/calendar/calendar.html>



September 26 @ 6:30 pm: Slovenia at EURONIGHT at the Embassy of France

For the seventh year in a row, the European embassies in Washington, DC , are proud to present "Euro Night!" on Friday, September 26 from 6:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. The Embassy of France hosts the 2014 edition, featuring more than 20 European Union embassies, each showcasing its respective culture, traditions and culinary specialties. Throughout the evening, enjoy live music while taking a cultural tour around Europe, feasting on national dishes and discovering European traditions!

More information to follow.