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Holiday Reception for Independence and Unity Day

To honor the 26th Anniversary of the Independence Referendum, Ambassador Dr. Cerar and his wife, Dr. Martina Skok, hosted a reception on December 22 for the Washington local Slovenian community members and their families and other guests. Among the many attending were former U.S. Ambassadors to Slovenia, embassy liaisons at the U.S. administration, entrepreneurs, journalists, representatives of cultural institutions and galleries and embassy neighbors. In his address, Ambassador Dr. Cerar



underlined the importance of the event 26 years ago, which led to the declaration of independence on June 25, 1991, and on December 23, 1991, exactly one year after the referendum, to adopting the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia.

In his speech, the ambassador also recognized the role of the Slovenian community in the U.S. in the process of gaining independence recognition from the United States on April 7, 1992. He also observed

that next year Slovenia and the U.S. will celebrate 25 years of diplomatic relations. Then, he wished everybody a Merry Holiday Season and a Happy New Year, 2017.

On this occasion, an exhibition titled "Slovenia through Time" by Tomaž Izidor Perko, was opened. The exhibition is a tribute to the pioneers of the Slovenian cultural Europeanization who gained international fame during their lifetime, and spread the fame of Slovenian culture abroad. The



Ambassador Dr. Cerar and Tomaž Izidor Perko.



Ambassador Dr. Cerar and poet Tone Kuntner.

ten portraits depict outstanding personalities of Slovene cultural history, namely Janez Vajkard Valvasor, Primož Trubar, Jakob Gallus Petelin, Jože Plečnik, France Prešeren, Ivan Cankar, Rudolf Maister, Herman Potočnik-Noordung, Rihard Jakopič and Ivana Kobilca. The exhibition

will remain on view for visitors every Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., until February, at the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia, 2410 California St., Washington, D.C. 20008. More of Perko's work can be seen at www.tomazperko.com. Also joining in the cultural program of

the evening was Slovenian poet and actor Tone Kuntner, who in front of the portraits recited a paragraph from the work of writer Ivan Cankar, and presented all eight verses of France Prešern's poem Zdravljica.



Portraits of Ivana Kobilca and Rihard Jakopič.



Holiday gathering.

SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

3rd Science and Education Showcase at the Embassy and Opening of Idrija Lace Exhibition

On November 18, the Embassy of Slovenia presented the 3rd Slovenian – American Science and Education showcase, a forum aimed at strengthening cooperation in science and education between the U.S. and Slovenia. The evening featured the

Society for Slovene Studies, Association VTIS, American Slovenian Education Foundation, as well as Fulbright Scholars.

The program started with an afternoon showcase organized by Association VTIS, which presented

renowned Slovenian experts in science and education, namely Dr. Matjaž Kuntner, Zoologist / Arachnologist, Fulbright scholar at the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. Damjan Pfajfar, Economist at the Federal Reserve Board, Dr. Ana Počivavšek,



Dr. Timothy Pogačar of the Society for Slovene Studies.



Presentation by Dr. Damjan Pfajfar.

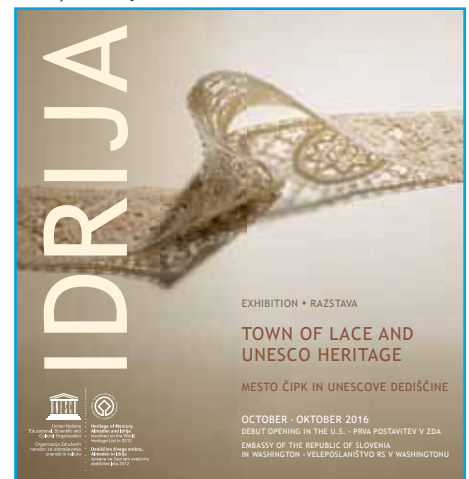
Psychopharmacologist at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, and Dr. Rok Tkavc, Microbiologist at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Furthermore, the programs of the American – Slovenian Educational Foundation were introduced by Dr. Peter Rožič, S.J. (Santa Clara University and University of Ljubljana) and Dr. Mark Vlasic (Georgetown). At the end of the evening, Dr. Timothy Pogačar of Bowling Green State University presented the activities of the Society for Slovene Studies with many of its members in attendance.

The afternoon forum was followed by a networking reception, with Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar and Minister Counsellor, Fabrice Vareille, Head of Global Issues and Innovation at the Delegation of the European Union

to the United States of America, as the keynote speakers. Guests included American and Slovenian alumni of the Fulbright and other exchange programs, science attachés, representatives of NGOs and think tanks working on international exchanges, researchers, scholars and scientists.

On the occasion the ambassador opened an exhibition titled “IDRIJA - Town of Lace and UNESCO Heritage”, curated by Idrija Municipal Museum. The exhibition presents, through its impressive photographic materials, the environment in which Idrija lace originated and continues to thrive. The town of Idrija, home of the second largest mercury mine in the world, is registered in UNESCO’s List of World Heritage Sites. The exhibit shows the historical development of

Idrija lace and presents its creators – bobbin lace makers, along with their laces and products enriched with lace. In addition to the traditional lace, Slovenian designer based in NYC, Ms. Manca Ahlin, enriched the exhibition with her own designs inspired by Idrija Lace, such as interior design artifacts and jewelry.



Father Peter Rožič and Dr. Mark Vlasic presenting ASEF.



Idrija lace exhibition.

Dušan Šarotar at the Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico

Between November 26 and December 4, Guadalajara hosted the largest book fair in South America: Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara (FIL). After the Frankfurt Book Fair, the annual Guadalajara book fair is the second-largest in the world. Representative of Slovenia at this year's 30th edition of the festival was writer, essayist, literary critic and editor Dušan Šarotar.

In Guadalajara, Dušan Šarotar took part in several events and programs. On Tuesday, November 29, he participated in the Festival of European Literature (Festival de las Letras Europeas), where he spoke of European literature together with Dutch, French and Finnish authors.

Among other engagements, he lectured at the Guadalajara University and presented his latest book translated into Spanish titled *Panorama*, which was published by Editorial Arlequín de Guadalajara in November. The author also had a literary event in Mexico City on December 3, when the program was organized by the Escuela Mexicana de Escritores.

Dušan Šarotar is a Slovenian writer, poet, screenwriter and photographer. He has published five novels (*Potapljanje na dah/ Island of the Dead*, 1999, *Nočitev z zajtrkom/Bed and Breakfast*, 2003, *Biljard v Dobrayu/ Billiards at the Hotel Dobray*, 2007, *Ostani z mano, duša moja/ Stay Me*, My Dear, 2011 and *Panorama*, 2015),

two collections of short stories (*Mrtvi kot/ Blind Spot*, 2002, and *Nostalgia*, 2010), three poetry collections (*Občutek za veter/Feel for the Wind*, 2004, *Krajina v molu/ Landscape in Minor*, 2006, and *Hiša mojega sina/ The House of My Son*, 2009) and book of essays (*Ne morje ne zemlja/Not Sea Not Earth*, 2012). Šarotar is also author of fifteen screenplays for documentary and feature films. His short film, *Mario Was Watching the Sea With Love*, based on the author's short stories from the collection *Blind Spot* and on his screenplay, won a Global short film award in New York, in 2016, and the first prize in Ningbo, China, for the "best short film" in the Central and East European film selection.



Panel at the Festival of European Literature.



Dušan Šarotar and Guadalajara university students.

Valley of Peace at the AFI European Union Film Showcase

The Annual AFI European Union Film Showcase ran from opening night on December 1 through December 18, bringing the best in European cinema to Washington audiences. The festival in its 29th edition took place at the historic AFI Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was presented by the American Film

Institute (AFI) in collaboration with the Delegation of the European Union to the United States and E.U. Member States. This year's selection of 47 films included award-winners, international festival favorites, local box-office hits and debut works by promising new talents. Fourteen of the 28 European Union countries presented their official

Oscar® submissions for Best Foreign Language Film.

The selected film from Slovenia *Valley Of Peace (Dolina Miru)*, was screened on December 9, 10 and 12th. The war drama was directed by France Štiglic in 1956, and was presented in restored DCP on its 60th anniversary. The film narrates a story of two young



orphans, German Lotti (Evelyne Wohlfeiler) and a Slovenian boy named Marko (Tugo Štiglic), who together escape from a town which has just been bombed in a U.S. air raid. They have

heard someone talk about a lost valley where there is still peace and they set out to find it. Right above them, an African-American pilot parachutes from his fighter plane that was shot down by

the German army. Sergeant Jim (John Kitzmiller) discovers the children, and he can't bring himself to leave them to their fate — even if they slow down his own escape.

EDUCATION

“Slovene Knowledge Around the World” Event in New York

On Saturday, November 19, 2016, at the New York University, VTIS Association of Slovenes Educated Abroad, presented the 3rd Annual Slovene Knowledge Around the World showcase. The event featured four presentations of the work of young Slovene scholars and professionals, followed by a networking reception.

The attendees were first welcomed by Igor Cesarec, President of Društvo VTIS, who explained to the audience the work of VTIS, which serves as a platform for Slovenes educated abroad to connect and cooperate with each other. It also represents their

interests, and endeavors to strengthen the ties between Slovenes abroad and Slovenia. The goals of the event are to showcase the talent and promote the work of Slovene experts in various fields, to facilitate cooperation and networking among Slovene students, researchers, academics, businesspeople, professionals and other members of the Slovene community abroad, and to encourage the strengthening of the links between Slovenia and the U.S.

The 15-minute long “lightning talks” followed by a Q & A session were given by: Vid Čibej, manager in the International Tax Services group

at PricewaterhouseCoopers in New York, Andrej Košmrlj, an assistant professor at Princeton University in the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department, Teja Pristavec, a Ph.D. student in the Sociology Department at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and Polona Šafarič Tepeš, who is currently working on her Ph.D. in Biomedicine, researching at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York.

More information about VTIS can be found by visiting its website at: <http://www.drustvovtis.si>



Annual Holiday Gathering of the Fulbright National Capital Area Chapter



For the fifth year in a row, the Embassy of Slovenia hosted on Sunday, December 4, the traditional holiday gathering of the Fulbright Association alumni of the National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC). Around 150 students, academics, business people, and government officials who participated in the Fulbright exchange program and now work in the nation's capital, joined the event, which included a performance by the DC jazz-piano band, and a potluck dinner

of culinary specialties of different countries, as well as Slovenian wine and potica pastry.

Opening remarks by the Board Vice-President of the Washington, D.C. Fulbright Alumni Club, Mr. Sean Andreson, were followed by a welcoming speech by the Slovenian Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar. He emphasized the importance of international exchanges for achieving cross-cultural understanding. The Fulbright program, supported by the U.S. Congress, is the international

exchange scholarship program between the U.S. and partner governments of 155 countries, including Slovenia. Since 1964, when the first Educational Exchange agreement between the U.S. and the now former Yugoslavia was signed, over 400 Slovenian scholars have taken part in the program and even more Americans visited Slovenia as part of their grant, some of them also joining the embassy for the Sunday annual event.



Curator Vasja Nagy in Mexico with Art in a Suitcase

In November and December, Slovenian curator Vasja Nagy traveled throughout Mexico to present art selections by 8 established artists from Slovenia and Austria. The exhibition from a suitcase curated by Vasja Nagy featured artwork by Vesna Bukovec, Gani Llallosi, Eva

Petrič, Günther & Loredana Selichar, Astrid Sodomka, Franz Wassermann and Tilen Žbona, and was first introduced on November 12 to the audience in Oaxaca in the La Huella Grafica venue. From November 17 to 30, the artwork was on display at the Fundación Fertilizando el Esfuerzo

A.C. in Mexico City. Vasja Nagy also presented the project at Galería Tu Mamá on December 7, and at Casa de Cultura San Rafael on December 8, both in Mexico City. On December 9, the showcase took place at Centro de Artes y Oficios Tepito.



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Ambassador Dr. Cerar Participates at the ASEEES Convention

On Thursday, November 17th, Ambassador Dr. Cerar attended the annual convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies and participated in the program organized

by the Society for Slovene Studies. At the panel titled Slovenian Foreign Policy after 25 Years, he discussed past accomplishments and future challenges with the panel which included Carole Rogel (The Ohio

State University), Charles Bukowski (Bradley University), Peter Rožič (Univerza v Ljubljani / University of Ljubljana) and James Gow (King's College London).



Concerts by Vlado Kreslin at the Embassy, in Salisbury, MD and in Cleveland, OH



In cooperation with the International Club of DC, the Embassy of Slovenia hosted on Tuesday, November 30, a wine tasting event that presented cultural and culinary offerings of Slovenia. Some 80 people were welcomed at the beginning of the evening by Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar and ICDC President Sanjaya Hettihewa. The program continued with a concert featuring Vlado Kreslin, one of the most influential Slovenian musicians, who has also performed with REM and Bob Dylan. His distinctive style combines elements of folk, pop and rock music, American

blues and even gypsy music. During his performance Kreslin presented his music in Slovenian and English, as well as read from his book of poetry: *Instead of Whom Does the Flower Bloom*. Afterwards, guests could enjoy a selection of wines paired with distinguished dishes from various parts of Slovenia, including traditional layer cake (prekmurska gibanica) from the Prekmurje region, prepared by Ms. Vesna Kolmanič.

A day earlier, on November 29, Kreslin performed at the great Holloway Hall at the University of Salisbury in Salisbury, Maryland. The event was presented in cooperation

with World Artists Experiences. On December 2, he sang at the Slovenian National Home in Cleveland. The concert benefited Slovenian Museum & Archives. "An Evening Under the Lights" was organized by the museum, Friends of the Slovenian National Home, the Consulate General of the Republic of Slovenia in Cleveland and the Center for Slovenian Studies at the Cleveland State University led by Luka Zibelnik. The event also featured the first unveiling of the 160-year-old Authenticated Prešeren's Manuscripts on display at the Slovenian Museum and Archives at St. Clair Avenue.



Slovenian National Home in Cleveland.

Holloway Hall in Salisbury, MD.

Traditional Slovenian Breakfast at Harriet Tubman E.S.



For the sixth consecutive year, the Traditional Slovenian Breakfast project took place on November 18 in kindergartens and primary schools throughout Slovenia. During the first school period, children breakfasted on brown bread, honey, butter, milk, and apples, all of which were of organic and local origin.

The Embassy of Slovenia in Washington, D.C. introduced the traditional Slovenian honey breakfast on Thursday, November 17, to the Harriet Tubman Elementary School students. The fifth-grade class enjoyed the traditional Slovenian breakfast goods prepared and served by the embassy staff: home-made bread, butter, Slovenian honey, locally produced milk and apples, as well as

walnut and raisin potica cake. During the lesson that was presented in the frame of the Embassy Adoption Program, students also became acquainted with Slovenian traditional ways of harvesting, wheat threshing and milling, making bread in a brick oven, traditional butter making, beekeeping, and organic fruit growing.

Originally initiated by the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, the Traditional Slovenian Honey Breakfast project aims to educate, inform and raise awareness of children in kindergartens and elementary schools – as well as the general public – of the importance of eating breakfast, of the benefits of locally grown food, of the need for agricultural activities that preserve the environment, and of

beekeeping for agricultural production and economic activity. The project also raises the awareness of youth and the general public of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including health-enhancing physical activity and sports.



Fourth Embassy Visit at the Harriet Tubman E.S. and First School Visit at the Embassy



As part of the Embassy Adoption Program, this year the Embassy of Slovenia “adopted” a fifth-grade class of the Harriet Tubman Elementary School. The program, offered by DC Public Schools in conjunction with the Washington Performing Arts Society, every year pairs embassies with classes throughout the DC Public School (DCPS) system. The program is designed to bring together embassy officials, teachers, and students from participating schools in order to expand the students’ knowledge of different countries worldwide. Teachers work with their students to help them learn about their adoptive country, and representatives from each embassy provide monthly cultural visits to their adopted classes, giving the students a

personalized understanding of their nation’s culture.

On Thursday, December 1, the fifth graders visited the Slovenian Embassy for the first time. The group of some 20 students was welcomed by Ms. Nuška Zakrajšek, who explained to them the role of an embassy and answered their questions. After the lecture about the country and a lesson of the Slovenian language, the students had a chance to taste traditional Slovenian walnut roll-cake “potica” and the famous Carniolian sausage (kranjska klobasa). The 5th graders also learned about traditional Slovenian folk music and took singing and dance lessons. At the end of the visit, each one got an “I feel Slovenia” hat. The students also brought with them

Christmas ornaments they had made themselves. The ornaments were sent to Slovenia and are now on display at the Nova Gorica public library.

Two weeks later, on December 15, Ms. Nuška Zakrajšek, public diplomacy and cultural affairs officer at the Embassy of Slovenia made her fourth visit to the fifth graders at the Harriet Tubman E.S. During the lesson, students revised their knowledge of Slovenia’s geography, history and cultural features. The group then got acquainted with the specifics of the Slovenian language and the Slovene alphabet. They also learned how to count in Slovenian and, through fun games, practiced the pronunciation of a few essential phrases of introduction.



Jela Krečič in Conversation With Slavoj Žižek

In conversation with her husband, philosopher Slavoj Žižek, Jela Krečič, Slovenian journalist, columnist and philosopher, presented her literary debut, *None Like Her*, on November 10, at the Community Book Store in Brooklyn, New York, and on November 12, at the Politics and Prose Bookstore in Washington, D.C. Jela's first novel, is an energetic and finely-observed romantic comedy and was recently published by Istros Books/Peter Owen. The sharp-edged tale explores the romantic misadventures of a 21st Century cryptomysogynist. Set in Ljubljana, the narrative follows the adventures of the lovelorn Matjaž. The book is structured as a series of first dates and features crisp dialogue

and widely contrasting characters.

On November 13, Jela and her husband presented a lecture at the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at the George Washington University, discussing the book as well as the comedy phenomena by Chaplin, Lubitsch, Sturges - all examples of directors who never missed an opportunity to approach economic, social, and political crises through comic lenses.

Jela Krečič writes for the largest national newspaper *Delo*, where she notably published an exclusive interview with Julian Assange in 2013. Her philosophical research focuses on films, TV series and aesthetics, and she

has conducted several studies on these topics. She has also co-edited a number of anthologies on contemporary TV series and on the German-American film director, Ernst Lubitsch.

Slavoj Žižek is a Slovene philosopher and cultural critic. He is a professor at the European Graduate School, International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, Birkbeck College, University of London, and a senior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His books include *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*; *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle*; *In Defense of Lost Causes*; *Living in the End Times*; and many more.



ANNOUNCEMENT

Consular Hours in New York

The consular officer from the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Washington DC will be holding consular hours and providing consular services (authentications, certifications, passport applications, etc.) in New York City **on Friday, January 27, 2017** at the premises of Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations located at 630 Third Avenue, 20th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017.

To schedule an appointment please fill out the form you can find on the embassy's website and send it to the Embassy of Slovenia at [sloembassy.washington\(at\)gov.si](mailto:sloembassy.washington(at)gov.si) **by January 23, 2017** to allow the Embassy enough time to verify your data. Please suggest a time for your appointment. The Embassy will give you further information on the documentation you have

to bring. You may also visit the Embassy website <http://washington.embassy.si/> (Consular Affairs, Visas) for required documents for most consular services. Please note that the consular fee must be paid with a Money Order addressed to "Embassy of Slovenia". Cash, personal checks or credit cards will not be accepted.

Prior appointment is needed to enter the premises of the Mission.

52nd Annual Miklavževanje in Washington, D.C.

On Saturday, December 3, The Bishop Baraga Society, Lodge #257 of the KSKJ (American Slovenian Catholic Union), organized the traditional Slovenian Saint Nicholas Celebration-- Slovensko Miklavževanje. The seasonal program took place in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and featured musical performances by the attending children. Saint Nicholas, in his bishop's robes and attended by angels, then distributed presents to children. Afterwards, traditional Slovenian pastries and Carniolian sausages with sauerkraut, were offered at a buffet dinner,

which provided a nice atmosphere for an evening gathering of around 150 members of the Slovenian community of greater Washington who joined the event to celebrate their Slovenian heritage.

In Slovenia, the winter holiday season begins with the feast of St. Nicholas on December 6. St. Nicholas or, as he is called in Slovenia, Sveti Miklavž, brings presents to children during the night between December 5 and 6. When he visits the children, Sv. Miklavž is accompanied by angels, who help him carry and distribute the presents,

and devils, who reprimand children who had been bad. Since, according to the legend, one night St. Nicholas threw three pieces of gold into the house of a poor man for his three daughters, traditionally children get oranges as a present on December 6, along with other small gifts, cookies, dried fruit and, sometimes, if they hadn't been so good, a switch. Special bread, called poprtnjak, is made at this time. The bread is covered with a cloth and placed on the table, but it is not eaten until the feast of the Three Kings on January 6, when it is distributed to the children.



UPCOMING EVENT IN NEW YORK

PHOTO EXHIBITION SILENT SPACES by MATJAZ KRIVIC

In this series of panoramic photographs, Slovenian artist Matjaz Krivic explores Tibet's venues of veneration and celebrations of life. The artist captures the vibrancy of sacred sites, be they stupa, mountains, rivers, or monuments, and conveys the reverberations of worship, gratitude, and adoration for life on earth through silence and meditation.

Matjaz Krivic is an award-winning documentary photographer who has traveled the globe capturing the distinctiveness and grandeur of indigenous people and places for 18 years.

Opening Reception: [Thursday, January 12, 2017, from 6-8 p.m.](#)

On view: [January 12 - March 1, 2017](#)

Where: [Tibet House Cultural Center, 22 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011](#)

More information: <http://us3.campaign-archive2.com/?u=2d5b3de79f3d0b683a30262ba&id=edd69f23d68ce=fcc6ca1254>

- The Embassy participated at the 2nd Annual Florida International University Language Day on November 18th: <https://www.instagram.com/fiulanguage/>
- Barbara Borčič and Emil Memon showcased on Sunday, Dec. 4th at the UnionDocs Center for Documentary Art the 66-minute presentation of DIVA, Slovenian video art: <http://www.uniondocs.org/event/2016-12-04-diva-station>
- Slovenia's University of Ljubljana wins Peer-2-Peer OSCE 'Challenging extremism' competition in Hamburg: <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/287641>
- Slovenia steps up to the plate in its pursuit of foodies - <http://www.travelweekly.com/Europe-Travel/Insights/Slovenia-steps-up-to-the-plate-in-its-pursuit-of-foodies>
- Slovenia's subtle charm almost feels like home - <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/lifestyle/sd-tr-slovenia-20161208-story.html>
- 14 photos that will make you want to travel to Slovenia now - <http://www.minikinescapades.com/natural-attractions-of-slovenia/>
- Slovenian Designer Brings Lace Tradition To US - <http://www.contemporist.com/rope-lace-artwork-etsy-office/>
- National Geographic Announced World Legacy Awards Finalists, among them was the Slovenian Tourist Board - <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/worldlegacyawards/judging.html>
- Prešeren's Manuscripts On Display in Cleveland - <https://www.slconnect.com/preserens-manuscripts-display-cleveland/>
- Children of Harriet Tubman Elementary School are participating in the "Slovenski okraski" project. They made these holiday ornaments, which were sent to Slovenia and will be soon on display at the Nova Gorica Public Library. At the same time, children from Slovenia sent their own handmade ornaments to the U.S. children. - <https://www.facebook.com/SLOembassyUSA/posts/901330123304050>
- Traditional Slovenian festive dress was displayed at the Blair House in the frame of the Diplomacy by Design event organized by the United States State Department Office of Protocol.

- In keeping with the green initiatives for the Republic of Slovenia and for the City of Knoxville, the Slovenian Consulate in Knoxville recently installed solar panels to help provide electrical energy for the Consulate and contribute to reducing CO2 emissions - https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=586671758188136&id=175688535953129

- In the frame of the FBI National Academy, Mr. Aleš Kegljevič, officer at the Slovenian Criminal Police Division, participated at the country fair and showcase in Quantico and presented Slovenian food, wine, beer and tourist features - <https://www.facebook.com/SLOembassyUSA/posts/878720718898324>

