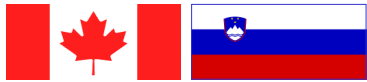




OUR STORY

NAŠA ZGODOVINA



Canadian Slovenian Historical Society ~ Vol. 11 ~ Winter 2021

Vesel, zdrav in blagoslovljen božič ter srečo in zdravje v novem letu!



Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year!

*Že drugič nas je COVID presenetil ravno za božične praznike
Že tretjič smo morali preložiti našo slavnostno kosilo in program za 75. obletnico
"Remembering May 1945". Izbrali smo nov spomladanski datum. Točne podatke bomo objavili.*

*Due to COVID protocol the 75th anniversary commemoration "Remembering May 1945"
is postponed until the spring of 2022. More details to follow.*

**Join us for our Annual General Meeting to be held via Zoom on Saturday, February 12, 2022, at 10 AM
We welcome your participation. Please register at cshistorical@gmail.com**

PROFESSIONAL CANADIAN HOCKEY PLAYERS with SLOVENIAN ROOTS

Compiled and composed by Stane Kranjc and Miriam Čekuta

With the onset of winter, ice hockey season begins in earnest and many Canadians turn on their TVs to watch the seemingly endless numbers of games played by professional and amateur teams. Many of us used to gather every Saturday night to watch "Hockey Night in Canada" hoping that the team we were cheering for would be victorious and waiting to hear what "words of wisdom" would be spoken by Don Cherry and Ron MacLean. Thus, Slovenian Canadian hockey families/fans came into being, and youngsters of all ages began to "lace up" skates, play neighbourhood hockey, and dream of a future hockey career.

The origins of ice hockey are a challenge to ascertain, and it is debatable whether the game originated in Canada or somewhere else in the world. What is known is that over time ice hockey has been recognized as our Canadian national winter sport with Lacrosse deemed our national summer sport.

In Slovenia, ice hockey has become a popular sport. It blossomed in the late 1920's after Slavko Bloudek brought hockey equipment to Slovenia from neighbouring countries. Initially there were very few hockey clubs, and little to no competition for the Slovenian players. Over the years other Yugoslavian republics as well as individual cities in the region formed their own teams. As the numbers multiplied, so did the numbers of Slovenian players and the enthusiasm for the sport. These regional teams often made up of Slovenian players began competing against other European teams. In 1968, under the banner of Yugoslavia, Slovenian hockey players took part in the Olympics, group B. Following the independence of Slovenia, in 1991 the Slovenian Hockey League was formed. In 2014 the SHL participated in the Sochi Winter Olympics. Our small country of Slovenia became popular and was recognized worldwide, especially after they defeated the USA in overtime. Ice hockey

has become more prominent in Slovenia and the League has produced many high caliber players over the years.

Most Slovenian fans are aware of Anze Kopitar, a Slovenian who has been playing in the NHL since 2005. His skills and knowledge of the game are a big contributing factor to the LA Kings. He has earned many awards and won several cups. He has been the captain of the LA Kings for many years. Other players of Slovenian descent that have been drafted by the National Hockey League are Jan Mursak, Marcel Rodman, Edo Terjav, and Jure Perko.

In Canada we too have had several Canadian Slovenian hockey players drafted by professional teams and some have even played for several NHL organizations Stan Smrke was the first known Slovenian Canadian who played for the Toronto Maple Leafs and then Montreal Canadiens in the late 1940's and 50's. The most recent player of Slovenian descent is Matt Stajan who was drafted by the Toronto Maple Leafs in 2002 and later played on the Calgary Flames team. John Jakopin was drafted by the Detroit Red Wings in 1993 and later played for the Florida Panthers. Additional hockey players of note who were born in Canada and have Slovenian roots are: John Smrke, William Hajt, Ed Kastelic, Steve Bozek, Ken Lovsin, Wade Belak, Randy Veliscek, Dean Malkoc, Chris Hajt, Greg Kuznik. Their hockey stats and profiles are available online.

It is expected and it should come as no surprise to hockey families/fans that young women and men with Slovenian connections will join the ranks of the above luminaries in the near future. The CSHA - Canadian Slovenian Hockey Association may be grooming a few candidates for this eventuality.



OUR VISION and MISSION STATEMENT

VISION:

To preserve the records of Slovenian immigration, cultural heritage and continued contributions to Canada and establish the legacy as Canadian Slovenians for future generations.

MISSION:

Canadian Slovenian Historical Society will:

- ◆ archive and preserve the history of Slovenian immigration, its evolutionary heritage and contributions to Canada;
- ◆ gather, record, maintain and augment relevant collections of artifacts reflecting Slovenian cultural traditions, practices and contributions;
- ◆ establish, save and maintain a collection of publications, reports and manuscripts in digital, printed and oral format from Slovenian sources/organizations across Canada;
- ◆ promote academic and literary research of *Canadian Slovenians* in Canada;
- ◆ create/build a display setting of museum format for archives and artifacts;
- ◆ raise awareness, provide access and promote education of the workings and relevance of the CSHS, and strive for community engagement.



V čast: Mia Ferkul

Mia Ferkul (Aug. 11, 1927 - Sept. 24, 2021) often recited the proverb: "Po dobrem delo boste jih spoznali" (By their good deeds you will know them). To her, life was simple. You either lived for yourself or you lived for others. This selflessness is a common characteristic in the many people responsible for establishing our Canadian-Slovenian community in Toronto.

Mia was born in Ljubljana and fled her war-torn country shortly after the war. She met her future

husband, Tone Ferkul in a displaced persons camp in Austria, before arriving in Canada. She didn't talk much about life in camp, but she did say that it provided her with the most impactful education in her life. During that time she witnessed the very best and the very worst in people - an experience that would shape how she wanted to live.

Guided by her faith, Mia served her community through numerous organizations, including Ženska Liga (Catholic Women's League), several youth and community groups, and the local widows club, all while raising ten children, working part time and serving on the board at the Slovenian Credit Union, where she appointed herself chief teller and marriage counsellor, dispensing free financial advice to all her friends. Every December, Mia was known to serve homemade hot chocolate to the angels and other participants of Sveti Miklavž*. She supported numerous missionaries, priests, nuns and choir members; regularly hosting them in her home when they visited Toronto.

Like many of her contemporaries, Mia was part of an inspirational generation of Slovenians who helped carry on our cultural traditions, and represents the legacies of those we aim to preserve at the Canadian-Slovenian Historical Society.

Mia Ferkul's oral history was recorded in February 2019 and is preserved in the CSHS archive.

If you or any of your family members have a story to share about your experience as a Slovenian living in Canada, reach out to us to contribute to the "Povejte Nam Kaj" oral history project and be a part of our collective history.

**The tradition of Sveti Miklavž (St. Nicholas) bringing gifts to children on the eve of December 6 is a popular Slovenian folk tradition. It was first cited in written records in 1839.*

V spomin: Slavka Stajan

To commemorate her contributions to our community, we published this poem by Slavka Stajan (Feb. 14, 1927 - Jul. 21, 2021), which describes her thoughts and feelings at having to leave her home country of Slovenia in search of a better life in Canada.

Slavka was born in Otočec. She was a teenager when World War II began and as with many from that generation, she experienced tremendous hardship. Her family risked punishment, by bravely offering their home as a refuge to young men, whose lives were in danger. Shortly after the war ended, Slavka met her husband, Ludvik. In 1950, she made her escape to Austria, and spent two years in a refugee camp, before making her way to Canada, where she raised five children.

Giving back to the community was not a choice for Slavka. She was a willing and active member of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal parish and farm. She was amongst the original members of Ženska Liga (Catholic Women's League). This group of women banded together and their charitable efforts contributed immensely to parish upkeep while preserving Slovenian culture. At the encouragement of Father Franc Sodja, Slavka also volunteered her time at Dom Lipa. It brought her immense joy and personal fulfillment, resulting in over 20 years of service.

Slavka's poetry gives us a rare glimpse into her personal experience. The artifacts preserved in the CSHS archive tell stories and uncover hidden truths of those that came before us. Should you or your family members have any written materials that highlight the intimate experiences of a Canadian-Slovenian, we'd appreciate you reaching out to us for more information on how to donate these artifacts to the archive.

Slovo od rojstnega kraja

*Dolina prelepa v njej je moj dom,
v njem sem živela, a zdaj več ne bom.
Prišel je trenutek, trenutek slovesa
se dom je preljubi mi zgubil iz očesa.*

*Adijo planine, gozdovi prostrani,
s srcem in dušo, sem živela z vami.
Zdaj daleč, predaleč moram oditi
od vseh vas predragih se posloviti.*

*So leta minula, leta mladosti
in z njimi življenje, polno radosti.
Ostali so mi, sedaj le spomini
ne bom več hodila po domači dolini.*

*Zalijejo grenke mi solze oči,
ko avijon v neznane kraje hiti.
Še enkrat adijo preljubi moj dom,
Mogoče nikdar več te videla ne bom.*



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