



THE SOCIETY  
for SLOVENE STUDIES

# LETTER

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## President's Message... **CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS OF THE SOCIETY**

**This year the Society for Slovene Studies turns fifty** or, as we might say in Slovene, we mark our "abraham." Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll find information about a celebration of our golden anniversary at the Midwest Slavic Conference scheduled for March 24-26, 2023 on the campus of the Ohio State University in Columbus. We hope some of you will feel inspired to join us for the occasion, especially on Saturday, March 25, when Slovene-themed noon-hour and evening events will showcase the Society by regaling conference-goers with some of the very finest that Slovene culture has to offer the world. Big anniversaries like a fiftieth are traditionally a time for looking both back and ahead, for celebrating accomplishments, construing a pattern of achievement and growth, and identifying worthy goals for the decades to come. So, without further ado, let's begin by briefly...

**Looking back:** In 1973 the Society's founders were primarily first- and second-generation Slovene Americans and a few interested non-Slovenes employed as academics at North American universities spanning the continent, including such notable scholars as Rado Lenčec (Slavic linguistics, Columbia U), Toussaint Hočevar (Economics, Tulane U), Carole Rogel (History, Ohio State U), Bogdan Novak (History, U of Toledo), Rudolph Susel (editor of the Cleveland-based newspaper *Ameriška domovina*), Rajko Ložar (independent art historian) and Jože Velikonja (Geography, U of Washington). Soon they were joined by others, such as Joseph Conrad (Slavic literature and folklore, U. of Kansas), William Derbyshire (Slavic linguistics, Rutgers U), Irene Portis Winner (Anthropology, Emmanuel College), Henry Cooper (Slavic literature, Indiana U), Tom Priestly (Slavic linguistics, U. of Alberta), Leopoldina Plut-Pregelj (Education, U of Maryland), Gerald Stone (Slavic linguistics, Oxford U) and Robert Minnich

(Anthropology, U of Bergen) - a veritable who's who of Slovene studies in the anglophone world. Their initiative resulted in the creation of a non-profit, multi-disciplinary scholarly organization affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS, since then re-acronymed ASEEEES), along with America's first scholarly journal for our area, which began publication in 1977 under the title *Papers in Slovene Studies*, shortened in 1979 to *Slovene Studies*, which has continued to appear at least once and often two times per year ever since, generating a large corpus of original scholarship in English on a wide range of topics: Slovene linguistics, literature, folklore, anthropology, music and art history, philosophy and religious studies, geography, political science and history. Our founders (and the list of their names above is far from complete) also began sponsoring an annual scholarly conference under AAASS auspices at a different location in the U.S. or Canada each year.

**In the course of their long academic careers** - which typically spanned the 1960s to early 2000s - the Society's founders also invested a great deal of effort in training and incentivizing young, aspiring scholars to adopt a side specialization in Slovene studies as a field enriching their broader areas of disciplinary study, whether in history, political science, linguistics or literature. That second generation, whose careers have spanned the 1980s to 2020s, are now themselves approaching retirement. But never fear - as you'll have seen from the pages of our journal, our third generation has found its sea legs in careers that are well underway.

An overarching concern of the Society since the 1990s has been the creation of permanent centers for Slovene studies in North America that would no longer be dependent on the finite career span of a

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## President's Message...

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single scholar at this or that university. Impetus for the first major stride in this direction came from Slovenia, when the U of Ljubljana negotiated with Cleveland State U to establish a full-time, ongoing lectureship in Slovene based in the historically "largest Slovene city outside Slovenia," Cleveland. The success and outreach of the Cleveland State lectureship, which offers a course of Slovene language instruction at CSU and, more recently, an online curriculum accessible to traditional and non-traditional students throughout North America, has been driven since 2008 by SSS member Dr. Luka Zibelnik

In the early 2010s, the Society, together with the Scientific Research Center of the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences (ZRC SAZU), negotiated with the Ohio State U Center for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies to establish a permanent Slovene Research Initiative, which is now in its tenth year and sponsors an annual exchange of OSU faculty from many disciplines with their leading Slovenian counterparts based at ZRC SAZU in Ljubljana.

**Also noteworthy** are the recent home-grown initiatives at major universities around the U.S. - the U of Kansas, the U of Washington and Stanford U - to create new, dedicated endowments providing a permanent basis of budgetary support for instruction in Slovene language, literature and related subjects, as well as for ongoing exchanges of students and faculty with leading institutions in Slovenia across a wide range of disciplines. Many members of our Society, including members of the local and national Slovene American communities, have provided generous support for these initiatives, for which we can all be thankful. Once these investments in permanent, university-based programs achieve even a relatively modest critical mass - let's say an endowment principal of a quarter million dollars or more - they generate annual revenues in perpetuity that support wide-ranging programs in Slovene studies that have sufficient impact to inspire and incentivize untold new generations of faculty and students to connect with, explore and learn from Slovenia's distinctive, inexhaustibly rich culture, natural environment and creative potential.

**As a Society** we have much to be gratified by, but also much yet to do. I hope you'll join my Executive Council colleagues, fellow Society members and me in celebrating our half century of achievement and looking forward to new decades of discovery-rich study, creativity and public scholarship. ■

**Michael Biggins, President**

Society for Slovene Studies | Winter 2022-2023

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# SSS to Celebrate 50th Anniversary at Midwest Slavic Conference

BY KRISTINA REARDON

**The Society for Slovene Studies** will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary at the 2023 Midwest Slavic Conference, slated to take place at The Ohio State University (OSU) in Columbus, Ohio from March 24-26. Dr. Valeria Sobol of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign will deliver the keynote address on Friday evening.

**The Society will commemorate** its anniversary during the lunch hour on Saturday, March 25, when five graduate students of the OSU Department of Theatre will join three members of the Society in a dramatic reading of Act I of Ivan Cankar's play *Jakob Ruda* in English translation. The SSS participants include Michael Biggins of the University of Washington, Timothy Pogačar of Bowling Green State University, and Luka Zibelnik of Cleveland State University. To the Society's knowledge, this performance will be among the first productions ever of a Cankar drama in English.

**Proposals for the conference** were solicited in January 2023 on topics related to Slavic and East European Studies. The call for papers stressed a particular focus on displacement and diaspora.

**"As war and other disasters** continue in these regions," the call reads, "this theme will explore how war has displaced and damaged cultures, cultural artifacts, and cultural production." The Conference further promises to "...provide students and scholars with the opportunity to think about how these horrors also prompt cultures, societies, and languages to flourish and thrive will also creating new centers and pulls across the globe when citizens are forced to flee."

**Members interested in attending** may register throughout the month of March. General attendees will be assessed a \$25 fee, while presenters will pay \$35 (students) or \$50 (faculty/independent scholars). More information is available at [slaviccenter.osu.edu](http://slaviccenter.osu.edu) or by emailing [csees@osu.edu](mailto:csees@osu.edu).

## FROM THE EDITOR OF SLOVENE STUDIES

Thanks to members for their patience with the journal. Volume 44, number 1 (2022) is being shipped in March. Number 2 and volume 45 (2023) will be published this summer. I regret the unavoidable delay. You can access all past issues of the journal, through 2017, from the society's webpage, [slovenestudies.com](http://slovenestudies.com). Contributors to the journal should upload submissions there as well. —Timothy Pogačar

**ERIN GLOSSOP**

Erin Glossop is a proud second-generation Slovenian-American currently residing in Columbus, Ohio and working as a senior policy advisor at the Ohio Statehouse. Erin has always had an interest in family history and grew up hearing stories about Slovenia from her grandmother, who was born in Juršče. She visited for the first time last September and spent time with family in Postojna (and ate a lot of excellent potica). She welcomes the opportunity to get more involved with Slovenian culture and hopes to visit more Slovenian family in Buenos Aires soon, as well as attend Cleveland's Kurentovanje celebration.

**TRACY KONCILJA**

Tracy Koncilja's family in Slovenia lives in Suhadole, and she represents the Koncilja clan in Seattle. Her father immigrated to Pennsylvania in 1956 and she feels lucky to have grown up part of two cultures. That experience started her career as a middle school teacher for ELL students (English Language Learners), during which it has been interesting to work with families from all over the world and help students adjust to living in the U.S. She and her husband, Aaron Shur, can be seen these days working on their Slovenian language homework or riding in a car to teach their 16-year-old son, Quinn, how to drive. She enjoys volunteering with theater groups, reading, and searching for comfortable shoes. Her goal is to spend more time hiking, camping, and traveling with friends and family.

**JOHN LIPOLD**

John Lipold was born in the 1960s into the Slovenian community in greater Cleveland, absorbing the Slovenian language and culture from his family and neighbors. While a graduate student at Indiana University, he had the opportunity to attend the Poletna Šola Slovenskega Jezika in Ljubljana in 1992. In the early 1990s he also got to know Professor Rado Lenček through the American Slovene Congress meetings held at Columbia University in New York. Today he is a writer and publicist. He is a supporter of efforts to preserve and document the Slovenian experience in America.

**MARK MILLER**

Mark J. Miller is Associate Professor of English at Hunter College, CUNY. In the field of Slovene Studies, his main interest lies in the long literary history of Slovenian emigration to the Americas. He hopes to use Native American Studies, religious studies, and histories of the book to consider manuscript and print publications growing out of relationships between early Slovenian missionaries and Indigenous nations of the Americas (e.g., Marko Kapus, who worked with the Opata and Comcaac/Seri Nations, and Irenej Baraga, who worked with William Makatebinesi and Kanapima/Augustin Hamelin, Jr. of the Waganakising Odawa/Ottawa). Other areas of interest include representations of Slovenians in 20th and 21st C. Native American literature and the WWI-era history of Trieste.

**AARON SHUR**

Aaron Shur is connected to Slovenia through his wife's father, who was from Slovenia and moved to the US from the former Yugoslavia in his 20s. His family is very close to extended family in Slovenia and have exchanged many visits. He has lived in Seattle for 23 years, where he attended the University of Washington for medical school and residency training. He has retired from medicine and is still figuring out what to pursue next, possibly something related to cooking. He is a soccer fan and continues to play recreationally. He enjoys traveling with his family, trying new foods, and exploring the outdoors of the Pacific Northwest.

**MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Cindy Adams** is happy to report that her book, *The Red Toque: Love and Loss in the Time of Tito* (available on Amazon), has been written about in *The Slovenian Times* of Detroit and *The Slovenian American Times* of Cleveland. It was also a primary Sunday feature in Belgrade and beyond in the journal *Blic*. Several American journals are featuring it now. It is currently being translated into Slovenian.

**John K. Cox** (North Dakota State University) was recently named Translator of the Year by the Serbian P.E.N. Centre. The awards ceremony was delayed because of COVID but took place in September 2022. Among the 18 book-length translations Cox has published is Ivan Cankar's novel *Martin Kačur: the Biography of an Idealist* (Central European University Press, 2009), and he hopes to translate more Cankar in the future.

**Marc L. Greenberg** (University of Kansas) worked on various projects in 2022, notably editing the **Encyclopedia of Slavic Languages and Linguistics**, which project has slowed down as an indirect result of the Russian war on Ukraine. In summer he traveled to Montenegro and Albania collecting material for his linguistic research. During his stay in Montenegro he was interviewed on the cultural talk show **Kniški ljudi** (Book people) by host Đorđe Ščepovič in the capital, Podgorica. The video can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/D8rs8HJQIMs>. He met with several cultural leaders in Montenegro, including the writer Milorad Popović and members of the Fakultet za crnogorski jezik i književnost.

## PUBLICATIONS

Two publications appeared in 2022, "**De se završava južnoslovenski areal? Napomene o panonskom narječju poznoga praslovenskog**" (Where does the South Slavic area end? Notes on the Pannonian dialect of Proto-Slavic [in Montenegrin]) in **Cetinjski filološki dani III** and a co-authored essay with Brian Rosenblum, A. Town Peterson, Ada Emmett, and Josh Bolick. "**Open Access is Broken: What Can be Done?**" in the **Ghana Library Journal**.

## TALKS

In September Greenberg gave a talk "**Nastanek in razvoj slovanskih sistemov s stalnim naglasom**" (The emergence and development of fixed-accent systems in Slavic languages [in Slovene]) at the plenary Ramovš Symposium as part of the celebration of the late Fran Ramovš (1890-1952), Slovene Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana. In fall he was a visiting fellow at the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, University of Hokkaido, and during his stay he gave several in-person and hybrid talks, including "**Orthographies for small Slavic languages with significant internal differentiation. Case studies of Prekmurje Slovene and Montenegrin**" at the University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa (November); "Montenegrin language: What is it and what is at stake?" at Kyoto University; and "The Reduction of Word-Prosody Systems in Slavic Languages and Dialects (with Some Furtive Comparison to Japanese)" as the lecturer for the **126th NINJAL Colloquium**, National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics, Tokyo. In December he gave two invited lectures, "**Kako su se razvili sistemi fiksno naglaska u slavenskim jezicima?**" (How did fixed-accent systems develop in Slavic languages [in Bosnian]) in the series *Jezik-čovjek-svijet* at the University of Sarajevo, and a reprise of the talk "**What is at stake with a Montenegrin standard language?**" in the Institute for Advanced Studies Invited Lecture Series at the University of Požnač in the series "(Non-)standard in language – politics – culture."

**Kaitlyn Sorenson** (Binghamton University) recently translated the introduction from Mladen Dolar's book *Od kod prihaja oblast?*, which appeared in e-flux under the excerpted title "Freud, Slovenia, and the Origins of Right-Wing Populism": (<https://www.e-flux.com/notes/505443/freud-slovenia-and-the-origins-of-right-wing-populism>) In translating this text, she found herself reminiscing about the Slovene translation seminar that Dr. Michael Biggins taught via Zoom in 2015.

**Richard Terselic** writes to share some family history. He notes: My father's side lives in the area near Krško in the village of Vihre. Ferdinand Trselić would probably be a cousin of mine. He was in his 20s when World War II ended and worked on the family farm. Post-war conditions in Slovenia were difficult and he decided to leave the country. However, it wasn't that easy to do so legally. He heard that the French Foreign Legion was recruiting and had a recruiting station operating in Czechoslovakia. He covertly crossed the border, made it to the recruiting station, and enlisted for five years. After basic training, he was sent to Indochina, where the French were fighting the Communists. He completed three years of service there when, while driving the French version of a Jeep, he hit a land mine and was killed. His pension came back to his mother in Vihre.

# 2022 ASEES PANEL REPORT

BY TIM POGACAR

The annual convention of the Association of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies was held 10–13 November 2022 in Chicago. A conference theme was “**precarity.**” Scholars from Slovenia presented on Slovene people in precarious situations during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dr. Petra Svoltjšak, organized and chaired the 11 November meeting, devoted to “**Precarious Workers, Wound Healers, Nobility, and Soldiers: Different Images of Precarity in the Long Nineteenth Century.**”

**In the convention program,** Dr. Svoltjšak explained that the nineteenth century was a time of great change in the Habsburg Monarchy. The precarious situation arising from the social transformation affected all sections of the population. In Carniola, the urban population consisted of a relatively low proportion of salaried workers on the one hand and a considerable percentage of precarious workers on the other. Precarious workers were forced to search for even more precarious occasional work, to depend on scarce and insufficient formal and informal support or to combine both sources to survive. Even the hitherto prominent professions began to lose their prominence, and their holders found themselves on the brink of survival and eventually disappeared altogether.

Among them were wound healers who were among the most sought-after professions during healthcare emergencies. From the end of the 18th century, wound healers had been trained at medico-surgical lycées, but in the mid-19th century, these schools were either transformed into medical faculties or closed down. Wound healers found themselves in a precarious situation since they were being replaced by surgeons with medical degrees. Even the nobility found themselves in a precarious situation, particularly after 1848. Due to the abolition of feudalism, many lost their material basis for survival and had to cling to activities that had hitherto been considered unworthy of their status. The ultimate precarious ordeal was the First World War, in which Slovenian soldiers also took part. The war changed their views of the state and society, with which they entered the new Yugoslav reality after 1918.

**The first presentation** came from Dragica Cec (Science and Research Centre of Koper). It was on “**Living Arrangements and Everyday Life of Elderly Precarious Workers.**” Dr. Cec used data on the elderly of Ljubljana from the 1869 census to describe living arrangements from the 1820s to the 1850s. Men were usually categorized by occupation, while women were listed by family status. Elderly workers were often exposed to poverty. There was a high proportion of never married women among them. Those who did marry did so when they were older and stopped working (e.g., as domestic servants), and therefore had no children. They relied on alternative forms of cohabitation that has not been well documented in the research on family formation.

**Katarina Keber** (Scientific Research Centre SAZU, Ljubljana) spoke on “**A Vanishing Profession: Wound Healers in the Nineteenth Century.**” In the nineteenth century, physicians were scarce in the Slovenian provinces of the Habsburg monarchy, while wound healers (*Wundärzte*) were much more accessible. Many of them supplemented their income by barbering. In mid-nineteenth century, medico-surgical lycées for training wound healers were either transformed into medical schools or closed down throughout the monarchy. Licensing of surgeons ended in 1873. Wound healers found themselves in a precarious situation since they were being replaced by surgeons with medical degrees. By the end of WW I, surgeons had disappeared.

**Miha Preinfalk** (Scientific Research Centre SAZU, Ljubljana) presented on “**The Survival Strategies of the Nobility in the Long Nineteenth Century.**” In the nineteenth century, the nobility in the Habsburg Monarchy found themselves in a precarious position. Some people declined noble status because they could not afford to maintain a suitable household. Especially after 1848, when feudalism was ended, the nobility largely lost the material basis for its former way of life, leading to poverty or even the physical disappearance (extinction) of individual noble families. The nobility therefore had to find new ways of survival, from finding “ordinary” jobs to choosing unequal but wealthy partners, and other survival strategies that had hitherto been considered unsuitable for their status. Dr. Preinfalk prefaced his talk with information on the nobility since the time of the Protestant Reformation through the Napoleonic occupation.

**The final presentation was by Gregor Antoličič** (Scientific Research Centre SAZU, Ljubljana). It was entitled, “**Weapons, Death, Grief and Homesickness: The Precarious Everyday Life of Slovenian Soldiers during the First World War.**” Dr. Antoličič described the precarious everyday life of Slovenian soldiers during WW I on the basis of individuals’ stories, which were representative of experiences on the eastern and western fronts. He also described how the war changed their views of the state and society.

## COMPLETE PRINT SET OF JOURNALS AVAILABLE

As part of my ‘döstadning’ [1] I shall be getting rid of all four issues of *Papers in Slovene Studies* (1975, 1976, 1977, 1978) and a complete run of *Slovene Studies*. *Journal of the Society for Slovene Studies* from its inception, SS 1979/1, through SS 2021/22. There is one unfortunate gap: SS 1991/2 is missing. The collection does however include clean bound copies of the two *Festschriften*, SS 1987/1-2 *A Festschrift to Honor Rado Lencek on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* and SS 1989/1-2 *In Honor of the Memory of Toussaint S. Hočevar (1927-1987)*; and the Lencek volume has a printed note of appreciation, signed by Rado Lencek, inside the front cover.

If anyone wishes to have the almost-complete set, please let me know by 1 May. After that date, if anyone wants one or more single copies, let me know by 1 June. As for potential competition: ‘first come, first served.’ Note however that I shall require mailing costs — from Edmonton AB, Canada. — Tom Priestly, tpriestl@telus.net

[1] look up ‘*The Art of Swedish Death Cleaning*’

## — FROM THE — TREASURER

The annual financial report is being sent with the journal in March, along with individual dues notices. Dues can be paid by check or on the society’s website, slovenestudies.com. Thanks to members who have generously contributed to the society’s funds! — Timothy Pogačar

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