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President's Message... **NEW AND RENEWED BEGINNINGS**

Welcome to summer! For those of us in academia, whether pursuing lifelong roles as teachers or on a four-year transit visa as students, the start of summer is a time of new and renewed beginnings, plans and projects. For many students, aside from a chance to step away from their studies for a three-month mental respite doing something completely different (whether house painting or table waiting), summer can offer a chance to deepen their learning experience with a practicum, a pre-professional internship, or intensive study in a specialized summer program, either at home or abroad. It's particularly the study abroad option with its transformative, life-changing benefits that I'd like to praise here.

For students of Slovene, the single greatest summer study abroad institution of all marks its sixtieth anniversary this summer. The Slovene Language, Culture and Literature Seminar of the University of Ljubljana, a two-week intensive course of language study accompanied by a rich program of lectures, performances and field trips, has traditionally taken place during the first two weeks of July each year since the first Seminar was held in 1965. Also known by its Slovene acronym SSJKL, the Seminar has typically hosted up to 150 student and scholar participants from around the world each year, for a worldwide alumni base now numbering over 7,000. Slovenia's cumulative investment of effort, expertise and funds in this ongoing project has been enormous, and the impacts likewise have been massive and global. Among its many other achievements, the SSJKL has served as one of the chief incubators of new North American scholars in all fields of Slovene studies.

Alongside multi-year Tour de France and Giro d'Italia champions, record-breaking NBA players, Olympic gold medalists and countless other examples of conspicuous achievement, the SSJKL is yet another example of Slovenia performing above its weight. For more information visit <https://centerslo.si/en/seminar-sjkl/>

And what more apt and inspiring location for the program than Ljubljana? The combination of idyllic urban surroundings, expert instruction and a sense of the phenomenal breadth and depth of the cultural heritage conveyed by the Seminar is enough to capture the imagination of even the most distracted or jaded participant. I am convinced that even for students and scholars not of Slovene extraction and not even majoring in Slovene or Slavic studies, there is enormous potential for a program like SSJKL, based in Slovenia but drawing on outstanding Slovene content made available to them in English, to introduce them to a new culture and engage them with perennially vital questions of the humanities, arts and social sciences, broadly conceived. And we know that Slovenia can perform on a global scale well above its weight in these domains, too.

Enjoy the news assembled in this issue of our Letter and please send any news about your own endeavors in Slovene studies to our Newsletter Editor Dr. Kristina Reardon at Kristina.Reardon@gmail.com for inclusion in our fall issue. ■

Michael Biggins, President,
Society for Slovene Studies | Spring-Summer 2024

Project to Commission a statue of “Big Annie” Clemenc

BY ANITA CAMPBELL

The Keweenaw Community Fund is working to commission a bronze statue of “Big Annie” Clemenc in her hometown of Calumet, MI.

Anna Clemenc was very proud of her Slovenian heritage, and in 1913 she spoke out boldly for the thousands of immigrants who worked in the copper mines in the Iron Range of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. At the time, Calumet was the home to the largest Slovenian population in the U.S. Anna organized women across ethnic lines and formed the first Western Federation of Miners (WFM) ladies union auxiliary during the long 1913-1914 copper mining strike. She was affectionately known as “Big Annie” due to her 6’2” stature and was a brave activist, leading daily strike parades of thousands of miners, speaking out for fair wages, mine safety and social justice when women then had no voice and no vote.



Also known as America’s *Joan of Arc*, Annie was the first woman inducted into the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame in 1980 and the International Labor Union Hall of Fame in 2013. A local Calumet advisory committee felt the time was long overdue to honor Big Annie’s legacy in her hometown.

There have been several books written about Anna Klobuchar Clemenc, including: *Annie Clemenc and the 1913 Keweenaw Copper Strike* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013) by Lyndon Comstock, and a popular historical novel *Women of the Copper Country* (Atria Books, 2019) by Mary Doria Russell.

For more information about the statue project, please check out the website: www.keweenawgives.org/big-annie. There is also a Facebook page called “Big Annie Statue Project,” which is filled with many interesting historical links about her background.

We have an ambitious goal of raising \$150,000, as the several quotes we have received from sculpture studios have been that high. But we are confident and encouraged by the donations that have come in thus far to our tiny community. ■

ANNA KLOBUCHAR CLEMENC (“BIG ANNIE”)

For her service during the 1913 copper strike, “Big Annie” (1888-1956) is one of the most notable activists from a pivotal early period in the development of the U.S. labor movement.

IMAGE CREDIT:
National Park Service, Keweenaw NHP, C&H, Capello, Strike Album, #164, Annie Clemenc Heroine of the CC Strike, 1913

LAURA BASSI SCHOLARSHIP

While this year’s deadline has passed, it is worth bringing to the attention of SSS members a possible funding source for future years: The Laura Bassi Scholarship.

The Laura Bassi Scholarship was established in 2018 with the aim of providing editorial assistance to postgraduates and junior academics whose research focuses on neglected topics of study, broadly construed. The scholarships are open to every discipline.

Application deadline: 24 July 2024
Results: 10 August 2024

Interested students and junior scholars can find more on the Editing Press website: <https://editing.press/bassi>. ■

FROM THE TREASURER

2024 dues notices will be sent with volume 45 of the journal. 2024 dues remain \$20 for individuals, \$35 for joint memberships, and \$300 for lifetime memberships. Dues can be paid on the Society for Slovene Studies website using either PayPal or GoDaddy’s payment tool. Contributions to SSS funds can also be made on the website.

Timothy Pogačar,
SSS treasurer

New Members

The Society for Slovene Studies extends a warm welcome to all of this year’s new members. We look forward to future submissions from many of you to our journal *Slovene Studies*, and we encourage you to recommend membership in the Society to your colleagues, friends, and interested students! ■

SPOTLIGHT ON: DORMICE & MOONSHINE: FALLING FOR SLOVENIA

BY SAM BALDWIN

AUTHORIAL NOTE FROM SAM BALDWIN

Dormice & Moonshine: Falling for Slovenia, is a true account of how I – a mountain-loving, snow-seeking Englishman – fell in love with a 300-year-old former sausage-curing cabin on the side of a Slovenian mountain (that came with 300 problems).

As I slowly restored and renovated the house over the following decade, I fell in love with the country more and more, and when the planets aligned following a breakup, I ended up moving to Slovenia, living in the cabin as a heartbroken hermit.

The book takes readers on a journey deep into Slovenia as I start to build a new life there and explore the wild places and wild animals, the characters, the customs, and the cuisine. I share my experiences of the bucolic side to Slovenia which initially seduced me – the beekeepers, dormouse hunters, moonshine makers – and the modern side which I unexpectedly ended up becoming part of; the tech startups, the bitcoin miners, and the businesses. It's also a deeper story of where life can lead when you chase a dream, jump into the unknown, and submit to serendipity.

As many from the SSS will know, very little has been written about Slovenia – at least in English – and I wanted to add a modern account of life in the country. So far, the book has been popular with native Slovenians interested in how their country is perceived by an outsider; those with Slovenian heritage, people who love visiting or living in Slovenia, and armchair travelers who enjoy travel literature. ■



Dormice & Moonshine: Falling for Slovenia, by Sam Baldwin, is out now, available in paperback, hardback or eBook from Amazon.

EXCERPT

The following is an excerpt from Dormice & Moonshine: Falling for Slovenia, a travel-memoir by Sam Baldwin. It comes from the chapter "A Date with the Dormouse Hunter."

Within two minutes of entering The Hunter's den, I was sipping on pure dormouse oil.

The viscous liquid was the colour of pale whisky and had a mildly nutty taste. According to The Hunter, it was a natural medicine. He watched me uncork the small bottle and tip it to my lips, but his wry smile suggested that downing dormouse oil was probably not a local habit. This gift of rendered rodent had been his reply to the miniature bottle of Scotch I presented to him. I think he got the better deal.

During my research I had read that the Slovenian sport of dormouse hunting was something still practiced. Yet when I asked my Slovenian friends, most considered my enquiry idiotic:

"Who, Sam, would bother to hunt a mouse?"

I persevered and discovered that the hunting and eating of dormice – *polh* in Slovene – did indeed take place and I wanted to learn more about it. I had put my request to The Twins, and they had dutifully hunted down a real, live dormouse hunter.

The Hunter – who was also the president of the local tourist association – arrived at Snežnik Castle on a quad bike. Deeply

tanned, with dark hair and wary eyes, his handshake was firm but brief. His office was decorated with dozens of hunting trophies: an eagle, deer and chamois skulls, and several stuffed dormice. One was re-enacting the moment of death, its head stuck in a trap; another was perched on a branch, eating a beechnut. Two pet *polh* lived in a cage in the corner of his office, but being nocturnal creatures, they were curled up, sleeping out of view.

In light of my feeble Slovene-speaking ability, The Hunter had invited Ola, his English-speaking assistant, to ensure my dormouse education could be delivered

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MEMBER UPDATES

WAYLES BROWNE

Danko Šipka (Arizona State) and **Wayles Browne** (Cornell), recently edited *The Cambridge Handbook of Slavic Linguistics*, published in May 2024 with Cambridge University Press. Six contributing authors featured in the collection are from Slovenia. A link to a blog post about the book: <https://www.cambridgeblog.org/2024/05/uniting-slavists-across-the-traditions/>

MARKO JUVAN

Marko Juvan (ZRC SAZU Institute of Slovenian Literature and Literary Studies) recently published *Zadnja sezona modernizma in maj '68 : svet, Pariz, Ljubljana* (The Last Season of Modernism and May '68: World, Paris, Ljubljana) with the Ljubljana publisher LUD Literatura in 2023. It focuses on Slovenian modernism of the 1960s and 70s from the perspective of the systemic theory of world literature. It is interested in the interplay of literature, theory, and the transformative politics of the student movement in "the long 1968" and in the position of Slovenian modernist literature in the Yugoslav socialist self-management as an in-between periphery between the capitalist West and the real socialist East. The chapters in the first part examine the concepts of literary monolingualism and multilingualism, the literary world, capillary worlding, and consecration for their significance in the treatment of Slovenian literary modernism, especially in the period of the student movement, and of literature thereafter to the present.

With starting points that explain modernism beyond the Western canon and address the modernist phenomena in the Second World, the second part of the monograph discusses modernism in the context of "the imaginative proximity of social revolution" (Perry Anderson) of the global student movement, in which modernism experienced its "last season" (Franco Moretti). The idea that literature, with its internal transformation, leads to a profound change in the entire social field (from politics to morality to lifestyle) inspired the neo-avant-gardes and led to the inclusion of literary life in political protest, the production of "revolutionary literature," (post)structuralist text theory, and the poetics of modernist literary works. Slovenia, as a country on the periphery between the communist East and the capitalist West, caught up with the metropolis of Paris in the late 1960s. Even more, with the artistic group OHO and the Lacanian School of Ljubljana, concepts emerged that, precisely because of their specific peripheral genealogy, found appeal throughout the world.

TAYLOR EFTIMOV

Taylor Eftimov, a PhD Candidate at the University of Washington in the Slavic Languages & Literatures department, will be one of the students attending the University of Washington's Early Fall Start course in Kamnik, Slovenia in September. For her exploratory project during the course, she will be investigating where the literature and film of Goran Vojnovič places the most importance on the concept of the "home" or "homeland" and what these concepts mean to his characters—characters that are usually quite interestingly diasporic in nature. She plans to visit important places from Vojnovič's novels including the Fužine neighborhood in Ljubljana as well as the Istrian Coast; additionally, she also hopes to interview Goran Vojnovič while she is there. She hopes to use this work to contribute to her larger dissertation topic of the conceptions of "homeland" across the former Yugoslav region as well as within the diaspora.

NEWS FROM THE FACULTY OF ARTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

From July 1 to 12, 2024, the jubilee **60th Seminar of Slovene Language, Literature and Culture** with the title "**Metaphor in Slovene Language, Literature and Culture**" (with 107 participants from 25 countries) will be held together with a 3rd two-day international conference *Slovene at foreign universities, "Metaphor in Translation"* (with 16 participants from 11 countries). The seminar and the conference are attended by students, professors and researchers of Slovene at universities and other institutions around the world. Event website: <https://centerslo.si/en/seminar-sjlk>

The Summer School of Slovene will take place this year from July 1st to 19th. Around 100 participants from 30 countries will attend Slovene language classes either in person in Ljubljana for 2 or 3 weeks or online for 2 weeks. In addition to learning Slovene, they will have a chance to find out more about Slovene culture during the afternoon or evening accompanying programme.

<https://centerslo.si/en/courses-for-adults/courses/summer-school/>; <https://centerslo.si/en/courses-for-adults/courses/summer-school-online/> ■

SLOVENE STUDIES

JOURNAL OF
THE SOCIETY FOR
SLOVENE STUDIES

Apologies to members that the journal is behind. This summer, members will receive volume 45 (2023), which contains proceedings from a conference devoted to Rado L. Lencek's work. Volume 26 (2024) will follow in early autumn.

Book review matters should be directed to editor Timothy Pogačar for the remainder of 2024, while Peter Jurgec, University of Toronto, is on leave.

Thanks to all members for their patience and understanding!

Timothy Pogačar, editor

Slovene Studies Programs

NORTH AMERICAN PROGRAM REPORT

The latest on Slovene Studies programs throughout North America. Don't see your program? Send us a note - we'd love to include info for Fall 2024.



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

2024 EARLY FALL START PROGRAM IN SLOVENIA

From September 1st to 21st of this year, the University of Washington will conduct its first ever for-credit Early Fall Start intensive study abroad program in Slovenia. Titled "Slovenia: Language, Culture and Society at a Crossroads," the program this year will immerse fourteen UW students from many different majors and disciplines in an intensive introduction to Slovenia's history, geography, literature, art, culture, and current affairs within their wider European contexts. The program will be conducted entirely in English; students will draw on key source material made available to them in English as the focus of in-class discussions and presentations.

In addition to participating in 20 classroom hours per week, the students will learn rudimentary Slovene language skills and will complete a series of study-related afternoon field trips as well as a weekend excursion through the Adriatic Littoral, including Trieste. As a final capstone to the program, each student will also formulate and explore a topic in their major discipline or some other area of particular interest to them as it relates to Slovenia.

The program, including instruction, room and board, will be based at the former Mekinje Convent just outside of Kamnik, Slovenia, which since 2020 has functioned as a residential study facility for groups such as ours. **The program will be led and classes taught by UW Slovenists Prof. Michael Biggins and Dr. Cyrus Rodgers**, supplemented with guest presentations by a number of Slovene writers, artists, and academic experts. In 2024 the fee for the three-week program, including tuition, room and board, but exclusive of airfare to Slovenia, is \$2,500.

At present, plans are to offer UW's Early Fall Start Slovenia Program on an annual basis. Each year a certain number of student slots will be open to non-UW students for the same affordable program fee paid by in-state UW participants, with the 5 credits earned transferable to the students' home universities. We welcome inquiries about the program from students, faculty and the interested public anywhere. ■

Michael Biggins
mbiggins@uw.edu

EXCERPT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

unhindered. They led me out of the office to a small museum comprised of two rooms. The first housed stuffed versions of Slovenia's major mammals: deer, bear, boar, weasels, stoats, wolves, lynx and fox. The second was a veritable shrine to The Cult of Dormouse. Packed with polh paraphernalia, I was sure it was the most concentrated collection of dormouse wisdom in the world.

On the wall hung an illustration of a 17th-century myth that was apparently once widespread amongst Slovenia's rural folk. It depicted a winged, tailed and horned devil, armed with a whip, driving a herd of dormice into the forest. The caption read: "The Devil, the dormouse shepherd, clicked, whistled and

"The Devil, the dormouse shepherd, clicked, whistled and made a hullabaloo while chasing dormice through the woods.

made a hullabaloo while chasing dormice through the woods."

Exactly why Beelzebub was chasing dormice and making a hullabaloo about it was not elaborated upon in any further detail.

To laymen, the edible dormouse (*Glis glis*) looks much like the grey squirrel. Though it lacks the squirrel's bushy tail, the dormouse is the same colour, a similar size, and also lives in trees, eating nuts and fruit. So it seemed quite reasonable to me to ask, "Do you hunt and eat squirrels too?"

But as soon my question had been relayed, the atmosphere instantly darkened. The Hunter went silent, frowned at me, then mumbled something to Ola. She glanced at me and mumbled something back to The Hunter. No translation was provided. It was as if I'd asked if he hunted and ate baby humans. Fearing my innocent question may have offended, I quickly changed course, sheepishly asking him about the origins of dormouse hunting. ■

SLOVENE STUDIES IN THE NEWS

- **The Société des Gens de Lettres and the French Ministry of Culture recently bestowed the Grand Prize for Translation** upon Andrée Lück-Gaye, who translates literature from Slovenian into French.

A French government publication explains that Lück-Gaye acts as more than a translator. She is described as a “guide” to Slovenian literature “because, with patience and passion, but also with remarkable tenacity, she has allowed the Slovenian field, a singular linguistic and cultural universe, little frequented in France, to emerge, then to find its readers and its audience.”

Interested readers can find more online at:

<https://www.culture.gouv.fr/en/news/Translation-Andree-Lueck-Gaye-spotlight-on-Slovenian-literature>

- **Literary Hub published a short essay on the legacy of Tomaž Šalamun** by Brian Henry on 22 May. Henry synthesizes biographical notes with Šalamun’s own words, and those of critics, to create a tightly woven introduction to the seminal Slovenian poet.

Additionally, the website published four Šalamun poems in Henry’s translation: “Where Is North, Where Is South,” “Blue,” “Ether,” and a segment of *The Purpose of a Cloak*.

Interested readers can find more online at:

<https://lithub.com/to-become-a-poet-is-to-step-into-the-void-ilya-kaminsky-on-slovenian-poet-tomaz-salamun/>

- **Slovenian fiction writer Ana Schnabl authored an opinion column in *The Guardian* on 24 April entitled: “Do you speak a ‘big’ global language? Here’s what my tiny language can teach you.”** The piece recounts a recent experience she had being asked to speak German at an event, and her subsequent effort to claim her Slovenian identity linguistically.

“No language, be it *majhen* (“small”) or gigantic, has any intrinsic value,” she writes. “Its value is bestowed upon it only by its speakers who, perhaps, call those languages a home or, as it is with me, a *love* – which, I’d add, doesn’t make me a linguistic purist.”

Schnabl considers the way that “Slovene survives by loaning and expanding instead of refusing and enclosing,” contextualizing her thoughts about the role of small languages in a world that increasingly relies on *lingua francas*.

Interested readers can find more online at:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/apr/24/language-speak-big-slovene-english-german?CMP=share_btn_url

- ***National Geographic* recently published an article by Alex Crevar on 30 May about cycling and Slovenian cuisine, entitled: “What’s it like to cycle the Slovenia Green Gourmet Route?”** The itinerary spotlights culture, history and, of course, Slovenian food.

“The trail was launched in 2020, coinciding with Slovenia receiving its first Michelin stars,” writes Crevar, “as well as being named the 2021 European Region of Gastronomy.”

Crevar’s article takes readers on his own journey along the route, including rich description and quotations from local culinary experts peppered throughout.

Interested readers can find more online at:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/cycling-slovenia-green-gourmet-route>

- **AussieVision, a blog about EuroVision, offered an explanation of the literary roots of Slovenia’s 2024 submission to the song contest. Entitled “Veronika” and performed by singer/songwriter/harpist Sara Briški Cirman (stage name: Raiven), the song ultimately did not advance far into the competition. However, it did pique international interest in the figure of Veronika, who has graced the pages of the works of such authors as Oton Župancic (*Veronika Deseniška*, 1924) and Dušan Cater (*Veronika Deseniška*, 1996), among others.**

Interested readers can find more online at:

<https://www.aussievision.net/post/slovenia-at-eurovision-2024-who-was-veronika>

