



# The Linden Tree

Quarterly Newsletter of the Slovenian Genealogy Society International, Inc.

April 2020

Volume 34—Issue 2

## President's Letter by Jeff Dormish

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### NEXT ISSUE

Coming in our July issue:  
Personal letter from a son to his mother back home in Slovenia from 1946.  
*A House Named Gosak* by member Alice Gosak Gary

If you have an article to submit for publication in The Linden Tree, or suggestions for future topics of research, contact us at [info@SGSII.com](mailto:info@SGSII.com)

I hope this issue of the Linden Tree finds you well. The global virus pandemic has caused us to make big changes in our lives, some transient and others that may be long lasting. We hope the Linden Tree and



the work you have been doing on your family history will be a diversion from the daily news. We may wonder what our ancestors thought when a major national or global event occurred.

I would like to make a suggestion that you consider making a formal journal or simply writing down your thoughts about how you are personally dealing with this time and how you think your life will change. How did the country do? Do you think there will be major changes in how the country as a whole will function? What questions would you liked to have been able to ask an ancestor who experienced major events such the Depression during the 1930s or the Spanish flu in 1918? Think about what you would like share with your descendants about this time. Or it could be interesting to see how your predictions look one year from now.

Much of our genealogy work involves looking backward in time – where was your great great grandfather born, when did he come to the USA, when was your great aunt married? So we spend time going through FamilySearch, or your favorite online database or if you are able, go to Slovenia. But what about all the information that is available now from current family members? There are many types of questions to answer that can reveal aspects of your family history that won't be found in any official record.

It's always recommended that you start the process speaking to the oldest member of your family. But for many of our members we are the oldest member of our family, so we have to take this step to save stories and anecdotes about yourself or that you know firsthand about your relatives. There are many sites that provide suggestions for questions to answer but these from Ancestry and Kimberly Powell are both very worthwhile.

<https://support.ancestry.com/s/article/Interviewing-Family-Members>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/fifty-questions-for-family-history-interviews-1420705>

(See President's Letter Continued on page 2)

(President's Letter Continued from page 1)

Like many other topics, FamilySearch also has an extensive list of information on the topic of documenting family stories in print and via audio recordings. They suggest that you write one story a week (a defined goal!) and they provide 52 prompts for each of a broad range of topics (<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/52stories/>). These are samples of topics – occupations, travels, education, values, holidays and traditions. <https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/52stories-printables/>. Once all of this information is generated it can be stored in the FamilySearch Memories application (<https://www.familysearch.org/photos/>).

The company StoryWorth has an interesting service. They send a question to you each week. If you don't think that question is a good fit for you there is the option to choose a different one. You send your responses back to them and you can include photos with your story. They

compile your stories and assemble them and they are ultimately published as a book. This could become a treasured family heirloom.

There is another very important way you can help your descendants with information you have. We all have photos with people we can't identify. When the albums were originally put together every person was well known to the owner of the album. And now you have the good fortune of receiving that album and with too many photos the question "who is that" comes up. I received a whole box full of photos from a third cousin who I had only met online and unfortunately most of the photos fit into that category. We take many more photos than were taken in the past thanks to digital photography. Most photo software has the functionality to adjust the color and contrast to make the photo look gorgeous. But we often make the mistake of not identifying who is in the picture and what the event was. The

software has text fields where that information can be added. We just need to take the time to make this final step and make it a truly valuable photo. The same situation applies when are digitizing old family photos. At this point we may be the only person who can identify who is in that photo so we need to use the text fields for these new files.

Good luck with your research!

I would like to close with the sentiment of the year "Stay Safe". See you next quarter.

Powell, Kimberly. "50 Questions to Ask Relatives About Family History." ThoughtCo, Feb. 12, 2020, <https://thoughtco.com/fifty-questions-for-family-history-interviews-1420705>.

## FRANCIS COBERLY GRANT 2020

The SGSI Board of Directors is pleased to announce a grant for \$425 being offered to any SGSI member who would like to learn the Slovenian language via an online 16-week non-credit course through the Department of Modern and Foreign Languages at Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio. For more information about the courses being offered (Slovenian I and Slovenian II), follow the link to: <https://onlineslovenian.com/>

The grant, entitled the FRANCES

MIKLICH COBERLY GRANT, is offered in honor of "Franny," SGSI's beloved, enthusiastic volun-

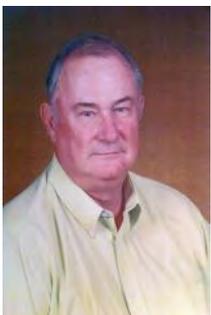
so proud to know that an SGSI member has the opportunity to learn the language.



teer who was the heartbeat of SGSI from 2008-2017. Franny passed away suddenly in April 2017. She would be

To apply for the grant, email Rose Marie Macek Jisa for an application. Deadline for entry is June 15, 2020. The grant recipient will be notified July 15, 2020. He/She must register for the Fall 2020 term classes (Slovenian 101 or 201). Reimbursement for the full amount of \$425 will be given upon providing evidence of successful completion of the course.

## THANK YOU JOE ZUPANCIC



Joe Zupancic, a member of SGSI's Board of Directors for over two terms, has elected not to seek re-election.

During his tenure, Joe established guidelines for the Frances Coberly Memorial Grant and assisted the treasurer with member donations. Among other contributions, he helped plan a one-day drive-in work-

shop in Cleveland and a weekend symposium also in Cleveland.

Thank you, Joe, for your input and participation on the SGSI Board these past seven years.

## Q & A WITH AL PETERLIN

Questions and Answers  
with Al Peterlin —  
SGSI Chairman Emeritus

### How did you decide to found SGSI?

While it may seem unusual, it was never my intent to start an organization. I first started thinking about genealogy because of a school project for one of our children. We were asked to fill out a simple family tree, and we just didn't know the answers. I decided to find the answers as a personal project. And, it wasn't as easy then as it is now.

For several years, I visited county courthouses, wrote letters to people I didn't know and who didn't know me. And, my search reached across the pond into Slovenia itself. It was a treasure trove of information although the process could be overpowering at times. Happily, I met some really helpful people. But as each pebble in the water stirred up new and more intriguing leads, I found the people providing the answers to me were as interested in what I was finding out as I was.

That was the start of a personal letter to everyone interested. It grew into a newsletter. The newsletters spread more than I ever dreamt. And soon I was being invited to speak to a group

here and there. Soon, friends and relatives were offering me book collections from their grandparents. Few could speak Slovenian so the books were of no need to them. My poor wife, Barbara, watched as our garage turned into a library of old books no one else seemed to want.

By 1986, I was collecting so many books, giving so many talks and writing out what was a newsletter that I thought it time to actually formalize my activities into an organization, The Slovenian Genealogy Society.

### How were you able to grow the group into such a large widely respected organization?

Again, growth was not my intent. Passing along the information I had gathered was. The interesting part is that pretending you are an organization soon makes you become one.

People started to ask for help, requiring more time than I could offer. At the same time, others were offering to help the organization. In a sense, I was forced into letting others join in and help. That in fact may be the key. Good, great, helpful people came out of the woodwork and made the SGSI into an organization. The only way I could thank or even mention them all is to go back to the newsletters. Many are documented

there. None of them ever sought any credit, but they are the ones who built the organization. And, even when I decided it was time to step down, people like Rose Marie, Betsy, and now Jeff stepped in and improved everything about the organization.

### Did you know people in Slovenia with a genealogy background when you started?

When I started, I knew nothing about genealogy or the more common terminology family history. I started with a book called the Source, moved to reaching out to the LDS library and then wrote directly to the archives and churches of Slovenia.

Genealogy may be the only arena where the experts seem more interested in letting the learner become the expert and teach them. At every step of the way, each genealogy source seemed to say, "This is what I know. What do you know? If you learn anything new, get back to me." I never met anyone in genealogy who acted like "I know more than you." I always felt they felt "We're in this search together." And, for me, I always felt the most important person in the search was not the organiza-

(See Q&A Continued on page 4)

(Q&A Continued from page 3)

tion or even an organization. Each search was about **one** person, every person, one at a time. That is what I loved. We each have a story, and it's interesting.

### **What are some significant discoveries you have made while searching your family's history?**

I guess I could say I thought each piece of information I gathered about the members of my family were significant. *But, maybe the most important would be that you don't ignore those living with you as you look back. Do it together. I think I could have done a bit better in this regard.*

Genealogy is more than three significant dates, although they are milestones to collect. It is about the journey. The most significant thing I have taken from my search is that all the things we do are important, and that unless we jot down a diary recognizing how unique we are, your children and great grandchildren will never know you. I don't mean documenting the momentous issues in your life. I mean the daily day-to-day struggles, joys and people you meet. Leaving a legacy is not how much money you leave. It's about leaving a breadcrumb on the ground so others can follow the trail of your life.

### **Do you have any special memories of your trips to Slovenia?**

I have too many special memories to even mention. I did write up some thoughts on my trips in SLOVENIJA magazine. If I had to pick just a few, visiting my grandfather's house was special. Kneeling in the family pew in the family church was another. The first time I stepped off the plane and touched Slovenian soil was really something, a feeling too hard to explain.

And, as an American, it is almost impossible to describe the feeling of being on our first conference in Slovenia when 9/11 changed the outlook of the world. Not the type of genealogical memory one wants, but still, that just might be what I was talking about. I was there on my grandfather's homeland when my homeland was attacked. Forged together in memory forever.

### **Do you have any advice for our members as they begin their research?**

I think I would say, do it your way. Importantly, join our organization. It's an amazing way to start your search and a great way to document everything you learn. But, the necessary thing is to start, one step at a time. Be as organized as you can be, but don't be afraid to follow the side notes wherever they lead. Wander a bit through the leads, and widen the search. Look into an ancestor's brother and you learn more about

your ancestor. Pull the loose string. See what unfolds.

### **So, What now?**

The interesting thing about genealogy is that the ability to search and look never ends. My formal leadership in SGSI remains a highlight of my life, but I wait eagerly each quarter for the newsletter to stay in touch.

My life remains full and I am blessed, truly blessed, with a loving wife and family. Our health is good and we finally have lots of time available to enjoy each other and to do the things we enjoy doing.

Besides family I have two projects to keep me busy:

I write country music and perform under the stage name Three Past Sunset. My original songs are all available on iTunes, etc.

My business interest remains weather. I've opened a web site <https://thepatientandweather.com>. I have always heard that weather impacts human health. I think I have found a way to actually predict the weather risk of a migraine or headache for people who are sensitive to weather. I would love to have everyone visit the site. If you suffer migraines or know someone who does, have them contact me.

## **SGSI RECEIVES GRANT FROM THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA**

**W**e are pleased to announce that SGSI has received a grant in the amount of EUR 2500 (~\$2700) from the Republic of Slovenia, Government Office for Slovenians Abroad. The grant is designed to provide financial support for the preservation and development of Slovenian identity outside the Re-

public of Slovenia. An important part of the application process is to show how your group has supported the Slovenian community. Our outreach activities in 2019 included promoting our organization and providing information regarding our research resources during the spring Kurentovanje parade in Cleveland,

Ohio, as well as Slovenefest, an annual event in July, that takes place at SNPJ in Pennsylvania. We also pointed out the improvements to our website which is used by our members based in the U.S., Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ireland and Slovenia.

## SGSI INDICES—INVALUABLE GENEALOGY RESOURCES

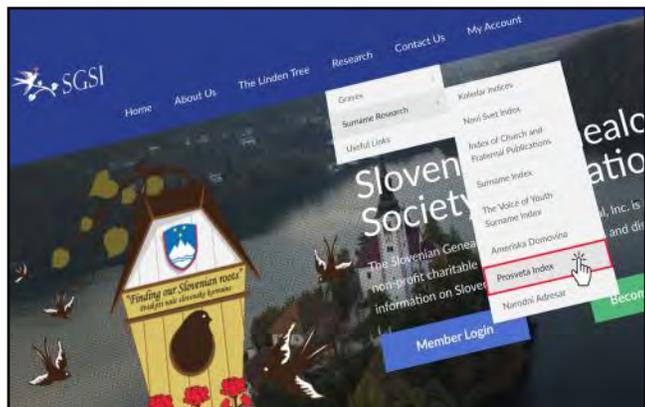
by Rose Marie Macek Jisa

As an SGSI member, you have access to resources on the SGSI website under the RESEARCH category found on the Home Page. The three classifications listed are “Graves,” “Surname Research,” and “Useful Links.” This

(Slovenska Narodna Podporna Jednota in Slovene). It was/is sent to every member of the Society. Patricia Pate, an SGSI volunteer, compiled this index using microfilms of thousands of editions of the Prosveta from 1916 to 2008. She referenced each surname citing the edition, year, page number, and column number for each entry, oftentimes finding numerous references for an individual.

only to have insurance, but more important, to have an avenue for social and cultural activities. So, whether or not SNPJ is familiar to you, it behooves you to check this index. You may find your families’ surnames, and if not theirs, those of your aunts, uncles, cousins, friends.....

A few more words about this index: When you click on the Prosveta Index in the RESEARCH category, the first paragraph has a link to **Prosveta Preface** where you can learn more about the publication such as names of members who died during the 1918-19 flu epidemic and those who served in the armed services during WWII. The second paragraph gives information on how to use this index. If you find references dated from 1916-1948, you can retrieve these yourself by clicking the link to **Directions for Accessing Prosveta Newspapers 1916-1948** and following the step-by-step directions to access the NUK—the National and University Library in Ljubljana. They have digitized these years! For references after 1948, record the refer-



To assist you even further, she added other helpful “clues” as follows: If you find an entry has a number directly following the surname, this indicates the person’s age at death and tells you there is an obituary in this edition, a perfect finding as the obit normally cites the Slovene village/town of birth. If a “p” appears at the end of an entry, there is a photo. Some page numbers are listed with the letters S or E preceding the number. This indicates the reference is written in Slovene (S1, S2, etc.) or English (E1, E2, etc.) This method was used when the newspaper had both a Slovene and an English section.

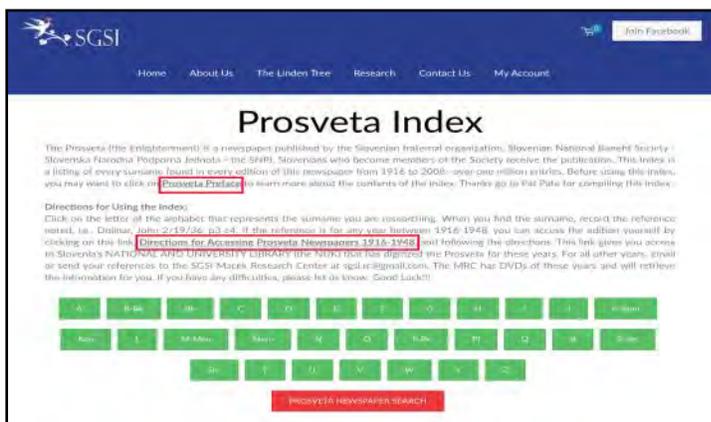
article focuses on the Surname Research classification where you will see several titles written in both Slovene and English followed by with the word “Index” (plural Indices).

Just what is an index and how does it apply to genealogy? We understand it as “Go to the back of a book and see an ‘alphabetical listing’ of important contents.” Each entry references a page so you can find what you are looking for quickly. For genealogical purposes, an index is likewise an “alphabetical listing,” but only of “last names and first names” (referred to as “surnames” in this collection). These surnames are taken from Slovenian newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, books and other written works making it easier for you, the researcher, to find information quickly.

This article concentrates on one of the indices of a Slovenian newspaper, The PROSVETA (The Enlightenment) published by the Slovenian National Benefit Society (SNPJ)—

By now, you might be thinking, “I don’t remember anyone in my family ever mentioning SNPJ!” Maybe not, but remember your families came to America in the early 1900s (some earlier and some later). They affiliated with fraternal organizations not

ence(s) email to [sgsi.rc@gmail.com](mailto:sgsi.rc@gmail.com). Our volunteers will retrieve the information for you from DVDs the SNPJ has given to SGSI.



## MADONNA OF THE KITCHEN

by Sedaj L Tesch



“My mother is my friend  
Who shares with me her  
bread  
All my hopelessness  
cured!  
Her company makes me  
secured!”

— Israelmore Ayivor

What a trying period of uncertainty it’s been for us all over the last few months. What seemed to be an effortless, free-spinning of our workaday world is now reduced to a helpless stationary space of the unknown marked by intermittent feelings of fear and loss. I indeed found myself stuck in the anxiety of it all. But throughout this time, a strange calm began to settle over me, a stillness you might say. I found myself remembering my grandparents’ home in Montana. A tide of sweet recall returning me to a place of long ago, where a simple life was a life well-lived. The garlic sausages hanging in the smokehouse, my grandfather’s grand garden, the buckets of fall apples whose aroma withdrew after running headlong into the smell of bread in the oven as you walked onto the porch. I longed to be there, and I soon had this overwhelming urge to make bread. Yep, make bread! I needed to feel connected—to get my hands sticky and create something tangible that takes me back to a more peaceful time. It turns out, thousands of others were feeling the same!

Kruh (bread) was always my great comforter growing up (still is today!). Is there nothing more heavenly than the wafting aroma of freshly baked bread? Nothing as delicious as sop-

ping pillowy chunks into olive oil or butter? I come from a long line of breadmakers (sadly, I did not follow). And not just homemade bread every now and then, but pounding out countless loaves every week. My mother, Marlene Matranga (nee Mourich), is 82 and still makes a batch or two every week using her commercial-grade bread pans! She learned from her mother, Mary Mourich (nee Zobec), and her grandmother, Ursula Mourich (nee Sedej). The women on my Slovenian side ensured our families’ survival and state of happiness through the craft of making bread.

Our matriarch, Ursula, was called “Mott” by all who lived in the coal-mining community. When researching my genealogy, her name was at the forefront of family stories and community oral histories. I learned this quiet, simple, plain woman who emigrated from Stara Oselca in the Gorenjska -Poljane region of Slovenia made bread every day. She was the only midwife within a 10-mile radius covering three Montana mining communities and delivered more than a dozen babies. She would cobble shoes and send them to family and friends in her village in the old country, long since ravaged by war. One touching oral history comes from an older man who grew up in Montana and had beautiful memories to share of Mott. He was only a small boy from a poor mining family and lived at the end of the road of the mining community they now call Scotch Coulee. Often going without food for days, he and his brother and sister would walk to the Mourich house and knock on the door. Mott greeted them quietly, not saying a word, and led them to the kitchen

table. She would bring out big blocks of cheese and bologna and would cut thick slices of bread, making sandwiches three to four inches high. They were grateful to Mott and loved her for the kindness that she gave.

It seems the central theme of this article was to share my longing to make bread and my need to reconnect with the people and places that bring me comfort. But, maybe I was picking up on what we are all feeling? Perhaps it is the heartbeat in all of us to find that same appreciation for comfort...and peace. So let us celebrate the little things in our lives—like family and friends, and one another in our communities and brotherhood (SGSI). And while we’re at it, let us celebrate all the mothers and grandmothers for their gifts of strength and comfort as we take things one day at a time. Let’s make Mother’s Day special this year. And lastly, in this present day of uncertainty, let us be thankful for good food...and bread. Yes, I’m quite proud to say that I make two delicious loaves of bread a week now, and I’m on the hunt for sources of flour—that is currently out of stock. But when the fear of the unknown rises up, the bread rises up with it and I hear the Slovene women of my family say, “You’ve got this”!

## SGSI DONOR LIST 2019

The SGSI Board of Directors thanks each of you for your generous financial support throughout 2019. Your generosity enables us to help other Slovenians find their families and preserve our culture. We could not do this without you.

**\$500 and up**

Patricia A. Harmon  
 Mary E. Pluth  
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<b>Financial Condition</b>	
<b>Year Ending December 31, 2019</b>	
<b>REVENUES</b>	
Contributions	\$12,474
Program Services	1,059
Membership Dues	9,699
Misc. Income	1,140
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$24,372</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Donation to Slovenian Archives	\$1,000
Rent and Utilities	6,151
Repairs and Maintenance	570
Printing and Postage	1,065
Gift Shop Supplies	238
Office Expenses	405
Depreciation	185
Advertising	200
Insurance	1,733
Travel Mileage/Meetings	853
Website Maintenance	1,414
Bank and PayPal Fees	269
Other Expenses	925
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$15,008</b>
Excess for Year	\$9,364
Net Assets-January 1, 2019 (corrected)	\$69,205
Net Assets-December 31, 2019	\$78,569
Submitted by Lorraine M. Kaup, SGSI Treasurer	



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