

The voice- Of Slovenia

Year 2/No 27
November - December 2002

**Rather than being strictly a Slovenian Club we are now
a multi cultural club and proud of it.**



Lesley Blefari ..we'd love to see you

One day late last year, I was offered the challenge of managing the Triglav Club now called St Johns Park Panthers (Triglav). My first question... Where is St Johns Park?

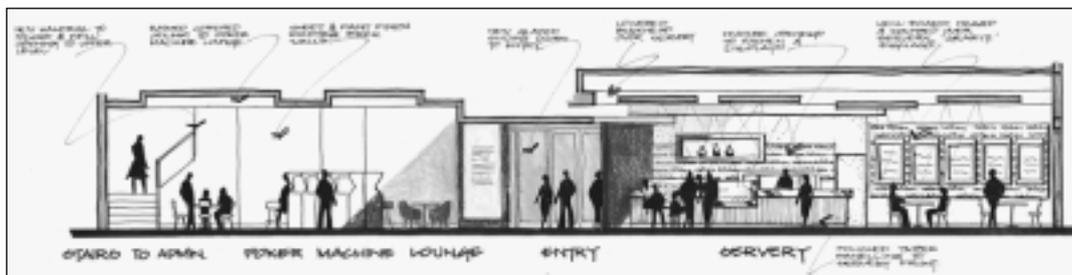
I am Lesley Blefari the General Manager of the St Johns Park Panthers (Triglav) Club with fifteen years of experience behind me in almost every aspect of hospitality and club life. This seemed to me to be a great challenge, and I have never been able to resist learning more about European culture.

After working with the original founders of the club and the people who have adopted it as their home away from home, I can feel their passion for what they have achieved and have slipped very easily into their fold. I have a great respect and understanding for their pride and their sense of loss. I am hoping that slowly the Slovenian people will see that they are now in partnership with Panthers to ensure the survival of this magnificent symbol of survival in a new country.

The Panthers Group believes this club has huge potential and in fact consider the potential so great that St Johns Park Panthers (Triglav) has been given priority over many other clubs in the group. All we need is 1% of the disposable income in this area and we'll be extremely successful. Already trade has increased due to longer trading hours, functions are booked every weekend and poker machine revenue is up. We have Slovenian people slowly rediscovering us again and neighbours choosing us rather than the larger clubs down the road because we provide friendly family style service.

Rather than being strictly a Slovenian Club we are now a multi cultural club and proud of it. We welcome all nationalities to visit us and have found ourselves a niche market in this area due to our flexibility and acceptance of rich and dear traditions. For example, in the last few months we have hosted a Hindu Wedding, Tongan Engagement, Filipino Wedding Anniversary, Assyrian Birthday party and of course our regular Slovenian get-togethers.

Having said that we are now a multi cultural club, we still maintain a great emphasis on Slovenian heritage. That will be done in any way we can including donating to the Slovenian School at Merrylands, subscribing to the Glas Slovenije - Voice of Slovenia magazine for anyone to borrow, buying special books from Slovenija, maintaining the monument in the courtyard, running regular Bocce competitions and the dinner-dance each month.



The club is due for renovation as quickly as possible with a modernisation of the entire building, upgrade of the car park, new and modern catering facilities and an extra function room opening into the courtyard. Panthers Group will be spending around \$3.3M on us. My plans... to be the most successful small club in the Panthers Group but we need your support.

....Come and visit us soon if you live in Sydney or next time you visit Australia if you live overseas. We'd love to see you.

In the meantime may I wish everyone, no matter where you live, a very happy Christmas and may your hopes and dreams come true in 2003.

Christmas in Slovenia

Christmas is the most popular religious and family holiday in Slovenia, too. It has a long tradition of veneration and celebration, filled with the archaic Indo-European heritage, interwoven with later Christian performances. Christmas, which means in Slovene "little god" is connected with celebration of the myth of the Sun god and his son. It is set at the time of the winter solstice, when the old sun dies and is again re-born. It is the period around 25th December, when the old Indo-European peoples celebrated the new year, the start of a new cycle on the 'birthday of the invincible Sun God - Dies natalis Solis invicti.'

There are so many customs, beliefs, superstitions, traditions and magical events connected with Christmas in Slovenia that one could barely fit them into a thick book. The majority are part of the common European heritage, like the cult of greenery, fire and water and fortune telling and charming, giving presents, carol singing, Christmas baking, and later Christian additions, in which the Sun's is replaced by Christ's 'light of green fulfilled by the Christmas fir. Christmas fir only arrived here in the middle of last century from German lands, and the atmosphere of the crib, which came to Ljubljana in 1644 with the Jesuits. The most recent addition is actually written greetings cards, which appeared here, as elsewhere, in the 20s of the 19th century. Christmas songs by foreign and domestic authors are also very typical of Slovenia, as well as Miklavz (St. Nicholas), Christmas and New Year Fairs.

Apart from Christmas decoration, the oldest sign of Christmas is Christmas baking which also extends back to the pre-Christian period. The Christmas loaf differs from region to region. Three types are normally baked: wheat, rye and buckwheat.

These formerly ceremonial breads, with which various additions are associated, have magical properties and bring both people and animals health, strength and energy. The well-known Slovene carol singers are also connected with Christmas, New Year and the Three Kings. They are mentioned by Primoz Trubar, author of the first printed Slovene book (1550). The carol singers brought a blessing to the house for the coming year, health and luck to people and animals. They also walked through the town, as successors to the former early Slav pagan singers with the same role.

Slovene people speak of three Christmases: the real one and two little Christmases (on New Year's Day and the Three Kings). On these days, every family burned incense and the smoke brought magic power and, at the same time, expelled demons. Christmas is thus a truly hallowed and magical time.

Text by: Damjan J.Ovsec

Ali se da po slovensko? Se da! *Say it in Slovenian? Yes, we can!*

Zadnji dve leti so imeli v Sloveniji burne razprave glede zakona o rabi slovenščine kot uradnega jezika Slovenije. Eno izmed glavnih vprašanj je, kako zaščititi uporabo slovenščine? Stanje in ohranjanje slovenskega jezika je velika skrb v Sloveniji danes, nič manj kot v preteklosti. Vendar Slovenija danes ni edina dežela, ki se èuti ogroženo in èli zaščititi svoj jezik. Vpliv angleščine predvsem preko medijev èutijo vse evropske države in na različne načine šèitijo uporabo svojega jezika. Zakoni, ki se nanašajo na zaščito jezika kažejo, kako pomemben je jezik kot odprta suverenosti, in enakopravnosti, celo obstoja naroda. Za to je odlièn primer zgodovina slovenskega naroda.

V Avstraliji imamo seveda neprimerno večji problem s slovenščino. Druga in tretja generacija, še razumeta nekaj slovenščine, ker starši ali vsaj stari starši govorijo slovensko, vendar otroci ne govorijo več. Kakšni so izgledi za èetrto generacijo? Kot avstralska Slovenka druge generacije imam svoje misli o tem. Slovenski jezik me zanima kot bistveni pojav slovenske kulture, iz katere izhaja moj rod. Močnosti za uèenje obstojajo, imamo jih celo več. Slovenščina se bo v Avstraliji lahko obdržala, seveda èe bo volja. Svoje misli o tem bom povedala v angleškem jeziku, tako da bodo lahko brali moji sovrstniki in vsi, ki se zanimajo za ohranjanje jezika.

Spoken Slovenian is rapidly diminishing amongst the second and third generations born in Australia. Several reasons are given by the parents from Slovenia, as well as their children born in Australia: it is easier to speak in English, English is the important language to learn, and Slovenian isn't necessary. There is no doubt that it takes great effort to maintain, or develop knowledge of another language, albeit Slovenian or any other language which one learns at home, or at school. In the case of second and third generation Slovenians, who

already have some understanding of the language, they can maintain the language heard at home, and progress well - with some effort and some formal tuition. I refer to the case where both parents speak Slovenian, or where the children have learnt some Slovenian from members of the extended family such as grandparents, and there are cases where one parent is from Slovenia, and the children still have some knowledge of the Slovenian language.

The opportunity to learn Slovenian language at school has long been available in metropolitan Melbourne. It is a secondary school subject, offered as an elective subject on Saturday mornings by the Victorian Education Department. Slovenian is amongst the forty-three languages available throughout Victoria at secondary level, and has been available as an optional school subject at secondary level in Melbourne and Geelong since 1977, and in Sydney since 1978. Many more parents could have taken up this opportunity for their children. One major constraint is that the classes are held weekly on Saturday mornings, and coincide with sporting activities, and tuition in dance and music. In Victoria, the Slovenian associations have in the past provided Slovenian language classes at pre-primary and primary level on other days of the week. Some of these classes have closed due to lack of interest.

Why haven't parents who are second generation Slovenians, and still know the language take these educational opportunities? it is possible with sufficient class sizes to run sessions on other days of the week also. Why do most third generation Slovenians only speak in English, even though they understand Slovenian?

I believe it is important that children be at least given the opportunity to learn Slovenian from an early age, and are encouraged to converse in Slovenian. Language is a part of one's heritage, and it is

parents' responsibility to hand on their knowledge. Children need to be given a real opportunity to learn it at the ideal age, when it is easily absorbed, that is, when they are learning to speak. Later when children begin to acquire the language of the environment, it becomes more difficult. However with some commitment the language of the home and family can be maintained and developed further, parallel to the language of the school. In Melbourne, the Slovenian Religious and Cultural Centre runs the Slomšek School, with classes at pre-primary and primary level. A fortnightly conversation session is available there for

contemporary Slovenian society. I also have interest in learning more languages, and found that Slovenian gave me a good basis for understanding other Slavic languages and was used in my Sanskrit studies. I also discovered another dimension Slovenian language; in the writings of many fine contemporary Slovenian poets and writers, whose works are also published in many other languages. Another option, and one that all learners eventually consider, is to go to Slovenia, and learn the spoken language there; this is possible at secondary level, as well as for the adults. To develop language skills further, speaking skills, a longer stay in Slovenia is ideal.



adults. The Slovenian Association Planica offers regular classes at primary level. There is also the option of private tuition.

On a personal note, I treasure the knowledge of Slovenian, my parents' legacy. I am a second generation Slovenian. Both parents had come from Slovenia, as a consequence of the Second World War. We spoke Slovenian only at home, and with a few family friends. Being bilingual was a matter of course. I recall that I was always pleased to have learnt another language. It is a connection to Slovenian culture, and my heritage. I developed my Slovenian language skills through reading and study. There is a wealth of resource material on the Web, where you can follow the daily news and events of Slovenian. There is also direct broadcasting of radio and television by RTV Slovenija. This has given me a channel of information about Slovenia, and is in the language of

There are various courses for Slovenian as a foreign language, which are offered by the University of Ljubljana and the Institute at Koper (for more detail look on the website www.TheZaurus.com, *Slovenian Language Resources, Slovenian Language Courses*). In 2002 at the Institute for Slovenian Studies of Victoria, the Director Sasha Ceferin, initiated the project Secondary Students in Slovenian schools. The first group of students will be attending Slovenian schools for two months in 2003, at the Diocesan School in Vipava and the Diocesan Classical Gymnasium in Ljubljana. The scholarships have been funded by the Office for Slovenes Abroad and the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport. The principals of both schools, Vladimir Anèel and Joèe Mlakar, responded with great interest and were pleased to participate and host the students.

There is an upsurge of interest for Slovenian language

Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year



study amongst second and third generation Slovenians in Australia. Many visit Slovenia and for the first time discover the real Slovenia of today - a modern European country and culture, with a remarkable and long history. They tend to be familiar with only a few aspects of Slovenian culture, traditions, customs, and cuisine, as practiced by their parents' generation. They are interested in speaking with relatives and friends in Slovenian, even though English is widely spoken among the younger generations. They soon find out that one learns much more about a culture through language. Consequently they are interested in attending language classes. Many indicate a preference for shorter courses. Often they understand some Slovenian but need the skills to be able to speak, read and write.



Sandi Ceferin, Sasa Ceferin and Aleks Kalc

In recent years, there is an ever-increasing demand for more self-study materials for Slovenian language. I was drawn into a very exciting and most creative language project of the Institute for Slovenian Studies of Victoria, the first comprehensive online Slovenian language course for beginners. This happened because of interest in Slovenia for such a course. Working in a dedicated team, we completed first the research into learning technologies and applications, and then the online course within three years.

We submitted the outline of the proposal in Slovenia at the end of 2001. Our online course has been designed, and customised for independent learning; it is self-paced, a systematic program, and self-assessed, with an audio component. The course is flexible, incorporating all the best practices of progressive language study methodology. A tutor referral programme can also be incorporated. We invested a lot of time and resources, because we believe this course would give Slovenian language learners a good basic grounding in the language. It would be suitable for those who cannot attend classes, or attend university courses in Slovenia, or stay there for a longer period necessary for language acquisition. The latest news is that an online course will be produced in Slovenia, and the first step will be to find students' needs. We may have to explore other options of producing language materials in another format, as learning technology programming is a time-consuming and therefore costly process.

Leaning language has always been a challenge. It is a complex process, requiring time and persistence. It is the key to learning about a culture; the rewards are great. One learns more about the world and oneself through the process.

*Sandi Ceferin
 Melbourne, December 2002*

Sports too Much on the Minds of Slovenians

Ljubljana, (STA) - The two minutes of emotion provided by athlete Jolanda Ceplak upon winning the women's 800-metre run at the European Championships in Athletics held in Vienna was selected the event of the year by the listeners of the public Radio Slovenija. For what we know, Ceplak actually broke the world record - but there are too many records to keep score of, Slovenia's leading daily Delo says on Monday.

The public radio broadcaster has marked Slovenian culture and history with many cult shows, ultimately coming up with the "Event of the Year". As the last few selections have shown, Slovenians are difficult to understand. Many occasions have marked their history over the past decade, yet their favourite events insist on being related to sports, the paper points out under the headline "Event of the Year".

Last year, the event of the year was Slovenia's qualification for the football World Cup, the year before, the title of course had to go to extreme skier Davo Karnicar's skiing from the top of Mt Everest, the paper observes.

Up until a few years ago, "The Event of the Year" was quite a serious matter, representing public-opinion on everything that the nation had failed to or did not dare afford. Now, it has been profaned to the level of sports events, Delo points out.

This fact, the daily adds, may be seen as both positive and negative. It testifies to the strong spirit of the nation, which has strengthened over decades of fighting for survival, but at the same time it points to a new kind of nonchalance.

Scandinavians can afford that, but Slovenians have been in the midsts of politics and wars for too many a decade - it would be ridiculous and irresponsible to take the distance, Delo comments on the fact that sport - instead of politics - has become the only thing that Slovenians still jive for.

But the Slovenian territory is far from Mt Everest or the 800-metre course that Jolanda can run faster than anybody else. All this sporting curriculum cannot and must not be the final range of Slovenians' desires and ambitions, the paper concludes.

SE European Markets a Challenge for Slovenian Enterprises

Ljubljana, (STA) - There are over 105,000 small and medium-sized companies, employing between 5 and 250 workers, in Slovenia, which represents 99.7% of all enterprises in the country. According to Velko Glaner, head of public relations at the small business promotion centre (PCMG), the main problems these enterprises face are the lack of financial support and self-confidence when entering foreign markets, while their greatest challenge are the SE European markets.

From 45 to 50 percent of workers in Slovenia are employed by small and medium scale enterprises. In the recent years, their number has stagnated, as enterprises have settled their business organisation, production and employment policy.

The main problem these enterprises face is the question of gaining financial means for their current projects and services, or for the development of business in Slovenia and abroad. Financing is a great a problem in weaker, as well as in the successful enterprises, said Glaner.

Most of the small and medium enterprises which have decided to enter foreign markets have been successful. However, problems with foreign competition are caused mainly by language barriers and often over-modesty or lack of self-confidence. Because of this businesses do not show everything they have to offer, Glaner told STA.

Another problem Slovenian enterprises are facing is a rather expensive workforce. In order to prepare them for foreign markets, the Slovenian Economics Ministry, Labour Ministry and PCMG organise seminars and workshops for small and medium scale enterprises. Media is another means of keeping them informed.

The SE European markets are Slovenia's greatest challenge. Familiarity with the mentality and old business connections in the republics of the former Yugoslavia is undoubtedly a great advantage for enterprises. Former Yugoslavia used to be one of Slovenia's main export markets.

According to Glaner, the rising importance of the stability pact is due to connect Slovenian enterprises with the southern countries. It is to help the development of business exchange between Slovenia and the republics of the former Yugoslavia.

Leter from cricketers in Slovenia

Greetings and lep pozdrav to all members of the Slovene community in Australia from all cricketers here in Slovenia. As perhaps you already know, we have been playing cricket here in Slovenia since 1997. Initially Ljubljana Cricket Club was founded by a group of keen ex-pats, but since then we have expanded our activities, and we are now introducing cricket into schools in Slovenia, coaching local people and generally attempting to give the game deep roots here. For example, only on Tuesday of this week a group of six of us (including two Slovenes who were introduced to the game here) went to Skofiska Clasicna Gimnazija in Sentvid, Ljubljana to demonstrate cricket to a group of 16/17 year olds. We had a two hour session, with in the end about 60 kids playing the game for the first time. The sports teachers were so enthusiastic about it that they have asked us to go back next week for a second session. General information about us and cricket in Slovenia is available on our club website, at <http://www.ljcricket.com/>

At present there is only one cricket club here in Slovenia, in Ljubljana. We play in the Austrian league, as well as welcoming visiting sides from a variety of different countries. In 2001 we were pleased to welcome the Australian Crusaders to Slovenia.

We are in the process of registering the National Cricket Association as a drustvo, and setting up a juniors club in Ljubljana. Our plan is to hold the inaugural National Junior Championship, an 8-team tournament in Ljubljana in June 2003. Our ground is at Valburga pri Smedniku, about 15km north west of Ljubljana. In 2003, we will establish a second ground in the city of Ljubljana on land being provided by Mestna Obcina Ljubljana. The new ground is essential to increase the profile of and awareness of cricket in Slovenia, and to enable us to set up decent training and practice facilities. In a very important recent step forward, we were lucky enough to secure an excellent sponsorship deal with Harvey Norman, who have this year opened their first European outlet in Ljubljana. We are hoping to expand our activities as much as possible in the future. We would like to establish contacts with the Slovene community in Australia in order to promote the development of cricket in Slovenia. Our ambition is that cricket should be played in every school in the country, and that cricket should be the number one summer sport here. In particular, in pursuit of this we would identify the following areas of possible support:



1. If there are any members of the Slovenian community in Australia who would like to play cricket and perhaps do a little coaching on their next visit to Slovenia, we would be delighted to welcome them.

2. In the medium term, we would be very keen to send talented Slovene children to Australia on cricket scholarships. This project would obviously require sponsorship, so if there is anyone in the Slovene community in Australia who might be interested in helping us with this, we would ask you to contact us.

3. The expansion of our activities here obviously involves some cost. Should there be anyone in the Slovene community in Australia who might be interested in supporting cricket in Slovenia via provision of cricket equipment or other material support we would be delighted to hear from them.

Most important of all, however, would be the establishment of contacts between cricket lovers in Australia and in Slovenia. We would be delighted if you could forward this message to as many individuals and organisations in the Slovenian community as possible. Once again, best wishes to all of you from all cricketers here in Slovenia, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards, Alasdair Green Secretary, Ljubljana Cricket Club

Sports Journalists Name Ceplak and Pegan Best Athletes of 2002

Ljubljana, (STA) - Runner Jolanda Ceplak and gymnast Aljaz Pegan are the best Slovenian athletes of the year 2002, according to the association of Slovenian sports journalists. Ceplak and Pegan received the awards on Sunday evening at the Ljubljana conference and arts centre Cankarjev dom.

New Helicopter for Border Control

A 7.3-million euro contract was signed by the Slovenian Defence Ministry and the Italian-British company Agusta Westland on the purchase of an A109 Power helicopter. As Defence Ministry official Edvard Kraševac said on this occasion, the helicopter is expected to be supplied in April 2004, and would be used to control the state border as well as in rescue operations. This means however, that on the basis of a special agreement with the Defence Ministry, the plane will be used by the Interior Ministry, or its airborne police unit. The government took a decision to buy a helicopter for the purpose of control of the state border from part of the money that was supposed to be used for the purchase of a Falcon 900 EX jet. Following harsh criticism of its wastefulness, the government decided to buy a cheaper jet - Falcon 2000 EX - and to allocate the surplus to buy a helicopter.

Slovenia's Most Promising Company is Gorenje

Ljubljana, 23 December (STA) - Gorenje, Slovenia's leading household appliance manufacturer, leads the chart of top 100 Slovenian companies, published in the latest issue of the business weekly Gospodarski vestnik (GV) on Monday. The company, seated in the NE Slovenian town of Velenje, gathered 73 of 132 points in the GV survey, making it the country's most promising enterprise.

Joze Stanic, general manager of Gorenje, explained that the company's progress has increased rapidly over the recent years, mainly because of export activity. He stressed that with growth expected to slow in the next few years, main export markets are to prove even more crucial.

Inflation and the tolareuro rate are to be important factors also for the future success of the company, Stanic said. However, the Gorenje GM remains optimistic, even about the increased competition that the company can expect to face as Slovenia joins the EU.

Two Slovenian pharmaceutical companies were the runners-up to Gorenje in the top 100 chart. Krka of Novo mesto finished second with 69 points, while the Ljubljana-based Lek was ranked third with 65 points.

Also in the top ten were: caravan-maker Adria Mobil, car-seat cover producer Prevent, telecommunications company Iskratel, the Port of Koper, rubber manufacturer Sava Tires, oil trader Petrol, mobile services provider Mobitel, logistics company Intereuropa, brewer Pivovarna Lasko and software company Hermes Softlab.

The list of the 100 most promising Slovenian companies was based on eleven business indicators in 2001. These were gathered from traditional GV charts (top 300 exporters, 300 largest companies, 300 most successful companies, 500 fastest growing companies in the last five years). Only the companies with over 50 employees were taken into consideration for the chart. Another condition was that the companies had to deliver a report on imports and exports for the year 2001 to GV and allowed the magazine to gain information on the company's businesses.

The following indicators were also taken into consideration: 2001 revenues, revenue growth, 2001 profit, earnings per employee, capital yield, indebtedness, and export-import rate in 2001.