



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NEWSLETTER

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Embassy Adoption Program

For the fourth year in a row, the Embassy of Slovenia “adopted” an elementary school class as part of the Embassy Adoption Program.

Since 1974, the Embassy Adoption Program, in conjunction with the Washington Performing Arts Society, has paired embassies with fifth- and sixth-grade classes throughout the D.C. Public School (DCPS) District. This year, the Embassy of Slovenia partners with the Turner Elementary School.

Within the Embassy Adoption Program, embassy officials and teachers from the assigned school design an individualized year-long curriculum. Based upon the latter, tutors work with their



Fifth- and fourth-grade students of the Turner Elementary School together with their teacher Ms. Crystal Wiley, School Counselor Ms. Linda Colon, Ms. Ellen Walker of the WPAS and Ms. Nuška Zakrajšek.

students to help them learn about their adoptive country, and representatives from each embassy provide cultural visits to their adopted schools throughout the year, giving the students a personalized understanding of their nation's history, culture, government, arts, food, geography, and much more.

Embassy Adoption has inspired many students to continue exploring world cultures

in high school through DCPS International Studies Program. To date, more than 45,000 youth have partnered with over 100 embassies representing countries ranging from Australia to Zimbabwe.

On Tuesday, December 2012, to open the yearly program, Nuška Zakrajšek, Public Diplomacy and Cultural Affairs officer, and Andreja Jerončič from the Embassy of Slovenia visited a fifth-grade



class at the Turner Elementary School, where they received a most welcoming reception by both staff and students, who displayed "Slovenia Embassy Welcome" posters throughout their lovely, recently completely renovated, school in Southeast Washington.

To review what the teacher, Ms. Crystal Wiley, already had taught the class and to get students better acquainted with their newly adopted country, a short movie about Slovenia was shown, followed by some interesting facts presented mostly through pictures and stories. After that, students demonstrated their gained knowledge by filling out a short quiz about Slovenia and coloring the Slovenian flag.



Presenting Slovenia.

Throughout the presentation, the children were highly interactive and curious, which was a great beginning of the Embassy Adoption Program

and cast a great outlook for children to proudly say "I FEEL SLOVENIA" after the end of the program in May 2013.

EDUCATION

Outreach Program at the Inspired Teaching School

On Thursday, December 6, 2012, Ms. Nuška Zakrajšek from the Embassy of Slovenia visited second-grade students at the Inspired Teaching Public Charter School in Northwest Washington, to give a presentation on Slovenia. Since mid-November, the students were becoming acquainted with the country, learning about the Slovenian flag and Slovenian alphabet, and listening to its traditional stories.

The last presentation on Slovenia included a sketch of its tourist attractions, national history, and culture. The kids were very excited after the presentation and had many questions about the country. They also learned about traditional Slovenian music and clothing, and tasted a traditional



Second-grade students at the Inspired Teaching Public Charter School with their teacher Ms. Latisha Coleman, Ms. Roža Oblak and Ms. Nuška Zakrajšek in the traditional Slovenian outfit.

dish, the "jabolčni zavitek" (apple strudel), home-made by

Ms. Roža Oblak, mother of one of the students.

The Fulbright Association at the Slovenian Embassy

On Sunday, December 9 afternoon, the alumni of The National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC) of the Fulbright Association were welcomed at the Slovenian Embassy by Ambassador Roman Kirn for their annual Christmas gathering. An event that included a performance by the DC jazz-piano jazz band featured also culinary tastes of different countries, since the members of the association are students, academics, people in business, and government officials that come from diverse backgrounds, but did at some point participate in the Fulbright exchange program.

The highlight of the event was the recognition of the retiring Fulbright Association Executive Director Mary Ellen Schmider, who gave a short talk. Also, the President of the



Intoductory remarks by Ambassador Roman Kirn.

Fulbright Association NCAC, Philip Lyon, recognized the most dedicated members of the Fulbright community.

The Fulbright program, supported by U.S. Congress, is the international exchange scholarship program between the U.S. and partner governments of

155 countries, among which is also Slovenia. Since 1964, when the first Educational Exchange agreement between the U.S. and the then former Yugoslavia was signed, over 350 Slovenian scholars took part in the Fulbright Exchange Program. In the last decade, up to five one-semester scholar grants and up to three nine-month student grants were awarded under Fulbright program annually to Slovenes.

On October 6, 2011, the third Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia concerning the Fulbright Exchange Program was signed since Slovenia's independence. Starting with the academic year 2012-2013, the Fulbright Program in Slovenia is jointly administered and implemented by the U.S. Embassy and the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund.



From right: Stephen Reilly, the new Executive Director of the Fulbright Association, retiring Fulbright Association Executive Director Mary Ellen Schmider, the President of the Fulbright Association NCAC, Philip Lyon, Ambassador Roman Kirn, Prof. Mark Vlasic of Georgetown University, moreover a member of the Board of Directors of the Fulbright Association in D.C.

Brestanica

Brestanica is a small town in the eastern part of Slovenia, lying in a narrow valley at the confluence of the Sava River and a minor tributary called the Brestanica. The name of the settlement was changed from Rajhenburg (from German Reichenburg) to Brestanica in 1952, as part of Slovenia's postwar government efforts to remove German elements from toponyms.

Beautiful landscape, friendly people and good culinary offers in harmony with the exciting history of Brestanica provide visitors with ample opportunities to spend an unforgettable day in this lovely place within Sremič winegrowing region. Located between the Bohor, Sremič and Eastern Zasavje hills, Brestanica is a great starting point for numerous hikes to the surrounding peaks. The most popular trail leads to the nearby



Slovenia's oldest castle Rajhenburg, first mentioned in 895 A.D.

Saint Hermagoras's church on the Srem hills. Another attraction are the Mačkovci ponds, which have become known especially for sports fishing, but are also popular with other visitors, as they lie in the idyllic forest-meadow environment and offer opportunities for boating and relaxing by the water.

On a hill on the right bank of the Sava River south of the settlement, lies Slovenia's oldest castle, Rajhenburg, which has now been reopened after more than a year of renovation. It was first mentioned in written documents dated 895 A.D., making it the earliest documented castle in Slovenia. Sitting atop a hill overlooking Brestanica, the castle museum has been enlarged and expanded with several new additions. The exhibition space has been quadrupled and a museum shop added. It now also includes a restaurant, a chocolate shop, an herb garden and a wine gallery. A display of local postcards, a permanent display of works by the sculptor Polona Demšar and of castle furniture dating to the 18th and 19th centuries are currently on view for visitors. Also, a permanent display dedicated to the Order of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance and an



Panoramic view from Bohor hill. (Photos: www.brestanica.com)

exhibition dedicated to the WWII expellees will be moved back into the castle by March 2013 and autumn 2014, respectively. Among its many owners, the Order of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance is the one best known to the public. The order, also known as the Trappists, lived in the castle between 1884 and 1945, producing and selling chocolate, cheese, and a liqueur. During World War II, the castle served as a detention center for Slovenes who were slated to be expelled by the Germans

and, after WWII, was turned into a women's prison. It finally became a museum in 1968.

The most important of several churches in and in the vicinity of Brestanica is the parish church of Our Lady of Lourdes. The basilica belongs to the Roman Catholic diocese of Celje and was built between 1908 and 1914 in a Neo-Romanesque style. Earlier, the parish church was a church in the southern part of the settlement, dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. It was first

mentioned in documents dating to 1213; however, the present building was built in 1341, with a 17th-century steeple and two 18th-century side chapels added to it. A third church in the town, close to the parish church, is dedicated to Saint Sebastian. On a hill to the east of the settlement stands another church, dedicated to Saints Hermagoras and Fortunatus. It was built in the late 15th century and has a chapel dedicated to Saint Notburga, with well preserved, high-quality wall paintings.

CULTURE

Stories from Zalog in New York

European cities are becoming a political arena of citizens' initiatives, NGOs, and other forms of activism, but we are witnessing a lack of such activities in suburbia. At the same time, we can see the extreme growth of suburbs around all cities, meaning that a huge number of inhabitants are placed out of the city. The pressure made by suburbia and their sprawl on the core of a city is not just an infrastructural issue connected with financial investment, but it brings a paradox to the contemporary city because it is increasingly losing one of its primary functions – housing. The majority of city users no longer lives in the city; home is beyond the city borders.

CULBURB project has been funded with support from the European Commission and is implemented in Prague, Ljubljana, Bratislava, Vienna, Budapest and Warsaw. The project activates the public realm in the suburbs of Central



Presentation of the project in New York.

European capital cities through acupuncture interventions. Using minimal means, these actions set up interaction among inhabitants and have an impact on community life. A first step in such a process is the improvement of public spaces in the suburbs. In the six localities, acupuncture methods are implemented with

artistic and architectural tools. The chosen interveners receive support to develop their ideas and interpretations, which can take any form that ultimately leads to socializing, reduction of barriers, enhancement of the quality of the environment, and improved community life.

Boštjan Bugarič, coordinator of the project

in Ljubljana, presented the acupunctures in Ljubljana's suburb of Zalog to wider public in New York City in Gallery MC on November 29. The stories of Zalog are the result of immigrations in former Yugoslavia, when the area experienced much immigration from other areas, which twenty years later led to a generation that has its roots in a very diverse mix of cultural backgrounds. It is not an area with a high Slovenian population, and it has proven difficult to integrate these new young people with their city. Instead they have developed their own urban identity, found their own urban hotspots, and have their own urban (non-) perspective.

With the creation of ZALOGRAD, a group of artists, architects and social researchers have started exploring the urban space of Zalog through the eyes of its youngsters. How do they relate to their 'city', what is important to them in terms of city space, how do they see the future in Zalog? The project is also about building



Acupuncture in Zalog Ljubljana (Photo: Domen Grögl).

communication and overcoming prejudices between different generations of citizens: Who are they? – Who are we?

Boštjan Bugarič's work is concerned with experiential implementation of a different socio-spatial concept often situated in the site-specificity of the new urbanity of the city. His public interventions and installations are focused on the research of social

transformations of public spaces, influence of migration processes on substantive designs of towns and cities, strategies of reurbanization of cities. He has been the founding member and the leader of KUD C3, which presents a platform for spatial research, studies of modern urban trends in public areas, and, as an applicative model, for theoretic research of public areas.

TO DO LIST

Beyond by Michael Benson

A spectacular photography exhibition of images from space.

When: Monday through Friday 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Where: Embassy of Slovenia, 2410 California Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008

More information about the work of Michael Benson on: <http://www.kinetikonpictures.com/>

SlovenSki Program for 2013

Schedule:

February: 1-3, 2013, SlovenSki weekend Windham, NY

February 15-23, 2013, SlovenSki trip to 3 Vallees, France

March 18-24, 2013, Nastar Nationals Aspen/Snowmass (qualified racers)

April 1-7, 2013, SlovenSki week in Sun Valley, ID

More information and application form: John F Kamin, 61-32 75th Place, Middle Village, NY 11379, phone: (718) 424-2711, email: jfkamin@verizon.net

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Send us your comments or request for a subscription on: vwa@gov.si,

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