

SSF HI-NOTES

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SERBIAN SINGING FEDERATION



SEPTEMBER 2005

From the Desk of the Executive Board...

• • • NEWS ALERT • • •

The latest phase of the SSF Headquarters renovations is complete!
Repeat...The latest phase of the SSF Headquarters renovations is complete!

That's the wonderful, exciting, long-awaited news! What then is the flipside of this you may ask? The fact that we are still in need of **\$10,000** to finish paying for this construction! There are a number of ways you can help:

- Sell/buy "bricks" for the "Living Wall" (see order form in all issues of the Hi-Notes). They are a steal at \$125/each! You can put anything you desire in the inscription up to 27 characters/spaces per line with 3 lines total. What a GREAT way to help your SSF AND leave your permanent mark in the library/headquarters!
- Make a choir and/or personal donation to the SSF building fund. All sizes of donations are welcome and appreciated!
- Collect donations from your church and church organizations for the SSF building fund.
- Donate the funds for items on the "wish list".

This building and everything contained within its walls is not only our history...but our future...our children's future...our grandchildren's future. In order to carry our Serbian traditions and culture forward, we must preserve, understand and embrace our past...the past that has formed the people we are. Singing and music is an intricate part of our culture and religion. Let's take care of this unique organization and incredible library/museum!

Sincerely,

Donna K. Medich, *President*
Holly Jovanovich, *1st Vice President*
Ljubi Hayden, *2nd Vice President*
Shirley Senic, *Executive Secretary*
Georgine Stoisolovich, *Assistant Executive Secretary*
Bob Jakovich, *Treasurer*
Paul Bielich, *Executive Secretary Emeritus*

Submission Deadline for next issue is
Friday, October 14, 2005.

General Ad Prices:

Full-page \$20

½-page \$10

¼-page \$5

Wish List

The SSF Library/Headquarters building has been undergoing major renovations for the last several years. The latest phase, the front facade and gutting of the office side of the building, is complete. In order to finish the decor, storage, etc., the Executive Board has compiled a "Wish List." We welcome your monetary donations to cover the costs for specific items on the "Wish List." Please note, we will not be putting individual plaques listing the donor(s) on the items, but instead will acknowledge your generous gift(s) in another form. Following is the "Wish List"

Carpet & Installation	\$3,000
Showcase Cabinets (glass).....	\$3,000
Kitchenette Serving Area Cabinets/ Sink/Faucet & Installation.....	\$2,500
Interior Paint/Labor.....	\$2,200
Furniture Fabric/Re-upholstering.....	\$2,000
Art Supplies (matting/framing).....	\$1,500
Exterior Painting.....	\$1,500
Parking Lot Re-surfacing	\$1,500
Vinyl Flooring & Installation.....	\$600
Bathroom Fixtures (Handicap accessible).....	\$540
Window Treatments.....	\$500
Refrigerator	\$300
Fire Extinguishers.....	\$175
Telephone with Answering Machine Combo.....	\$150
Microwave.....	\$100

2005 SSF Festival Raffle Results

The drawings of the 2005 SSF Festival Raffle are underway! Here are the winners thus far:

May 2005:..... Ticket #0957 held by **SSS Branko Radichevich** of Chicago, IL.

June 2005: Ticket #0374 held by **George Radman** of South Bend, IN.

July 2005: Ticket #0474 held by **Mary Lawrence** of Duluth, MN.

August 2005: Ticket #0849 held by **Milan & Joyce Visnick** of Mclean, VA.

CONGRATULATIONS to the winners!

*Be sure to purchase your 2005 SSF Festival Raffle Tickets
before the next drawing!*

The next few drawings will be

- Sunday, September 25, 2005 -
- Sunday, October 30, 2005 -
- Sunday, November 27, 2005 -

**2005 SSF Festival Raffle Tickets are still
available...**

- **Only 1,250 tickets printed**
 - **\$20 per ticket**
 - **1 drawing a month for 12 months**
 - \$1,000 prize each month**

**Drawings held on last Sunday of each month,
through Sunday, April 30, 2006**

**Contact your local choir or Ljubi Hayden to
purchase your tickets today!
Ljubi49@aol.com or 708-895-0671**

S.S.S. Sloboda • Lansing, IL • USA

Sloboda, though now on summer break until July 7, has kept fairly busy. We are in the process of organizing our artifacts for our "Choir Room" in our church's multi-purpose room. This will take some planning and time, but we are sure to have it completed by this year's convention.....which by the way, we are hosting! Co Chairs, Daisy Merich and Georgene Stoisolovich are busy making plans for the September 23-25 annual convention. Be sure to send delegates !

Sloboda members celebrating birthdays from January-June are: Joan Anderson, Nick Stoisolovich, Natalie Peinovich, Bill Anderson, Georgene Stoisolovich and Daisy Merich. Happy wishes to all for many more in good health and spirit.

Belated Happy 71st Anniversary to Ted and Seya Popovich who celebrated on May 12. Though they have a new home in Pittsburgh, our hearts and thoughts are with them...always.

One thing we take great pride in is our prolific breeding abilities.....just ask Paul Papich, he'll tell you!

- Director Melanie Evancevich became a Baba for the fourth time with the birth of new grandson, Jackson Adam Kundrat. He is the son of Sarah(Ozment) and Jim.
- Taylor Rose Anderson made Joan Anderson and Bob Anderson, grandparents for the fourth time. Taylor is the daughter of Mike and Kelly.
- Dusha Welch with husband Ed, welcomed new granddaughter, Alexis, born to Ed and Lisa Welch.
- Bill Anderson and his son-in-law, Chris, celebrated their birthdays by skydiving in Wisconsin.

Congratulations to all!

On the road, again....is the theme for many of our members.

- Leva Solaya traveled to Texas for grandson, William Mathis's graduation in May.
- Florida may never be the same with so many of our members hitting its boundaries!!!!!!!!!!!! Leva Solaya, Daisy Merich, Joan Anderson with Marge Savich will be vacationing in June. Shortly after, Melanie Evancevich, Aaron Ozment and Elaine Glumac will be soaking up the rays on the Gulf.
- Daisy Merich visited with son Ted and Family. While she was there she enjoyed watching her grandson, Teddy's Little League games.
- Natalie Peinovich got some vacation time in before and after Festival with sister Danella and her family. She also spent time with her parents, Ted and Seya Popovich. In June, she will travel west to Phoenix to spend time with daughter Diane and family.

With the good things, come some not so good.....Director Melanie had emergency appendectomy surgery Memorial Day weekend. She is home and on the mend. Glico Savich had minor surgery and is back in the fold. Also on the mend and up and about after surgeries are: Dorothy Lalich, Eli Hinich, Helen Popovich, and Dusha Welch. Helen Nakarda, Vi Bradich, Millie Jaksich and Nick Stoisolovich are all doing better, too.

Get Well wishes to our Mikie Lalich!!!!!! Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Mike. We miss you!

Welcome to Nancy Petkovich Samardzia, Dolly Milanovich and Norma Jean Janich! Great having you in our fold, ladies!

Sympathies to our Natalie Peinovich and Family on the passing of her husband, +Milan., who was a member and past officer of Sloboda. Also, to members Marica Krainovich and Helen Nakarda and Families on the passing of +Bob Zigich. +Bob was also a member of our choir along with his beloved late wife, +Millie. Supporting member, +Vlado Trbojevich passed away in April. Sincere sympathies to Marija and her family.

On May 15, Sloboda hosted the 2nd Annual Supporting Member Appreciation Luncheon. The tables in the West Wing of our Serbian Social Center were decorated with fresh spring floral arrangements and as usual, Sladjan and his staff did an excellent job preparing the delicious meal. Chairperson Elaine Glumac along with Janice Jaksich did a great job coordinating this lovely afternoon event. Drina Orchestra provided the music and played some old favorites for our guests. Sloboda is so blessed to have so many supporting members who are there for us in every way at every event. This is our way of showing how much we appreciate all of them.

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And again the curtain has closed...

Annual Serbian Singing Festival, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania/ May 28-29, 2005

The tone for this year's festival was set on Friday.....the Club was jumping! As the singers from far and near congregated for the annual song-fest, they made their pilgrimage to the friendly and welcoming Serb Club confines. For those of us who spent many days on South side in our youthful days, the landscape has changed dramatically! South Side has transformed itself into a hip, where the action is; where to live urban mecca. The mills as we knew them are gone, Stone's is gone but one thing has not changed AT ALL...the warmth and fun loving spirit of the Serbs in Pittsburgh. It would be a great weekend, that was a for sure.

Festival Chairpersons Dane Topich and Paula Winowich with all of their committee members covered all bases...transportation-great; food-excellent; hospitality-wonderful.....all the superlatives can be applied to the organization and thought that went into this weekend. Kudos to Dane and Paula, to all of the Holy Trinity Cathedral Choir and its parishioners for a job well done! It needs to be mentioned now that I ,for one, marveled at the food and preparation that was made in that tiny kitchen. Those of us who have grown accustomed to state of the art, modern kitchen facilities of the newly built catering halls need to take a moment to recall when all of our kitchens were that small and remember how challenging it was getting the soup, sarma and pogaca on those banquet tables! To ALL the ladies and gentlemen who cooked, washed dishes, helped out in the kitchen..your efforts were very much appreciated.

Both concerts were held in the grand Ballroom of the hotel headquarters. On Saturday, the Massed Chorus was directed by Mr. Bob Topich, Holy Trinity Cathdral Choir, Pittsburgh, "Hristos Voskrese"; Mrs. Milena Walker, SSS Stevan Sijacki, Milwaukee, " Star Spangled Banner"; Dr. Millard Golusin, SSS Ravanica, Detroit, "O Canada" and "Srpska Nardna Himna". Executive Secretary, Shirley Senic served as Master of Ceremonies. Appearing on Saturday's concert were: Festival Host- Holy Trinity Cathedral Choir, directed by Mr. Bob Topich; SSS Stevan Sijacki, Milwaukee Wisconsin, Honored Guest choir directed by Mrs. Mileva Walker; St. Sava of Mississauga, Ont, Canada, directed by Mr. John Lukic; Holy Trinity Cathedral Children's Choir directed by Mr. Bob Topich; SSS Gracanica Choir, Windsor, Ont, Canada, directd by Shirley Senic; SSS Ravanica, Detroit, Michigan directed by Dr. Millard Golusin; Special Guest appearance by the St. Roman Melode Choir of Kitchener, Ont, Canada, directed by Biljana Vazic; SSS St. Nicholas Cathedral Choir of Hamilton, Ont, Canada, this year's Choral Workshop host, directed by Protonica Mira Stojavljevich and SSS Branko Radichevich, Chicago, Illinois directed by Elizabeth Neskow. Each choir with its own individual style and form sang beautifully and was appreciated by the attentive audience. The children were absolutely delightful and captivated the audience. On this day, SSF President, Donna K. Medich presented the 50 year pins to members whose names were submitted by their individual choirs. Ziveli to you all!

Saturday night was filled with music of song and dance. The Serb Club was packed with music on both levels; Junaci played downstairs and Radost entertained the crowd upstairs in the bar area. At the Slovak Club, a walking distance from Sarah Street, Orchestra Lira played for singers and guests. The bus schedule continued like clockwork -each bus loaded up with singers and guests who sang their way back to the hotel.

On Sunday morning, Divine Liturgical responses were sung by Honored Guest choir, SSS Stevan Sijacki of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and directed by Mrs. Milena Walker. It was a beautiful service and the voices of the guest singers echoed through the vast Cathedral like that of angels. Fr. Rajko Koscic welcomed all singers and gave a very heartwarming sermon.

A fabulous Brunch was served back at the Club before Sunday's concert began. On Sunday, the Massed Chorus sang "Hristos Voskrese", directed by Dr. Rick Zivic, Kosovo Men's Choir, NE Ohio; "Star Spangled Banner" directed by Mr. Milan Damljanovic, SSS Njegos, Cleveland; "O Canada" directed by Mrs. Kathy Loverich, SSS St. Elijah, Aliquippa; "Srpska Nardna Himna" directed by Mr. Milutin Lazich, SSS St. Nicholas, Monroeville. Once again, Executive Secretary Shirley Senic served as Master of Ceremonies and greetings were made by Festival Chairpersons.

The choirs who performed on Sunday's concert were: SSS St. Nicholas of Monroeville, Pennsylvania directed by Dr. Milutin Lazich, who was this year's +Adam N. Popovich Director Award Recipient (the 10th). Dr. Lazich thanked the SSF and offered inspiring words to the singers and their choirs. SSS Petar Krstich of Steubenville, Ohio directed by Slobodan Zelich; SSS Njegos of Cleveland, Ohio directed by Milan Damljanovic; SSS Njegos Junior Choir directed by Milan Dam-

Continued on Page 6

S.S.S. Sloboda • Lansing, IL • USA • Continued...

Kudos to the S.S.S. Holy Trinity Cathdral Choir who did a great job hosting this year's Festival on South Side. Although we didn't go as a choir due to illness and other unfortunate circumstances, President/SSF 2nd VP Ljubi with husband Bato, SSF Assistant Sec. Georgene and Natalie Peinovich were there to enjoy the wonderful concerts and camaraderie with old friends. Congratulations to Dr. Milutin Lazich upon receiving the +Adam N. Popovich Director's Award this year.

As mentioned, Sloboda is this year's SSF Convention host. We will be working hard to ensure that our delegates enjoy their stay in Lansing.

Don't forget...our Fall Concert is October 30 featuring special guest choir, S.S.S. St. John the Baptist of Denver, Colorado along with our local choir friends. St. John the Baptist Choir is our 45th SSF choir and were inducted last October. We look forward to their stay with us.

Keep singing, happy summer and see you in September at the Convention...

LOH, President



And again the curtain has closed • Continued...

Ijanovic; SSS Dr. Laza Kostich of Midland, Pennsylvania, directed by Marian Izak; Kosovo Men's Choir of Northeastern Ohio directed by Dr. Rick Zivic; SSS St. Elijah of Aliquippa, Pennsylvania directed by Kathy Loverich and Tsar Lazar Choir of Pennsylvania directed by Mark Doncic all delighted the audience with their renditions of many old and new arrangements. Again, the children were beautiful and the audience loved seeing and hearing them. President Donna K. Medich presented the Sekulovich and Bielich Scholarships to this year's winners. Each of the awardees had excellent credentials and met the SSF criteria for award.

After the concert, everyone headed back to the Serbian Club for more good food, music by Radost in the bar, singing and dancing. Downstairs, the crowd was entertained by Junaci once again.

The Serb Club was jumping until late into the night and while many choir members headed back home to their families for the Monday holiday, there were those of us Festival "junkie" who left for home on Monday! This year's Festival concerts were filled with versatility, bittersweet memorable favorites, unique selections and hope for the future in our children as they carry on singing the rich, beautiful music of our Serbian Orthodox culture/faith. Leaving a Festival weekend is always a hard thing to do...too many goodbyes! Congratulations and thanks to Holy Trinity for a great weekend!

Now the SSF Board has begun planning for the 75th Gala Festival Anniversary. This Festival will be sponsored by the SSF and housed by the Ravanica parish facilities. It will be unique in organization and will prove to be an historic and memorable event. Mark your calendars now for next Memorial Day weekend 2006 in Detroit, Michigan.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2005 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:

PAUL S. BIELICH SCHOLARSHIP

- **IVANA MICANOVIC**
S.S.S. STEVAN SIJACKI, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN
- **THOMAS OLSEN**
S.S.S. ST. NICHOLAS, OMAHA, NEBRASKA
- **NATASHA POVICH**
PETAR KRSTICH CHOIR, STEUBENVILLE, OHIO
- **MARKO SAVATIC**
S.S.S. BRANKO RADICHEVICH, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

+PETAR AND +MINNIE SEKULOVICH SCHOLARSHIP

- **NIKOLA BUDIMIR (SSF)**
S.S.S. NJEGOSH, CLEVELAND, OHIO
- **MAJA PAICH (SSF)**
S.S.S. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, DENVER, COLORADO
- **SVJETLANA PAPULIC (SOCA)**
STEVAN MOKRANJAC CHOIR, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
- **STEVAN WALLENDAL (SSF)**
S.S.S. STEVAN SIJACKI, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

**GOOD LUCK IN SCHOOL THIS FALL AND
KEEP ON SINGING!**

Stevan Hristich Serbian Choir • Phoenix, AZ • USA

I am back reporting here from the valley of the sun, where the temperatures are scorching hot! We have many upcoming events to look forward to.

On September 3rd-5th the choir will be traveling to Jackson, California. This would be my first time traveling to Jackson, so I am very excited. We have been working hard on perfecting the selections that we will be performing. We hope to see everyone in September.

September 10th, 2005 our choir will host a 1- day golf tournament at the Long Bow Golf Club in Mesa, Arizona. Afterwards there will be dinner and dancing at the church hall. The chairmen for this event will be Milan Zec and Mark Baich. This event is intended to help us raise money for travel expenses, costumes, ect. Hopefully, the weather will be on our side and there will be no more planes that land in the middle of the golf course.

For the SSF convention this year, Denise Kangrga and myself will be attending as delegates. This is a new experience for me, and I am very much looking forward to learning more about the SSF organization, and finding out as a delegate what my responsibilities are. I hope to finally meet the executive board of the SSF. See ya in September!

November 11th-13th, we will host a concert here in Phoenix. Our honored guest will be the choir from Monroeville, PA. The planning for this event is coming along well. I will keep you posted on this event in future hi notes.

I am very pleased to announce that The Stevan Hristich choir will be recording a Cd in October. Our director Lazo Mihajlovich is in the process of compiling various selections for us to sing. This will be the second cd that our choir has recorded. We are delighted to add all our new voices into the mix; it gives our choir a fresh new sound. We will update you on all the details and the date of when the cd will be available to purchase.

As always, our choir rehearsals are held on Wednesdays at 7:00pm in the cultural center. We welcome all of you to join us if you are ever in the Phoenix area.

I would like to give a shout out to my cousin Milan Kesic and his wife Danielle, and congratulate them on christening their first-born son Ranko.

That is all for now, I hope everyone has a wonderful summer. Until next time, peace and love to all.

Signing off,
Beba Obradovic
1st vice- president

S.S.S. Ravanica • Detroit, MI • USA

Hi everyone! I hope that you are enjoying the sizzling summer heat! Hopefully the sun's energy will revitalize us all before we begin the Fall season of concerts.

Before I dive into "the news", on behalf of our choir, I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the Singing Federation's Executive Board and the Holy Trinity Cathedral Choir of Pittsburgh and their numerous volunteers who worked together to make the Singing Festival a wonderful event this year! It was truly a great time!

Our congratulations to our choir director, Dr. Millard Golusin, on his recent marriage to Cindy Pavlovich. We wish them much happiness in their life together.

No more paperwork! No more books! That is (or what could be) the chant of our latest choir retirees all of whom retired from the field of education. Paul Bielich, Marilyn Marusich and Ronald Payok all retired in June and are now looking forward to the joys of 7 day weekends! Our best wishes and congratulations to you all.

Congratulations also goes out to my husband, Dragan Koprivica. He received a gramata and gift from the Ravanica Church Board at our recent Church Slava, Vidovdan, in recognition and appreciation of the web site that he initiated and continues to run. If you haven't checked it out just click on www.ravanica.com for information on the Ravanica Church, organizations and our own S.S.S. Ravanica as well.

Well....that's all for now. Enjoy your summer!

Petra Koprivica
Choir Reporter

CONGRATULATIONS...

Allison (Alli) Mary Haase, born July 7, 2005.

Parents Tom & Jenny Haase & brother Brandon
S.S.S. St. Nicholas, Omaha, Nebraska

Milena Ann Sadewasser, born July 14, 2005.

Parents Brian & Danica (Medich) Sadewasser & brother Evan
Grandparents Milan & Donna Medich
Great-Grandmother Millie Medich
S.S.S. Aleksa Shantich, South Bend, Indiana

Sam Zagorac, born August 2005.

Parents Sam & Nicole Zagorac
Grandparents Bob & Joan Jakovich
S.S.S. Njegosh, Cleveland, Ohio

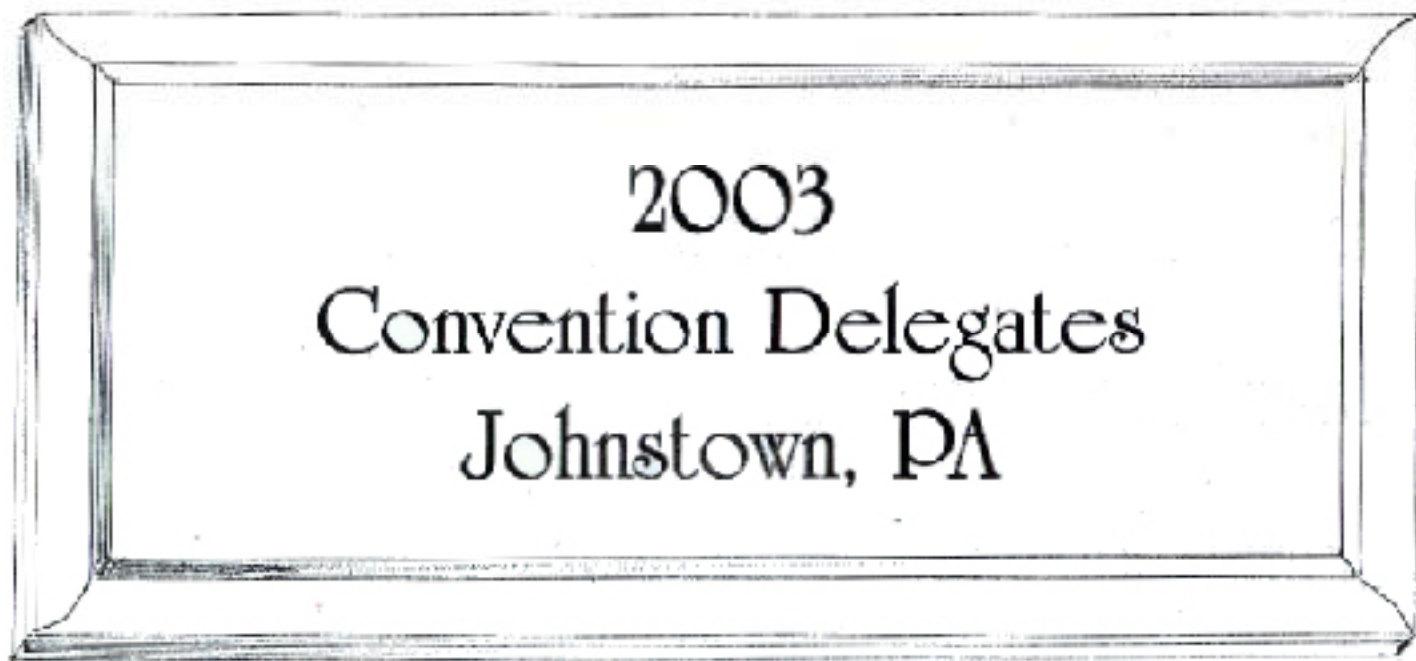


"LIVING WALL" at the SSF

The SSF is offering a "Living Wall" of well-wishers and donors. The SSF headquarters has been under major renovation plans. Part of the plan is to incorporate individual "bricks" as part of the interior wall. We have so labeled this a "Living Wall" as it is not intended to be a memorial tribute to any of our dearly departed. The SSF has a Memorial Plaque for individual names of our dearly departed.

These "Living Wall bricks" are actually made of natural cherry wood and measure 9" x 4" in size. They will be engraved with your inscription of a 3-line maximum, 27-character (lines and spaces included) maximum per line. ***The price of \$125.00 is a steal. Leave a permanent mark at the SSF! Buy your "brick" today!***

Example Brick:



To order, fill in the order form on the back of this page and mail it to:

Serbian Singing Federation
26356 John R. Road
Madison Heights, MI 48071

Your check for \$125.00 made payable to *Serbian Singing Federation* must be enclosed with your order form.

"LIVING WALL" ORDER FORM

Please print your inscription in the boxes below:

Line One:

[illegible]

Line Two (Optional):

[illegible]

Line Three (Optional):

[illegible]

Make check payable to:

Serbian Singing Federation

in the amount of \$125.00 and mail along with this completed order form NOW to:

Serbian Singing Federation
26356 John R Road
Madison Heights, MI 48071

More than a miracle' follows son's decades of grief Retired priest from Parma to see father named saint

Sunday, May 15, 2005, David Briggs, **Plain Dealer Religion Reporter**

Belgrade, Serbia-Montenegro

-- Do you believe in miracles? The Rev. Vasilije Sokolovic does. And more.

The retired priest from St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Parma will say his final prayers this morning for the father he barely knew in life, a parent murdered six decades ago this week by Communists who dumped his body in a shallow, unmarked grave. The atrocity took a loving dad from a small boy, and left a legacy of sadness of not knowing his father's final resting place.

But after today, Sokolovic will never again have to pray for his father. He and millions of other Orthodox faithful can pray to St. Budimir of Dobrun -- as the Rev. Budimir Sokolovic will forever be known -- to intercede with God on their behalf.

A Serbian Orthodox Church, exercising its freedom after years of oppression, today will canonize Sokolovic and 29 other martyrs of World War II in a historic service at a rebuilt monastery in Herzegovina. The Rev. Vasilije Sokolovic, who nearly died in 2000 after a heart attack left him comatose for weeks, marvels at what he considers the divine plan that has turned decades of suffering into everlasting joy. "Only God. Only God," a smiling Sokolovic said at a dinner with family and friends in a restaurant overlooking the Sava River in the Serbian capital. "Believe me, this is more than a miracle. Unbelievable."

Budimir Sokolovic was born in 1910 in the village of Tegare. His father ran a small hotel, but Budimir completed his seminary training at age 21 and became the 41st generation of priests in the family. He was the parish priest in Dobrun from 1936 until he and his family were taken to a concentration camp in 1941. They were released as refugees to Serbia a few months later, and Budimir later was the chaplain to the high command of the non-Communist Serbian resistance group known as the Cetniks.

The last memory the son has of his father is as a 6-year-old boy in 1944. The father rode on horseback into the Serbian village of Milanovac, scooped up the young Vasilije and his brother Vladimir and assured them: "You are my life."

For more than six decades after his father's murder, through his struggle to become a priest in a land that sought to wipe out his father's memory and following the heart attack that left him close to death, Sokolovic has held on to his father's words. Last week, the memories started to flow together as Sokolovic returned to his homeland, traveling through Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

When his father died, the young Sokolovic could not even mourn. His mother taught him to deny any relation to the priest for fear that he, too, would be killed by the Communist regime in Yugoslavia. The pain of denying his father publicly was almost unbearable. But on Thursday, in a free Serbia, Sokolovic led family in singing a prayer at a restaurant. He proudly celebrated his father's pending sainthood surrounded by his brother, his wife, his son and daughter, a grandchild, and relatives and friends stretching from Northeast Ohio to his homeland.

On Friday, his 67th birthday, Sokolovic dressed in his priestly attire to sing at the 16th century Tronosa Monastery, which was restored after it was burned and looted by the Nazis. Gently flowing water bordered the landscaped grounds overlooking the Drina Valley, where nuns worked quietly in the garden as children blessed themselves as they entered the building.

En route to today's service, reminders of the tragic history of the land could be found everywhere, from bombed-out buildings in Belgrade, to rows of vandalized houses across the border in Bosnia-Herzegovina abandoned by victims of the ethnic tension that still makes some areas unsafe for religious minorities. But even this is being overcome, and St. Budimir of Dobrun will play a small part today. Serbian Orthodox leaders will canonize their 30 newest saints in the restored Zitomislic Monastery, which was blown up in the Balkan wars of the 1990s. The monastery will be consecrated in the same service, as part of the region's commitment to respect and rebuild Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox holy sites.

On his own pilgrimage, Sokolovic has crossed several age-old religious and nationalist borders. Saturday, he stopped

+Fr. Budimir Sokolovich - St. Budimir of Dobrun • Continued...

at a cemetery in Forca in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where his grandfather and his father's brother are buried. There, with his wife, daughter and grandson at his side, he sang the hymn "May their memory be eternal." Earlier in the day, the family stopped at a cemetery near the village of Miljevin, where his father was executed. Later, Sokolovic returned to the village with his family to pray for his father, whose burial spot is unknown. "I felt so bad knowing he was a priest, and buried without priests, like an animal, thrown away."

Now he and his family can go anywhere in the world, and pray to St. Budimir, a man who today will be recognized by the Orthodoxy as having led a life so holy there is no doubt he is in heaven.

It is the closure Sokolovic has sought.

"He knows where his father is now, definitely," says Deacon Milan Medakovic of St. Sava in Parma. "He's joyful."

But Sokolovic's wife, Zorine, believes there may be more to the story.

She never met her father-in-law, but she has prayed every day of her married life for his eternal rest and care.

"I've always felt he accepted me," Zorine Sokolovic said. "Everything I heard of him was he was a loving person."

She already has begun to switch from praying for Budimir to praying to him. As she looks back, she wonders if her father-in-law already took care of them when her husband came out of his coma.

"How do I know who did the miracle?" she asks herself. "Who's to know? Was he there for us?"

Her husband is sure of it.

"Definitely," Sokolovic said. "All my life I have felt he saved me."

Sokolovic said he thinks this will be his last visit to his native land. But his soul is at peace, he said.

"When this whole thing is over, I'm not afraid to die," he said. "Whatever time God gives me, I am thankful to God for everything because I lived long enough to realize and see my father as a saint."

To reach this Plain Dealer reporter:

dbriggs@plained.com, 216-999-4812



Uncle's brutal end haunts area priest

by Tom Lavis

The Tribune-Democrat

tlavis@tribdem.com

As a youngster growing up under communist rule in Yugoslavia, Nedeljko Grgurevich, pastor of St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church in Westmont, Pennsylvania, never had a chance to mourn the brutal death of his uncle.

Nearly a half a century later, Grgurevich, 70, found himself weeping as he returned to his homeland to take part in the canonization ceremony declaring his uncle a saint in the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The Westmont priest, who spent three weeks in July visiting Bosnia and Serbia, said the story of his uncle, Momcilo Grgurevic, is a chilling one.

In 1941, he was a parish priest who condemned the principles of communism and its anti-Christian views that were propagated by dictator Marshal Josip Tito.

While the late priest never carried a gun or knife, he was part of a resistance movement that had a more powerful weapon: Faith.

Momcilo Grgurevich challenged the Tito regime, and became a martyr when communist forces murdered him in the streets of a mountain village in 1945.

Now, nearly 60 years later, he has been declared a saint, venerated as an intercessor of Jesus Christ and had his portrait placed on an icon, a significant achievement in the Serbian Orthodox religion.

The Yugoslav priest evaded capture by communist troops for four years. While underground resistance fighters conducted guerrilla tactics during a civil war, he waged his own battle to fan the flame of religious fervency.

He was nearly caught on several occasions, but managed to narrowly escape the fury of pursuing soldiers, who were ordered to send him to a concentration camp.

"My uncle eventually was discovered and shot and wounded in both legs," Rev. Grgurevich said in an interview at the parish house on St. Clair Road. "Reports indicate that he was dragged along the village streets and eventually decapitated by troops using a saw, despite being alive and conscious."

His head was placed in a bag and taken to a local government office and tossed down a hallway. The purpose was to disgrace him and his family and discourage others from practicing religion.

"One brave lady from his parish demanded his head and got it," Grgurevich said. "His body was picked up by other parishioners."

The communists would not allow the congregation to bury the body.

Instead, the body and head were placed in a shallow grave near a dump, where they remained until 1990.

"I remember my father tried several times to have his brother's body moved to a family cemetery that is more than 200 years old," Grgurevich said.

"Every time he placed a cross on my uncle's grave, it was removed. It wasn't until the fall of communism in 1990 that one of my uncle's sons had the body exhumed and moved to a grave next to the altar of his former church."

Momcilo Grgurevic's road to sainthood began when witnesses testified about a special light that would shine down from the heavens on his grave. Also, after all those years of being buried beneath the earth, the skin covering his skull re-

+Fr. Momcilo Grgurevic - St. Momcilo of Forca • Continued...

mained intact and had a yellowish cast that resembled beeswax.

"The Holy Assembly of Bishops in Belgrade, under a proposal by the Metropolitan, accepted him as a priest martyr and made him a saint of the Serbian Church," said Grgurevich, who participated in a ceremony on July 11 that officially welcomed his uncle into the communion of saints.

An icon of his uncle will be on display at the Bosnian church in Forca, the priest's hometown near Sarajevo.

July 11 has been proclaimed to a day of observance for the priest's accomplishments. The open sepulchre holding Momcilo Grgurevic's remains, which are draped with vestments, is on display near the church's altar.

The martyred priest was only 39 years old when he was murdered. He was married, but his wife died of natural causes several years before his death.

The couple's two sons who went to live with Nedeljko Grgurevich's family, both died of cancer before their father was canonized.

Grgurevich remembers his uncle as a passionate man who was a strict disciple of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

"When I first knelt down and saw his skull, I cried," said Grgurevich, who has been a priest in Johnstown since 1977. "I never had the chance to mourn him when he was killed in the mountains."

Grgurevich, his wife and son joined thousands of others who took part in a procession and canonization rite.

"The road to the small, rural church is a twisting, rough path used mostly by loggers," said Grgurevich.

"It is a difficult trip, but one that I would not have missed for the world."



GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Monroeville, PA.... Not to often do we have the opportunity to celebrate a
50th Wedding Anniversary !!

Uri and Mitzi Vukic were honored at a gala 50th Anniversary Celebration Sunday July 24th, hosted by their children Robert "Bob" Vukic, Tom and daughter-in-law Patty and children Kelsey and Dane, daughter Denise and husband Vladimir Brojovic. One of the highlights of the event was when two of the Mitzi and Uri's grand-daughters, Marina and Nina Brojovic, along with their Kuma Danielle Kochka, sang "Mnoga ja Ljeta". There wasn't a dry eye in the room. The three are members of the St. Nicholas Jr. Choir of Monroeville, PA. Mitzi is also assistant director of the St. Nicholas Choir.

Mitzi and Uri.... July 23, 1955

Mnogaja Ljeta

may God Grant you Many Many Years!

If your choir has not yet
RSVPed for the
SSF 75th Anniversary Choral Festival
to be held in Detroit, Michigan...

Get your response in right away! This is the
event of a lifetime! Don't miss out!
Every singer in every SSF member choir
should participate in this
*one-time-only **Special Festival!***

The **SSF 75th Anniversary** is in **2006**
and we'll be celebrating with a special Festival!
The following choirs have RSVPed that they will be
PROUDLY PARTICIPATING in this HISTORICAL EVENT...

St. Elijah Serbian Church Choir of Aliquippa, PA

Sts. Peter & Paul Serbian Orthodox Church Choir of Atlanta, GA

Bozo Yoksimovich Serbian Singing Society of Canton, OH

S.S.S. Branko Radichevich of Chicago, IL

S.S.S. Njegosh of Cleveland, OH

S.S.S. Ravanica of Detroit, MN

St. George Serbian Singing Society of Duluth, MN

Tsar Lazar Male Choir of PA

St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Cathedral Choir of Hamilton, ON

St. Nicholas Serbian Church Choir of Johnstown, PA

S.S.S. Mita Topalovich of Joliet, IL

S.S.S. St. George of Kansas City, KS

S.S.S. Sloboda of Lansing, IL

Dr. Laza Kostich Serbian Singing Society of Midland, PA

S.S.S. Stevan Stjacki of Milwaukee, WI

St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church Choir of Monroeville, PA

S.S.S. Milan Rakic of Montreal, QC

S.S.S. St. Nicholas of Omaha, NE

Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Cathedral Choir of Pittsburgh, PA

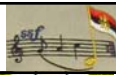




St. George Serbian Singing Society of San Diego, CA

S.S.S. Bishop Stefan Lastavica of Schererville, IN

S.S.S. Aleksa Shantich of South Bend, IN

S.S.S. Gracanica of Windsor, ON

SSF Clothing Products Order Form

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	Shipping & Handling	\$5.00		\$ _____
	Polo Shirt	\$22.00 U.S. \$27.00 Can. (M / L / XL)	M _____ L _____	\$ _____ \$ _____
		\$27.00 U.S. \$32.00 Can. (XXL)	XL _____ XXL _____	\$ _____ \$ _____
		Shipping & Handling	\$5.00	
		Tote Bag	\$10.00 U.S. \$15.00 Can.	_____
Shipping & Handling		\$5.00		\$ _____
	Wind Shirt	\$27.00 U.S. \$32.00 Can. (M / L / XL)	M _____ L _____	\$ _____ \$ _____
		\$30.00 U.S. \$35.00 Can. (XXL)	XL _____ XXL _____	\$ _____ \$ _____
		Shipping & Handling	\$5.00	
	Total Amount Due <i>(make checks payable to SSF)</i>			

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Choir (if applicable) _____

Address _____


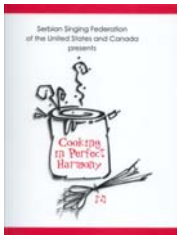

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SSF Products Order Form

Item		Price Per Unit	Quantity	Total Price
	SSF CD – <i>72 Years of Singing</i>	\$15.00 U.S. \$20.00 Can.		
	Shipping & Handling	\$3.00		
	SSF Cookbook – <i>Cooking In Perfect Harmony</i>	\$20.00 U.S. \$25.00 Can.		
	Shipping & Handling	\$5.00		
	SSF Canvas Tote Bag (red/black)	\$10.00 U.S. \$15.00 Can.		
	Shipping & Handling	\$3.00		
Total Amount Due (<i>make checks payable to SSF</i>)				

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Choir (if applicable) _____

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