

# Rotary Club Ljubljana

**Darinka Kladnik**

**The Traces of future**  
**20 years of Rotary Club Ljubljana**  
**80 years of tradition**



**Summary**

## For the wellbeing of all

“Rotary is a worldwide organization of business and professional leaders that provides humanitarian service and encourages high ethical standards in all vocations, and helps build goodwill and peace in the world.”

This is the uniform definition that has been used in all Rotary publications since 1976. However, it fails to reveal the true essence of Rotary, which lies in the conscious commitment to the Rotary ideas, which through the power of members' cooperation surpass local and national frameworks, in a way that other associations and organizations do not.

Even this does not suffice to truly understand the importance of their actions and the scope of their activities. A bare definition cannot enshrine the minds and desires of individuals who strive for the wellbeing of all and aim to strengthen the understanding among peoples. It does not show the real picture of Rotary as movement and mission that has been in operation for more than hundred years. This movement has exceeded all expectations and its goals have attracted more than a million people from all continents of the world, whereas a myriad of humanitarian actions has ennobled its mission.

The Rotary activities are spontaneous and do not infringe upon the freedoms and identity of individuals, quite contrary, they foster noble actions and deeds, which mark Rotary members with altruism, tolerance, understanding, trust, and friendship. They dedicate their time and effort to the wellbeing of others and influence on the society through positive initiatives and material aid.

The success of Rotary derives from individuals as main actors and promoters of Rotary activities, whose joint activities in different areas have borne much fruit; and from the welfare that should be appreciated by everyone and is created through our own actions, for us and for others. The Rotary members have committed to these ideas and have bound these founding principles and ethic rules of the Clubs with their personal beliefs. This obliges the members to ethics and excellence in their private, as well as professional lives.

However, also the socialising and international cooperation under the motto Enjoy Rotary is of great importance, and implies more than just passive membership, which is common to many organizations. Rotary is about active implementation of tasks under the motto Service above Self, and stands for the Rotary ideal of personal involvement and commitment to humanitarian activity, by setting good example, by establishing dialogue and contacts with the young, by exposing positive attitude to values stemming from the dignity of human nature, by sharing information and advancing knowledge about different vocations etc.

At the time of recession the Rotary movement is even more important, as is greater also the distress of people. Accordingly, Rotary Clubs have tuned their programmes and multiplied their humanitarian actions, with the purpose of making it possible for as many people to share the benefits of the Rotary aid. This is also true for the Rotary Club Ljubljana, which incorporated in its programme many targeted and new activities, aimed at alleviating the consequences of recession. It is thus obvious that the loss of idealism at the time of crude capitalism represents a misperception, when it comes to the Rotary and its ideals. To shed some light on them we have decided to include in the present book also something about the work of Rotarians worldwide and about the beginning of Rotary movement in Slovenia. However, the focus is placed on the Rotary Club Ljubljana, which celebrates its 20th anniversary of revival in October 2010, and will, in March 2011, celebrate the jubilee 80 years of its first establishment.

A special acknowledgment goes to all participants who have consented to share their memories

and impressions, who have gathered data and put together collections, and who have contributed materials and photographs. Without them, this publication would not be possible and the representation of the Rotary Club Ljubljana would be insufficient. With their help we have managed to compose a mosaic, albeit not a perfect or a complete one. There could be many other pieces, representing the activities of Rotary members and the importance of Rotary in Slovenia and in the world, included in the mosaic.

Darinka Kladnik

## **Rotary Club Ljubljana**

Charter celebration of the Rotary Club Ljubljana took place from 12th to 14th October 1990, and attracted more than 400 guests from all over the world. The celebration marked the revival of the first Rotary Club in Slovenia, after half-a-century of imposed silence, caused by the ban on Rotary in former Yugoslavia, which lingered over those, striving for its revival, at the time when Slovenia was not yet an independent state. It did not, however, prevent them from planning and dreaming; their dreams became alive in the middle of 1985 and led to the establishing meeting on 6th December 1989.

The Rotary Club Ljubljana was the first established Club in the area of former Yugoslavia after the Second World War, and the third in Eastern Europe. It continued the tradition of pre-war Rotary Club Ljubljana, active from March 1931 to March 1941, when it celebrated its 500th meeting. Only the Rotary Club Maribor was established before, namely in 1930. This is when the seeds of Rotary were planted in Slovenia, and they soon started to germinate in the independent Slovenia. Rotary Club Ljubljana, whose godfather was the RC Graz, was soon joined by the RC Bled in 1991 - whose godfather was RC Villach, RC Maribor with its godfathers RC Ljubljana and RC Graz - Schlosberg, RC Portorož with its godfather RC Ljubljana in 1993, RC Ptuj with its godfathers RC Ljubljana and RC Feldbach in 1994 etc.

By the end of 2009, there were 43 Rotary Clubs in Slovenia, with the total of 1080 members, which indicates how ramified and luxurious the Rotary tree in Slovenia has become. It has become strong enough for Slovenians to be finally assigned our own and independent district, which is supposed to happen on the 1st July 2011. So far we have operated under the aegis of the District 1910, and this will be the fruit of many efforts of Rotary members, including the ones from the RC Ljubljana, who have always been aware of the commitments and responsibilities deriving from the expansion of their area and scope of activities.

In its twenty years of operation, the Rotary Club Ljubljana has accomplished many goals and carried out many actions (represented in Chapter four of this book), which mirror the commitment of its members to the Rotarian way of life and serve as a proof of how the members have found their sense of life and socialising in the Rotary. The ideas (as represented in Chapter one of this book) have been faithfully passed on to the younger generations, thus strengthening their desire to help those in need and to live a life based on noble goals, instead of scrambling for wealth.

Two of the actions organized by the Rotary Club Ljubljana that have met with the widest response have been the St. Nicholas' Concert and Gala Rotary Ball, which have become traditional events

with a humanitarian mission, attracting hundreds of people. This mass participation consolidates the identity of Rotary in Slovenia and extends the circle of beneficiaries or aid recipients. The humanitarianism of Rotary Club Ljubljana is not only reflected in material help, but also in its readiness to help, to work for the wellbeing of the community, to live in accordance with Rotarian principles, to arouse the most noble feelings in its members and others, and to accomplish the set goals. Rotary Club Ljubljana has pursued the objectives defined at the time of its establishment, supplementing them with a view to the needs of people and environment and in accordance with the tasks defined by the umbrella organization Rotary International, whose member it has been since its Charter Celebration. It belongs to one of the most active “families” in the world, which takes this opportunity to make the following announcement:  
The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands!  
Rotary Club Ljubljana witnessed its three-day Charter celebration, but the revival of pre-war Rotary had started even earlier. How many attempts have been made in the decades following the Second World War is not known, but that the Rotary ideas became deeply rooted in the minds of advanced and socially oriented people, committed to the wellbeing of all already in the 90ies of the 20th Century, has been proven. They made up the engine of Slovenian Rotary revival. The founding members, appearing in alphabetic order, remember how and why they approached this endeavour, as they compare different perspectives on the revival of Rotary Club Ljubljana, and assess its accomplishments. Each contribution is supplemented with a short biography of the narrator and sometimes an informative note is enclosed to provide additional information or supplement the text.

## **Peter Amalietti**

Born in Ljubljana on 14th March 1955. He earned his Bachelor degree in Sociology, but pursued different vocational paths in life. Until the age of 30 he was a dedicated musician and musical journalist, which is no coincidence, as he was drawn to the study of music (piano and organ) from an early age on.

Since 1987 he has been active as a writer, translator, lecturer, musician, composer and editor, and also established his own publishing house, which has already published more than 400 books in five or six languages, among which three Rotary publications. He has translated over a hundred books into Slovenian (including the Rotary books), some into the Serbian, Croatian and English, and has written more than two-dozen books, of which 16 have been also published.

After the year 2000 he has mainly published non-commercial books related to the spiritual life, understanding, combative and military strategies, health and self-healing, alternative history, criminology, permaculture. He is committed to world and Slovenian lyrics, be that classical or contemporary, and to various music editions.

He has been living in Ljubljana and dedicates his free time to the exercise of Taoist Yoga. He has a son, Aram Gustav (33 years old), who graduated in microbiology and now lives in the Caribbean.

## The Rotary Tree

At the time of the establishment process of Rotary Club Ljubljana, some changes of social system in Slovenia were already appearing. I knew that capitalism would require stronger civilian and social institutions, and was among the founders and advocates of Primož Trubar fund and KUD (cultural and artistic association) France Prešeren. Time has proven that all three institutions, including the Rotary Club, have continued to function very well.

The interest for the establishment of post-war Rotary Club in Slovenia was substantial and the actions well coordinated. Also the Austrian and Italian Rotary stood behind us, and even though many decisions were taken elsewhere, which is obvious from today's perspective, the support to the idea of the club's establishment was consensual.

Membership of Ljubljana's Club was quite different from that of many other foreign clubs, where most of the city's bourgeoisie participated in the establishment.

In Ljubljana, we had to slightly bend the rules since most candidates failed to meet the condition of property/wealth. Honesty was thus used as the main criterion in the selection, since most of the wealthy candidates were either not willing to help or their wealth was of suspicious origin and were therefore not accepted as Rotary members.

I was invited to the first meeting by Milan Štante, whom I did not even know at the time, but was one of the founding members. The meeting was held at Hotel Slon, however, the venue later moved to Hotel Union, where also the pre-war meetings had been held. When I entered the Club I had no idea what Rotary actually stood for and have only learned to appreciate its importance later on.

I also did not know that meetings would have to be attended on weekly basis. Had I know this I probably would not have joined the Club at all. However, I knew that my father (Marjan Amalietti, 1923 - 1988) already in the 50-ies or 60-ies of the 20th Century declined the offer to be among the founding Rotary members, for reasons to me unknown.

The initial team of Rotary Club Ljubljana was very successful and ambitious.

The seeds we sowed fell on the fertile ground as we continued the tradition of the pre-war Rotary, and adopted part of its know-how, in particular the lectures. They offer a chance to meet important Slovenians and introduce them to the Rotary ideas, and it is quite common that lecturers are also aspiring membership candidates; however, it has been a tradition that Rotary members frequently give lectures themselves.

One of the first members was Anton Knez, a living bond with the pre-war Rotary. We were friends. He occasionally remarked that Rotary actually represented the entrance hall of Freemasonry.

He was an extraordinary person, even when he was 90, while I was among the youngest members when I entered the Rotary. I became the second Club's secretary. Darko Zupančič was the first, and I followed in his footsteps and remained most active in the first five years of my membership by serving as the secretary or by introducing a new secretary to the function.

As secretary, I had the best overview of all the matters that were going on in the Club, for it is the task of the secretary to meet guests and socialize with them, together with a myriad other things he has to do. With years other members took over the function of secretary, since Rotary is based on the principle of rotation. When I got sick I had to change my lifestyle, which impeded me from participating in the activities of the Club and regular Wednesday meetings and I have not been an active member for about ten years.

I remember having complained once that Rotary is only interested in under-achievers, in people that are hurt for whichever reason. I felt that some thought and effort should also be invested in

over-achievers, in the talented ones who exceed the average. I made my point and we introduced a special scholarship for the talented students. I have made quite a few suggestions, however, I never included Rotary in my work, since its nature was of a very different kind. I was writing and publishing books. And it was my profession of publisher that brought me to the Rotary. In the initial period of my membership I translated several books related to Rotary and published them for the use of the Club. I have also published a book on the bees of one of the founding members of the Rotary Club Ljubljana, Mitja Vošnjak.

The importance of the mission of Rotary Club Ljubljana can be found in the fact that its members contributed to the establishment of other clubs in other Slovenian cities and thus made the Rotary tree in Slovenia strong and branched-out. Activities have forged the ties of friendship among clubs and also among members of Ljubljana's club, and it is my personal belief that the Rotary Club Ljubljana is outstanding. Its only weakness is the fact that women are banned from membership.

## **Joined twice**

“I joined the Rotary Club Ljubljana already in the old Yugoslavia, somewhere around 1933, when it exhibited a similar organizational structure to the one of today, and had about 30 to 40 members. We would meet once a week in the Silver Hall of Hotel Union. We were in regular contact with Rotary Clubs abroad and actively cooperated with them. As vice-president of at the time “Farmers’ Loan Society”, I had to travel regularly, and being a Rotarian helped me forge successful business ties. It was customary at those times to visit the local Rotary Club when on a business trip, and in one such occasion in Stockholm the local Rotary Club organized their meeting in the hotel of my stay. I joined the meeting and presented Yugoslavia, a young state at the time, and consequently not familiar to all of the present members. I showed them a couple of postcards from Bled and Dalmatia that I had brought with me. It was at this meeting that I had first encountered the manager I was supposed to meet for business, and it made our initial contact much easier. With the ascent of communism on power, all international organizations, including the Rotary, were banned in Yugoslavia. I joined Rotary again in 1990, when it was re-established.”

*(Tone Knez, taken from the publication Rotary Club Ljubljana 1995/1996)*

## **Mitja Vošnjak**

Born in 1923 in Ptuj, where he attended elementary school. He later moved to Ljubljana, to earn his Matura degree on the verge of the Second World War. He joined partisans in 1943 and was active in the leadership of the youth organization. After the war he served for some time as the Broadcasting Board Director of the Liberal Republic of Slovenia; after 1949 he served as diplomat and from 1969 to 1973 as ambassador in Austria. In 1974 he became the Manager of Medex Biotic Centre in Ljubljana. He possessed a keen interest in bees, hunting and farming, the themes he was describing in his novellas and short stories; however, he also wrote war novels. In 1984 his memoirs “Veleposlanikovi zapiski” (Notes of an ambassador) were published. Vošnjak joined Rotary through the Rotary Club Ljubljana and remained its member until his death, in August 2003.

## **Živko Bergant**

Born on 15th December 1943 in Novo Mesto. He earned his Matura degree at Gymnasium Bežigrad, and proceeded to the degree of Bachelor (B.Sc.), Master (M.Sc.) and Doctor (Ph.D.) at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana.

He started his employment at PTT (The Postal, Telephone and Telegraph Company) in 1967, than worked in UNIVIT Ljubljana as accountant and manager of economic and finance department, in ŽITO Ljubljana as assistant manager in finance department and SOZD (compound organization of associated work) Gorenje in Velenje, as member of its KPO (collective board of managers) for the sector of finances. From 1984 to 2002 he was employed in ITEO, Consulting Institute of Ljubljana, as Consultant and Head of Economics, Accounting and Finance Department and a senior partner. He is a senior lecturer at numerous professional colleges in Slovenia and a co-founder of College of Accounting in Ljubljana, where he is currently the Head of Institute for Business Accounting and the holder of four courses. He has been a longstanding external collaborator in various bodies of The Economists Association of Slovenia (and is at present the Chair of Supervisory Committee and a member of editorial board of the Slovenian Business Review) and the Slovenian Institute of Auditors. He is an acknowledged lecturer on many seminars, symposia and conferences in Slovenia.

Živko Bergant has earned various professional titles: certified auditor; expert of The Economist Association of Slovenia for the area of finance function and information system (since 1993), certified business excellence valuator (since 1996) and verified business finance expert (Slovenian Institute of Auditors, since 1997). His bibliography comprises 221 bibliographic units recorded in COBISS. He is the main author of the Code of Business Finance Principles and the Professional Ethics Code of business finance experts at the Slovenian Institute of Auditors, as well as the author of many reform programmes, business plans and strategic plans for companies in Slovenia and former Yugoslavia. He was a member of supervisory boards and auditing committees in various companies and finance organizations in Slovenia.

In 1987 he received the Order of Labour with Silver Wreath, for his work and contribution to The Economists Association of Slovenia and to the profession.

As a musician (he plays the clarinet) he was also awarded the highest prizes for his longstanding amateur music involvement. He is married and has two children.

## **Successful beginning**

At the time when the Rotary Club Ljubljana was only at its beginnings, Slovenians had no real knowledge and understanding about Rotary. Even though there was no adequate and complete definition of the club's functions, we nevertheless managed to gather and get organized. We held group discussions about the information available to us, and these founding meetings pointed in the direction of our future operation. The meetings were also the venue for education and information, and for the shaping of new attitude towards this new organization that was accepting us among its members. Expectations were high and the general atmosphere led us to believe that everything was possible.

All this was happening at a time quite different from today, in the framework of previous social system, when global thinking was not part of daily reality. Despite the fact that our state was

socially oriented and focused on export, we did not think much about the humane, ethic dimension of society. Despite the increased attention to humanitarianism today, it is in a way even less present than it used to be, which confers on Rotarians even more ethics and humanity related tasks and responsibilities.

I was invited to join the Rotary by Anton Glavan, and at the time I could hardly have been described as idealist. Since I had been previously active in numerous organizations and associations I knew that the first challenge of every new association are internal problems, only after that come other issues. Infant diseases have soon been overcome, and we managed to form a transparent and compatible group, which represented a relatively successful beginning that surprised even our Austrian colleagues and godfathers of Rotary Club Ljubljana.

When I look back, I would not make any substantial changes. The problems we encountered were quite manageable, either within the association, or in the environment, where we performed the function of trendsetters. That we chose the right path can be seen today. If we had taken a wrong direction, we would not have succeeded in gathering as many members and establishing as many Rotary Clubs in Slovenia as we have. In view of the number of our members, the criteria had to become less severe than they were at the time of establishment of the Rotary Club Ljubljana, when we paid more attention to the diversity of represented professions. However, heterogeneity is more important in a restricted membership.

Recession that we have been witnessing is reflected also in the Rotary, there are fewer donors and fewer sponsors. This has become normal these days; however, it demands certain cuts and more individual investments and efforts put in the implementation of our actions. We have not despaired over this, however, we cannot meet all the requests addressed to our club, nor can we carry out all the ideas and plans.

An increase in the number of requests addressed to the Rotary Club Ljubljana clearly proves that we have become more recognised among people, due to the many actions carried out in the past. The most important was the action accompanying the establishment ceremony, when we provided an elevator for the disabled to the Opera House of Ljubljana. Another well received action, not related to humanitarian issues was the setting up of the clock on the square Ajdovščina, representing a contribution to the quality of our living environment. The wider community seems to appreciate it and takes the clock for granted.

Rotarians are not committed only to humanitarian actions, as we operate on a wider scale and strive for a better atmosphere in this world, for us, and for others. We like to socialize. And after all, we are a social organization, and although we are only open to male members, this does not imply sexism or gender based discrimination. We simply enjoy spending time in male-only company, where we can discuss and relax. It feels good. Why would a male choir want to become a mixed choir? Well, our club is like this.

## **Tomaž Bole**

Born in Ljubljana on 3rd December 1951, to a father professor of music and Slovenian language, who would often take his son to choir practise. Following the footsteps of his father (who was at the time the leader of "Slovenian Octet"), Tomaž Bole composed his own choir already in the first

year of elementary school. He later moved with his parents to Bežigrad, a district of Ljubljana, where he finished elementary and high school. In this period he was a keen cyclist, skier and table tennis player. Through Pionirski Dom (cultural, language and arts centre for children and youth) he got acquainted with film and theatre, he was playing the flute, the clarinet and the piano, was an avid reader and got enthusiastic about French and yoga.

He also sang in the APZ - Academic Choir - and danced in France Marolt folk dancing group.

When in the fifth class of elementary school, he wrote his first acrostic sonnet to his school girlfriend, and by the time of his Matura exam, he wrote nearly all of his poems, which would only be published twelve years later in his first collection of poems.

His search for the right kind of study that would lead to a lifetime profession borne fruit: the basis of economics, law, Germanic studies, history of art and organizational studies proved to be an excellent foundation for his work in the management of culture. At the age of 24 he married Darinka - Gina, and soon their son Vanja was born. He found employment as secretary at the Association of Cultural Organizations of Bežigrad Community and won the first marathon Olympics in satire shooting, organized by the Mladina weekly paper.

Two years later he co-founded Bežigrad Art Gallery and also directed it for three years. After the birth of his second son Aleš he again took the position of secretary at the Community of Domžale, where he remained nine years, to move for a year to Pionirski Dom and then become independent, together with Slovenia.

Ever since he has managed the Agency and Publishing House Gallus J. Carniolus, he is the founder of Gallus foundation and a co-founder and general secretary of the Gallus Institute. He has been devoted to his father's interpretation of Gallus's compositions, and to the promotion of this great composer at home and abroad with the Choir of Slovenian Madrigalists - Gallus Singers.

He began to be active in the Rotary Club Ljubljana when he recognized in the Rotary the way of life he was living himself. He led the youth Rotary Activities for 15 years, first in the club, then for all Slovenian clubs, and received twice the award of Paul Harris and honorary membership in the EEMA for his outstanding contribution to the Youth Activities. Since 2005 he has been the Chair of the Association of Slovenian Institutes - Foundations.

## Young ambassadors

I was one of the participants at the founding meeting, following the invitation by Darko Zupančič, who had set up the first team. We met at the Entrepreneurs Club. At that time I worked as activity organizer in Pionirski Dom and the manager of my father's choir Slovenian Madrigalists. I was preparing the project Gallus, for the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the composer's death, which represented the first private project in the field of culture, and was not possible under the legislation of that time. Rotary made me see new ideas and entrepreneurial opportunities, and with my background in the Association of Cultural Organizations in Domžale and Ljubljana, and on the basis of my knowledge and understanding of relations in the associations, I felt that Rotary could provide the basis for a better society, which was proven by its history.

However, the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana was quite audacious at that time, and I remember different associations being limited in their activities or even banned. It would be

no surprise to hear anyone question the purpose of our activities. When we met at the initiative meeting, our expectations were very high. We predicted how situation would change in our country, and we knew which direction we wanted to pursue. It was the year 1989. We talked politics a lot. There were different views on the future of Slovenia, and many inspiring conversations were held, in particular with Rajko Pirnat and Tomaž Kalin (however, they did not join the Rotary). In due time political discussions were reduced to minimum, since they do not fit in the Rotary framework. I was responsible for the Youth Activities in Rotary Club Ljubljana, which resulted from a pure coincidence. I still recall the meeting led by the president Jamšek. He asked me whether I was interested in working with young people. I answered positively and that was enough. I was assigned the Youth Activities, and as soon as I got familiar with the procedures, I grew to love them. This was partly connected to my ambitions and desires from a young age, when I could not afford to travel in spite of the fact that I had always wanted to see the world. As a Rotary member, responsible for the young and their activities, I could help others make their dreams come true.

After twenty years, things have started to change. There is no longer so much interest for youth exchange programmes, since many think children do not profit enough from them. Personally, I disagree with this. Rotary Youth Service is devoted to the idea of bringing different cultures together and getting to know them. It offers short-term or long-term (of one year) exchange programmes, and many other forms of exchange or visits. However, I have not been involved with Youth Service for five years, and I am no longer that familiar with them all.

There are summer camps where young participants can stay for duration of less than one to a couple of weeks. There were about fifty camps in Europe in the past, and Rotarians were sending their children there. We did not have such a camp, and when we wanted to organize it, there was not enough interest. Even years after Slovenia got its independence, foreign countries still considered this area not secure and unstable. That is why we did not organize our first summer camp until 1994. Today, there are more than 120 summer camps only in Europe, and many more all over the world. Children get to know different countries, cultures, traditions, customs, and at the same time perform the function of Slovenian ambassadors. Through reciprocal exchange of cultural perceptions their characters and personalities are formed.

Initially, there was quite some uneasiness present when sending children in summer camps to countries such as Israel, Egypt and similar. It was a difficult mission to persuade parents into making their children participate, so I first tried it out with my own kids, who provided the feedback.

A very different story is related to long-term visits, when teenagers spend a year living with one or more Rotary families abroad. They generally lose a year of school, but the life experience they get in return is immense. However, there is practically no interest for this kind of visits in Slovenia. All Youth Activity is based on extraordinary responsibility of organizers and host families. All the children that were sent abroad had been previously informed and explained their role of young ambassadors; in particular how the impression they would leave and the image of Slovenia they would represent depended on them. That is why we decided to bond with Gymnasium Bežigrad, which had a very good reputation, and helped us select students for the summer camps (even when they were not from Rotarian families), who could thus get acquainted with Rotarian ideas.

For its first ten years, the youth activity was happening under the auspices of Austrian district.

I was among the promoters of the idea of an independent district, assigned to Slovenia.

For the 10th anniversary of the Rotary Club Ljubljana, its Youth Activities became financially,

and from organizational perspective, independent, which represented an important milestone. Another milestone can be seen in the fact that Rotary Club Ljubljana did not represent the only pillar of Rotary in Slovenia. Soon after its establishment, there were three other pillars erected in Maribor, Bled and Portorož, each of them with its own godfather and concept. We embarked on the right journey and we are still holding the course, convinced that Rotary is not about personal gain, but about sharing your time, knowledge, money or anything else, with others.

## Youth activities–intercultural mission

Despite the fact that Rotary movement stems from the American culture with all the features of the New World, one of its four key services, namely the international service and in particular the “youth service”, developed in a very European way. The diversity of European States posed a great challenge to intercultural bonding of European States and Peoples. The first international youth exchange was organized by a Dutch Rotary club. The name “Youth Activities” has become umbrella term for all activities of the Youth Service in Slovenia.

Preparatives for short-term exchange visits have started soon after the establishment ceremony of the Rotary Club Ljubljana. The unveiling of many possibilities provided by the Rotary Youth Activities was a novelty for the club’s members, who were not used to the sense of Rotarian trust, and were partly for this reason, and partly for their over-protective attitude to children, initially reluctant to send their children on 10 to 20 day holidays abroad, to a youth camp in one of the European countries.

## Peter Breznik

Born on 25th June 1928 in Ljubljana, where he completed his education and in 1956 graduated from the Faculty of Law. Three years later he passed his bar exam and in 1960 he was registered with the Register of Attorneys, held by the Bar Association of Slovenia. For many years he worked in numerous organs of the Bar Association of Slovenia and presided the Association from 1985 to 1989 when he re-established annual meetings of Slovenian attorneys.

He became the honorary member of the Bar Association of Slovenia in 2000. From 1990 to 2000 he was a member of editorial board of law journal *Pravnik*, and for some time a member of bar examination committee, for the area of property-legal relations, obligation law and civil procedural law. He was a Faculty board member at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana, and a member of European Consultants Unit E.C.U. - Berater in Europa. He worked in his profession for successful 46 years and retired in December 2006.

He was active also in other areas, in particular sports - basketball. He was among the pioneers of this sport in Slovenia and even a basketball coach. He was also a cofounder of Basketball Association of Slovenia and for some time, also its secretary. He presided over the Basketball Association of Slovenia for several years, and over the Basketball Association of Yugoslavia for two years. In 1985 he participated in the Olympics in Los Angeles as the head of the national team of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav and Slovenian basketball associations awarded him for his accomplishments with various recognitions, including the Order of Labour with golden wreath,

and with the Bloudek Prize for his contribution to the development of Slovenian basketball. He has been a member of Slovenian Ethnological Society in Ljubljana, and is an avid collector of ethnographic objects from farm's life, of which he possesses an important collection. He is also a bibliophile.

He notably contributed to the establishment of the Rotary Club Ljubljana, where he served on many different functions from the very beginning on, including the function of the Club's president from 1992 to 1993. In 1997 he received the Paul Harris Fellow Award.

## Enjoy Rotary

With the independence of Slovenia the society changed, and it seemed obvious the Rotary principles would become the only socially acceptable ones for the behaviour in our society. Rotary accepts all that is positive, regardless of political or religious affiliation of individuals. Rotary brings together people of different political orientations and thus contributes to a better communication among people and to a more efficient implementation of its ideas, focused solely on the wellbeing of all citizens of Slovenia.

I was invited to join the Rotary by Boris Lukner. I was already familiar with the operation of Rotary to a certain extent and had some material about it. I knew who the pre-war Rotary members were, which was enough for me to view Rotary as a positive organization, which had been banned in former Yugoslavia prior to 1988.

The establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana was a positive deed, which proved, among others, the democratisation of our society, as reflected also in our Charter. Many guests from different parts of Europe joined us for our celebration of the 20th anniversary. I can say the Rotary Club Ljubljana definitely fulfilled my expectations in its 20 years of existence. It is my personal opinion that drawing attention to important social questions, often marginalized by the State, has been and remains its most important task.

The idea for the Grand Rotary Ball was born when Ljubljana became the capital city of the Republic of Slovenia. Every capital needs to have its events, representing the culmination of social life in the city. Events need to be on a high cultural level and tend to the promotion of Ljubljana as the capital city of independent Slovenia.

Rotary balls were organized in Ljubljana already before 1941, when there were also other social dances that I attended as a child in the company of my parents. Dances and similar events are known also elsewhere, since Rotary represents an opportunity for the socializing of tolerant people under the motto Enjoy Rotary.

Organizing the Grand Rotary Ball was a joint effort of the members of Rotary Club Ljubljana.

The first issue was the venue. At the time the only option was the Festival Hall. Jaka Pucihar and his orchestra provided the music and cultural programme, and also attracted some famous pop musicians. First participants gathered upon invitation of individual Rotary Club members.

Later on, the Festivalna Hall became too small, and we moved the ball to the old and renovated Union Hall, where pre-war Rotarians used to gather. There have been humanitarian contents included in the ball since its very beginning, and the raised funds were earmarked as scholarships to be awarded to perspective young students or graduates.

There is no need to change the content of this event, whose the number of participants has been steadily rising. This encouraged other organizations to start organizing similar events themselves, rendering social life in Ljubljana more vivid and alive. Seeing that all changes require time, in particular the substance-related ones, also social life in Ljubljana still has some potential for development.

## What is tolerance?

“I owe it to my forerunners, Franc Jamšek and Anton Glavan, who rendered my taking over of the club's presidency much easier, since they left me a well-organized Club. I accepted the motto of the president of Rotary International, Clifford Dotherman: “True happiness is in helping others”, and the one of the governor of District 1910, dr. Ernest Rudolf Ragg: “Truth and tolerance”, as my own guiding principles. Whoever subscribes to the existence of different kinds of truth with different meanings, understands what tolerance is about. However, tolerance of intolerance is something else, and not tolerance. All this was reflected in our service and friendship, the gist of our Club, and was implemented on our weekly meetings and lectures, through regular exchange of opinions, humanitarian activities for refugees, for children with special needs, through the exchange programmes for youth from different countries, scholarships for young talents, through calls for the most successful mentor awards, help in the establishment of new Rotary Clubs in Slovenia, through the organisation of humanitarian and social events, and through visits paid to Rotary Clubs abroad and our receiving of guests - members from other Clubs and important guests from Slovenia or abroad.”

*(Taken from the Report by Peter Breznik, on Rotary activities from 1992-1993)*

## **Anton (Tone) Glavan**

Born on 30th December 1944 in Ljubljana. Having completed primary school and high school, he continued his education at the Faculty of Economics, and earned his Master of Business Administration degree in 1972-73.

His entrepreneurial journey started in 1969 in Metalka, and continued in Žito, Black & Decker, Krka and Iteo. In the autumn of 1989 he set up his own company Anga, where he occupies the position of manager and majority owner. He is married to Maruša, and is the father of two daughters, Anja and Karin.

He joined Rotary in the fall of 1989 and was immediately assigned a very responsible function as Head of Charter's Organizing Committee, then the president, the treasurer and in the years 2004 and 2005 also the assistant governor. Until 2000 he was a direct and indirect godfather to eight new Slovenian Clubs (Portorož, Maribor, Novo Mesto, Idrija, Ptuj...). For his contribution to the Rotary he has already been awarded the Paul Harris Fellow Award three times.

## Public image of Rotarians

The 1984 marked a revival of Rotary in Slovenia, due to regular contacts between emigrant Rajko Bukovec and professor Fedor Pečjak. In the background of these contacts was the smouldering desire to establish the first Rotary Club in former Yugoslavia. The document, where Canadian president personally congratulated the Rotary Club of St. Catharines for its efforts, which were supposed to lead to a revival of Rotary Club Ljubljana, was a proof of this desire.

In mid-eighties, Rajko Bukovec, and the potential godfather of Rotary Club of Ljubljana, Günter Perner from Rotary Club Graz, tried to prove that Yugoslavia was divided and democracy in Slovenia adequately developed, for the first Club in Ljubljana to be established. As a proof, the opinion of the Republic's Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, claiming that Slovenia was independent and free to set up its associations and societies, was sent to Rotary International. The then prime minister of Yugoslavia, Dr. Janez Drnovšek, contacted Rotary International himself, as he wrote and confirmed that Slovenia supported the establishment of a Rotary Club in Ljubljana. As a rule, the first Rotary Club is always established in the capital city of a state, and at the time, Belgrade was without any. Ever since the ban on Rotary in Yugoslavia at the beginning of the Second World War, these clubs have not appeared. There are some proofs that various Serbian lobbies have been striving for the establishment of a Rotary Club in Belgrade, with the help of Rotarians abroad. They failed; however, they did not pose particular objections to the establishment of a Club in Ljubljana, which provided a continuation of pre-war tradition and the integration of civil society in international life.

The selection of godfathers was made upon thorough consideration. Rotary International knew about the tensions between Slovenia and Carinthia, therefore they strategically decided upon the Club from Graz and not Klagenfurt, which was against the will of some Austrian Clubs. One of former governors from Villach thus invested great effort in the establishment of the Club in Bled, which took place after the Rotary Club Ljubljana had been set up.

I joined the founding group in December 1989, due to my interests in the functioning of civil society, which was different in thinking from the business environment, where I mostly acted. Besides that, I also became father to a child with special needs in 1979, which changed my attitudes and perception of life and brought me to Rotary, where my personal friend, Franc Jamšek, introduced me. He was appointed President of the Club to be, and I was appointed President of the Founding Charter Organizing Committee.

When the Club started to operate, Slovenia became independent, which led to the collapse of economy. The Balkan wars were starting one after another, and dragged our activities with them. We focused on humanitarian actions, collected clothes, medicines and all other material our members donated or was collected elsewhere, and we only helped with the dispatching. Our focus has lately moved to youth oriented aid: for schooling, holidays, different activities and similar. I have forged many friendships through Rotary. While I rarely get together with my friends from youth, I encounter my Rotarian friends on weekly basis. I have friends all over the world, and wherever I go, I meet new ones. We are connected through our common way of thinking.

The image of Rotarians is recognizable all over the world: it represents a man with a certain reputation in his environment, who leaves a positive imprint in his work and is capable of organizing positive actions for those in need and for the young.

Interpersonal communication of members, and their willingness to learn from each other have represented an important activity of our club ever since its beginnings. Every meeting touched

upon a certain issue and triggered discussions, exchange of views and opinions, and we all learned from this. More than 30 members represent more than 30 professions, and discussions provide a chance to hear out different viewpoints, on issues such as health reform, for example - economists understand it differently than entrepreneurs, farmers, or cultural workers. I have been a Rotary Club Ljubljana member since the beginning, and I have personally gained a lot from my colleagues, who are all experts in their respective fields.

I have noticed quite some changes since the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana. In its first years Rotary clubs had the image of some kind of secret organization, and some were even afraid to join Rotary for some "potential damage" to their reputation, on the basis of already mentioned alleged secrecy. Later, when we introduced our actions and activities to the public, which were met with great response, for example St. Nicholas's Concerts, there were fewer reservations upon joining the Rotary. The reservations decreased further on, with the expansion of our activities and with the growing international reputation and dimension, which consequently changed also the perception of Rotary.

There are also members who join Rotary for personal gain or profit. They leave upon finding that Rotary implies giving yourself, your positive energy, time and activity. A true Rotarian will soon show his friendship and understanding, inside and outside of his Club, by helping those in need. After 2005 the Rotary started to develop with greater intensity, and to my view, without enough selection, which can result in disappointment of some Rotarians, over different values upheld by some new members. However, it is also true the world has changed substantially and the young generation can be of different thinking and opinions.

## New function

The function of Assistant Governor was introduced in 1998, to take some of the burden off the Governor. This led to the establishment of sub-districts, including the sub-district of Slovenia. Each sub-district was appointed its Assistant Governor, who was supposed to coordinate activities of Rotary Clubs from its area, together with the Governor. Cooperation among clubs is of utmost importance and comprises the operation of individual clubs, as well as help in the establishment of new clubs and their operation, education of new Rotarians and the dissemination of information about the principles of Rotary. Within the scope of Assistant's activities is also the duty to inform non-members about the character of this organization, which is the so-called Service Organization and not a humanitarian one, as it promotes friendship and the Rotarian way of life, as well as providing aid to the young and those in need.

*(Explanation note by Anton Glavan)*

## Franc Hočevar

Born on 4th July 1946 in Gornje Jesenice, attended primary school in Mokronog and secondary school for dental technicians in Ljubljana, where he proceeded with his studies at the Academy of Education, and graduated in 1968. He continued with studies in Zagreb, at the University College of Defectology, completed the study in 1973 and then continued at the Faculty of Economics, where he graduated in 1992 and specialised in management. He completed his studies with Master Degree at the Faculty of Economics in 1996.

During his studies he already took on some important tasks and functions; from 1970 to 1973 he was the Head of Study and Research Centre and the youth club centre at the presidency of the Youth Association of Slovenia, from 1978 to 1984 he was the deputy chairman of the Republic Committee for Health and Social Care, and from 1984 to 2004 the Director of the Institute for Rehabilitation of Ljubljana.

From 1999 to 2002 he worked as Adviser to the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Milan Kučan. From 2004 to 2005 he was the director-general of University Medical Centre Ljubljana, and from 2005 to 2007 adviser to the director of Rehabilitation Institute of Ljubljana. In 2007 the President of Slovenia, Dr. Danilo Türk, appointed him Adviser to the President on Health, Social Care and Humanitarian Issues.

He was also active as lecturer at the High School of Social Work (from 1974 to 1984), since 2001 at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Maribor, and since 2005 has lectured in educational programmes at the School for Managers in Social Care. He has been active in many other fields as well, in particular in the Rotary Club Ljubljana.

He is married and lives in Ljubljana, and has a 40-year-old son Grega and a 37-year-old son Matjaž, three granddaughters and one grandson.

## At the right time

I remember when Rotary Club Ljubljana was being established, and the atmosphere of that time in Slovenia. Those were dynamic times, and the spirit of entrepreneurship and liberalism was starting to appear together with the belief that people needed to start taking care of their own lives.

A different kind of elitism was coming to the forefront, which implied differentiation of people by external signs and features.

Rotary Club Ljubljana was born at the right time. It is difficult to judge how the society of that time perceived its establishment. Rotary was always attentive to voids or systemic gaps in the society, and has made every effort to fill them. I can personally say that the thought of becoming a Rotary member filled me with pride and honour. My prior activity in the field of social care and humanism, in particular at the Rehabilitation Institute of Ljubljana, could probably be credited for my invitation to this organization. I did not have a clear view of what Rotary was at the time of the invitation, however, I was happy to receive it.

In due time I realized Rotary was really a group of people, willing to do good to others, without expecting something in return. It did not require a change of my personal attitude. I had been devoted to such principles even before, and I did not need any additional development of social transfers.

As Treasurer of the Rotary Club Ljubljana, I supervise financial operations of our Club. This is not a desired and wanted function and therefore the post was initially vacant. Who would want to deal with the Tax Revenue Office, take care of accounting and similar? Even now that we have an accountant, the burden of responsibility for financial management has not been relieved. The Board of Administration makes financial decisions, and the treasurer sees to their implementation. It is not necessary that Rotary members be rich, however, they need to pay their financial dues and membership fee. Sometimes this amounts to over a 1000 EUR per year. Still, Rotary is not about material contribution, and the implementation management is worth much more. To give an example: we decided to earmark the raised money for schools where food and compulsory educational camps could not be paid for. In agreement with headmasters of schools, the individuals entitled to this aid were selected and many organizational efforts and time had to be invested for the project to be successfully implemented. This contribution was worth much more than the money invested in the action. Rotary provides opportunities to forge new friendships, meet new people and help others. 20 years ago the word "colleague, comrade or friend" meant something else than today. It was about cooperation, and spontaneous collaboration. In Rotary Clubs, there is no need to explain the importance of an action, for the standards of Rotary overlap with personal beliefs of its members, who work for the wellbeing of others, who leave positive traces and are not worried about their titles and awards. The Rotary Doctrine emphasizes eagerness to embrace new contents, solidarity and tolerance on a higher level. We all contribute something to carry out an action, and numerous actions, on smaller or bigger scale, have been implemented throughout the years. Working within the Rotary framework provides satisfaction. Knowing that you do well makes you feel good and improves your self-esteem. This cannot be taught. It must come from experience. When you have tried it, you know that Rotary builds on trust. Mutual trust and confidence open many doors to different opportunities. If you trust someone, he will not trick you, and this makes your cooperation much easier. Rotarian reciprocity in trust is a great starting point for any kind of business relationship. And it is precisely the lack of trust that has prevented some candidates from becoming Rotary Club members. If you have taken part in illegal activities, breached the law or are prone to corruption, there is not place for you in the Rotary. Each individual must first take a careful look in the mirror, and members carefully study each candidate, before allowing him to join their ranks.

## Jubilee cycling

"The most important event in the year 2000 was the 10th anniversary of the Rotary Club Ljubljana, the oldest club in Slovenia, which revived Rotarian activity of 70 years ago, when the first Slovenian Rotary Club had been established in Maribor. Individual members decided to celebrate this anniversary in different ways. For this purpose Franc Hočevar decided to cycle all the length of Slovenia in the total of 400 km in just a little more than two days. As a devoted cyclist this was his way of celebrating the Jubilee and promoting cycling among people."

*(Adapted from the newsletter Rotarijec, in January 2001)*

## Franc Jamšek

Born on 9th February 1949 in Ljubljana. After having completed Gymnasium Bežigrad he decided for the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana, where he graduated. His first employment was in Lesnina, in the sector of organization and informatics. He then found employment as sector manager in a construction company, from where he moved to The Institute for Social Planning of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia (today UMAR - Institute of macroeconomic analysis and development). He first served as Deputy Director, to become its Director General until 1990. He focused mainly to informatics and integration of science in developmental vision of Slovenia. Under his guidance many short and long-term plans of Slovenian development were created. In this decade he was a great advocate of marketing integration in Slovenian companies and of institutional development of entrepreneurship.

His business idea matured in 1990, when he set up a counselling company Profil, where he worked as director. He earned his Master Degree at the Faculty of Economics in 1994 and has published extensively, both professional and general articles, related to the field of counselling and management of human resources. He has received numerous awards for his work, including the 2006 Chamber of Commerce award for his achievements in economy. After retirement he has continued to work as confidential clerk in the company Profil.

He became acquainted with the Rotary movement in 1989, and was the founding president of Rotary Club Ljubljana. At the time of Slovenia's fight for independence he performed an active role in informing Rotarians from abroad about the situation in Slovenia, in particular by explaining the Slovenian view on the events. When war broke out in Croatia, he was involved in the process of collecting and organizing humanitarian help for refugees, in collaboration with Rotary Clubs from Italy and Austria. For his work in the Rotary Club Ljubljana, he was awarded the Paul Harris Fellow Award.

He cooperated extensively with fledgling clubs in Slovenia and abroad, and has actively promoted Rotarian principles in both, his private and professional life, in particular through the method of Appreciative Inquiry Coaching of managers.

## Diversity is the essence of all

Slovenians first came in touch with the Rotary through our contacts with the emigrants, in particular Rajko Bukovec and Vladimir Ovca, who were spreading these ideas through Ciril Smrkolj, a very communicative businessman Boris Lukner, and others; Darko Zupančič - one of the founders of The Entrepreneurs Club, and myself, at the time the Director of Institute for Social Planning, 40 years old and full of energy and decisiveness. Rotarian ideas seemed interesting, since they included the principles of entrepreneurship, integrity, humanity and good intention. Thus the Slovenian emigrants became one of the links with the Rotary, while the second one developed through cooperation of Rajko Bukovec and Prof. Fedor Pečak, in organizing aid and support to the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation of Physically Handicapped Children and Adolescents in Kamnik. Both led to the search of a way to organize and set up the Rotary Club Ljubljana. Since I was a high state official this prevented potential suspects and accusations of charlatany, freemasonry or right-wing orientation of the Rotary. I was in fact the right person to affirm Rotary in Slovenia, and naïve enough to actually set it. Borut Lukman, Fedor Pečak, Peter Breznik,

Tone Glavan and some other joined me, and we managed to form a quite stable team, which set to work. Establishment of the Club was accompanied by some problems that needed to be dealt with. Firstly, there was the issue of how to register the association compliant with Slovenian legislation and meet all the demands of Rotary International, related to newly established clubs, which imposed the establishment of the first club in the capital city, namely Belgrade. Vladimir Ovca, Rajko Bukovec and Janez Hlebanja were at pains trying to explain the situation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with Slovenia being one of its Republics and Ljubljana its capital. In view of the position

I was occupying, Cvetka Selšek and Janez Bohorič made an official statement with stamp, declaring that Ljubljana was indeed the capital of Slovenia, and Slovenia one of the Yugoslav Republics. This statement was then brought to the Rotary International, and we managed to persuade them into allowing the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana.

At this time, Rotary Club Graz played an important role for us. Günther Perner was its member in charge of Ljubljana's RC development, and he was at the time a very influential Director of the National Bank of Austria. We went along very well and he was an extraordinary mentor.

The Club from Graz was older, a bit old-fashioned and rigid, and some of this passed on to the Club of Ljubljana. When we were setting up our Rotary Club, I also invited a former Rotarian, Anton Knez. We appreciated his experience and advice; however, our work had to be set anew, since the society and needs have changed substantially from his times.

The team proved to be pleasant, ambitious and hard working, and we were heading for a successful start. We attended meetings regularly, participated in actions with great enthusiasm and were very ambitious regarding their outcome. At the time of independence, our contacts with foreign clubs proved to be very important, since many foreigners took a genuine interest in our work and the situation in Slovenia. We were also travelling abroad and witnessed the establishment of the Rotary Club Budapest, the first to be set up in Eastern Europe, where we also announced the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana in the near future.

When I look back at those times I can say the atmosphere was completely different. There were some embryonic beginnings of entrepreneurship, great expectations about the citizen friendly and citizen oriented society, optimistic perception of social transformation, and there was a positive image of Rotary, as important member of civil society, whose role was to emphasize its weaknesses and propose solutions (e.g. removal of architectonic barriers for the disabled and much more).

When a country is not doing so well, Rotary is even more important, and needs to draw attention to humanitarian principles, to those in need, and to the problems of society, even when it cannot provide solutions. This can lead to minor problems, since Rotary is a non-political organization, and the acceptance of certain viewpoints could be understood as political alignment. It is very difficult to draw the line that separates politics from non-politics. People of different political affiliations have been joined in Rotary, and a Rotarian cannot decide to criticize home politicians only, even if he could. He must set an example, live and teach by it.

Our actions are not criticism, they are more a kind of warning, saying that not everything has been done and put in order. They hold the mirror to each member, and I have not noticed any anti-Rotarian behaviour in Rotarians who hold public office. What is of particular interest about Rotary, are different professions and affiliations of its members; they need not agree on everything, the essence of Rotary lies in diversity, in the exchange of opinions, in the respect for the ideas of

others. Members can thus learn a lot by realizing that their ideas may not always be exclusively right. Rotary has proven to be a uniting element in this politicized Slovenia. Rotary teaches to give, and to help. Unless you have tried it, you cannot truly understand what it means. I have met some very rich Rotarians abroad, who behaved very modestly and were dressed likewise. Their donations were not ladled out and it even seemed to me they did not give and contribute enough. Then I realized the different perceptions and value of help. Abroad money seems to have a different, higher value, and so does help. To those, who receive it, means a lot more. Attitude to money is thus more respectful. In Slovenia some take the offered help for granted, as if they were entitled to it. Let the rich give, they say, and they should be happy we accept it. Slovenians are a peculiar people, slightly strange, as can be seen from some of the requests our Club receives. Nothing is good in Slovenia, only abroad. However, there are not many requests of such kind, most of them are genuine calls for help and reflect people's needs and social distress. Members carefully consider each request and do not operate on the principle of reciprocity - "one good turn deserves another". Our members are not socially disadvantaged or weak, and if reciprocity based behaviour should happen, the respective member would very likely be expelled. Nor is Rotary about our affirmation. Our only commitment is to the wellbeing of our society. With the recession, also the number of requests has risen; however, we should not forget that the number of Clubs in Slovenia has already exceeded 40. Requests are thus addressed to different organizations and clubs, and our aid has become more diffused. Also the number of Slovenian aid beneficiaries has risen. Rotary Clubs are very active and initiatives are coming from everywhere, also from the Clubs abroad. Rotary Club Ljubljana has regular contacts with the clubs from Klagenfurt and Trieste; we rotate our meeting venues and engage in international cooperation. When speaking about the Rotary Club Ljubljana I have to mention, there are some extraordinary people among its members, while others have become a bit tired. I no longer have that energy that I used to have 20 years ago. Nevertheless I can proudly say that we have accomplished many things and have not ignored a single task. The only reproach could relate to a lack of our common, joint position on some issues. We could have organized a conference on this topic, which we did not. Anyhow, due to such a colourful membership of the Rotary Club Ljubljana, I find it hard to imagine a consensual decision-making on all issues. What is important is that the dialogue exists among political opponents.

## Honour and responsibility

"Our club would like to become a bridge between the Rotarians (particularly of Slovenian origin) of the world and our county. It aims to strengthen the chains of cooperation and the ability to serve humanitarian goals. Our activities focus on transforming the society and making it open and friendly also to handicapped people. We are proud to be the first Rotary Club in Ljubljana, Slovenia and Yugoslavia. Besides prestige, this has imposed on our Club great responsibility for the establishment of new Rotary Clubs (in Nova Gorica, Maribor, Idrija. . .) and for the development of cooperation among rotary clubs in our country."

*(From the opening speech of the president of Rotary Club Ljubljana, Franc Jamšek, Ljubljana, 21st September 1990)*

## **Boris Lukner**

He was born in 1929. After having completed elementary school and classical gymnasium, he pursued his education in economics, although his main interests were the finances. His first employment was at the Federal Ministry for Heavy Industry in Belgrade, where he worked as planner in the state system of planning, but the Ministry of Economy afterwards delegated him to the position of the head of accounting centre, where he was keeping financial books for 36 different middle sized and small companies.

He selected his third employment alone, and it took him to an important import-export company from Belgrade, where he became the director of representative office for Slovenia, in Ljubljana, where he got familiar with the functioning of foreign trade. He could accept the lack of market economy in Yugoslavia, and searched for employment abroad. His first employment in Germany was the position of intern in a big concern Thyssen, where he got some experience in each sector, most of them in commercial and foreign trade. He then moved to chemical and pharmaceutical industry, and remained there for 21 years. Besides Germany, he also worked in France, Switzerland, Austria, Greece and occasionally Yugoslavia. He was mostly involved in consulting on foreign trade and on the organization of systems and investments. He built two factories: chemical with total synthesis in Slovenia, and a modern, pharmaceutical one in Greece. For 18 years he provided counselling service to a big concern in Hamburg, and to a pharmaceutical company from Switzerland, which was involved in the development and research of new medicines and their patents.

He is married and has four daughters from two marriages. They are all academically educated and successfully employed. He has three grandsons and one granddaughter, of whom two are already students, and two are still attending primary school. He has been retired for several years.

As a diligent Rotarian he was awarded the Paul Harris Fellow Award by the RC Interlagos from Sao Paulo, and he is also the honorary member of Rotary Club Domžale.

## **Morality and politics**

I was introduced to the Rotary ideas in the eighties, by Vladimir Ovca, who served as president to one of the Rotary Clubs in Sao Paulo. We met when he was 19, and remained friends until his death. That is why I like to say that the idea about the Rotary Club Ljubljana originated in Brazil (however, this is only my personal opinion, and there are different truths about the origin of this idea). At that time, people in Slovenia and Yugoslavia did not know much about the Rotary. Personally, I was quite interested in it. As an eager traveller, I soon learned how different clubs were operating in different countries, and already at that time decided to become a Rotarian, and subscribed to the ideas and rules of the Rotary.

I often said that we would need years to understand the true essence of Rotary, and there are many differences between our and foreign clubs, particularly in the accepting of new members.

The criteria abroad are much stricter and it is not easy to become a Rotary member. Also at the time of RC Ljubljana's establishment, human resources management was different and the criteria more selective. We were compliant with the principles of the Rotary International's Basic Act, which were defined as morality, honesty, and inclination to do good deeds to others and to the State. These values were the cornerstones of Rotary membership.

Upon the establishment of RC Ljubljana I got acquainted with many interesting people.

Franc Jamšek, who at the time held important public office of State Secretary in Slovenia, made a lasting impression. Without any kind of fear or reservations he set to organize the first post-war Rotary Club in Slovenia and Yugoslavia. In spite of the ban on the establishment of this kind of clubs, we held meetings in his ministerial office, which was an act of courage. After initial registration, first as association and then as a club, Franc Jamšek became our first and second president, as we requested him to extend his term of office due to the high quality of his work. From the very beginning on we started with our weekly meetings, compliant with the Rotary rules. We were a group of 20 to 25, and due to various reasons a third of the group dropped out already in the initial phase. After individual presentation of all members we introduced the order and principles of work as accepted worldwide. The Rotary founder, Paul Harris, set an interesting principle of joining as many professions, nationalities, religions, and races in the organization based on equality and friendship. Thus he succeeded in uniting everything that seemed impossible in the past. This was probably much easier in the USA than it was here, since there was less intolerance present. I was the godfather of quite a few members in the RC Ljubljana, and also later in the RC Domžale.

Member meetings of RC Ljubljana were traditionally organized in the evenings, in a relaxed atmosphere and they were often accompanied by mostly excellent lectures. Meetings abroad are usually held during lunch break, which is probably a more rational option, but it is questionable whether they are also more successful, and whether their activities are more efficient and of a bigger scope. Quite contrarily, in view of our possibilities, we are probably more efficient, which is particularly true for St. Nicholas's Concert, organized by the RC Ljubljana and probably unique in the world.

I dare say that help is more limited abroad, although they have more available resources. Activities abroad are more modest, as Rotary members donate most of the money themselves.

Even though Rotary Clubs do not represent a forum for the discussions on politics or related topics, this does not imply we are apolitical. All political party presidents but one have lectured on our meetings, and we organised those lectures with the purpose of finding out - firsthand - what was going on in Slovenian politics. We were thus able to adopt an informed opinion and view on Slovenian politics, which I personally believe could be more creative, reassuring and focused on the wellbeing of its nationals and the home country.

We have had quite a few Rotarians serve as high public officials, even ministers, who were more or less successful. They have often held lectures for our club. This offered a chance to our members to get to know and understand both; the top-down and the bottom-up approach to politics, and provided a good basis for informed opinion making and participation on the basis of our own judgment. We have been doing our best to introduce higher standards of behaviour, and to promote good relations among people; however, our influence has been quite limited. We would like to help Slovenians fulfil the promises we made to ourselves upon Slovenia's independence. And lastly: there is much said about elitism. Does Rotary membership makes us qualify as elite? Let us not be misguided by wrong feelings! It is true that we have already had elite (with a hundred year old tradition); however, we must create a new one. To rely on the Rotary membership only, as the alleged ticket to elite, is completely wrong and leads to primitivism, snobbism and imaginary high society. Elite is by all means needed in every society, but only if it is genuine, for it is the genuine elite only that educates and ennobles. It is thus an error to brag about Rotary membership, about social position, money and power; a Rotarian should possess all these without many words or

praise, he should behave morally, be successful, respected, modest, popular and above all, always willing to help. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Rotary Club Ljubljana, I should mention that the situation of Slovenian Rotary has definitely worsened in the last 10 years, due to different but well-known reasons. I am counting on new, young Rotarians, who will fix this and set on the path that used to be the only possible for Rotary members; the only things that count in life are love and friendship.

## The utopian idea of Vladimir Ovca

“The conditions in Yugoslavia were quite difficult in those times, and our idea of establishing a Rotary Club seemed utopian. The regime banned the establishment of this kind of associations or clubs. However, Slovenian emigrants in Brazil were in contact with Slovenian and Yugoslav authorities through their consular representatives and the Yugoslav Embassy in the city Brasilia, a miracle of modern architecture. Our relationship was very good and this issue propped up on many different occasions; however, it was always met with the same response: let us wait, the conditions are not mature, it is too soon!

In the years from 1981 to 1990 the atmosphere in Yugoslavia was already announcing the forthcoming secession and war. Those who still believed in economic solution of this artificial federation, turned to us, businessmen and factory-owners from different parts of the world, to try and save with our capital, what could be saved. In June 1989 the Yugoslav government invited us to the symposium of businessmen of Yugoslav descent. We arrived to Belgrade from all over the world, and at the reception I met the then Minister of Trade, Mr. Feri Horvat. He knew about the Rotary and to my question, whether the Yugoslav government would object the establishment of such a club in Ljubljana, he answered in the negative and added it was the sole responsibility of the Slovenian government to decide on such matters. Furthermore, he guaranteed his unconditional help in our attempts.

I was given this answer in the summer, and at the Slovenian Emigration Association talks about this option started with the president Mitja Vošnjak. Mr. Vošnjak, a former diplomat in Austria, told us about his experience from Vienna. I also met with Mr. Darko Zupančič, co-owner of Free Trade company, who told me about the Entrepreneurs Club established in Ljubljana. I was sure there existed some kind of semblance or affinity between this club and the Rotary Club we intended to establish. I made him interested in our idea and asked him to gather the members of his club for an informal talk at the Holiday Inn. A couple of days later we met in this respectable hotel for a business breakfast, which was attended also by my biography writer. We discussed the options, members, contents and other questions related to the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana. This meeting was the first step in the direction of the future establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana. My friend Boris Lukner, the owner of company BE-EL from Trzin, encouraged and supported me in my efforts. We were already discussing this at the time of his visit in Sao Paulo in 1985, and also later, in January 1989, when he was again in Brazil, and was visiting different Rotary Clubs in Sao Paulo. I introduced him to my friends and business partners.”

*(Taken from the book by Ivan Cimerman “A returned emigrant from the South, Slovenian businessman between Mlinščica and the Amazon”, Devana publishing house, 1998)*

## Anton Papež

Born on 11th January 1955 in Hinje, the Municipality of Novo Mesto. His parents were owners of an inn, and thus grew in the neighbourhood, which was a fusion of the entire happening in the village and in the parish, which left quite an impression on young Anton, as did his parents' continuous efforts and demonstration of their capabilities in the conduct of their trade.

He completed primary school in his birth town, and proceeded with secondary school of engineering in Ljubljana, then moved to the Faculty of Engineering and graduated in 1976.

After that he decided to study economics in Maribor and finished it in 1979. During his studies he travelled throughout Europe and thus expanded his horizons.

His first employment was at the international trade company Intertrade, where he was preparing bids for international calls for tenders for the sales of ships built in the Yugoslav shipyards.

In 1994 he moved to Tanzania with his family, to become the director-general of Trallco, financed by the World Bank. He signed a four-year contract to set up a factory, whose investment value at the time was of 20 million German marks.

In 1988 he became employed at Emona Commerce, where he set up a new company Emona-Globtec LLC and a consortium for cooperation with the Republic of Korea. At that time he organized a few popular business projects. He remained employed in Emona Commerce until 1992, when he left to become the Sales and Marketing Director at Žito, responsible for the reform of export. He decided to study business management (MBA) at the International Centre for Management Brdo, and completed his studies in 1994.

In 1994 he became vice-president of the group Tomos in Koper, and was in charge of the company's restructuring, needed for its impaired financial and business operation. He managed to curb the expenses and establish a joint venture company in the East of China, Tomos Shanghai. From 1997 he was the manager of one of most successful companies with the fastest expansion, TCG Unitech LTH. Until 2007 this company, originally from Škofja Loka, expanded to three important locations, namely to the industrial area Litostroj in Ljubljana, to the factory Benkovac in Croatia and to a factory in Ohrid, Macedonia.

In 2008 the establishment of Interenergo JSC, took place, whose shareholder he is and where he has worked as board director. The company invests in hydro and other renewable sources of energy and their marketing.

Anton Papež has been active in different boards of management, clubs and associations, including the Rotary Club Ljubljana. He has been the president of Regional Council for the Development of Gorenjska and Strategic Council of the College of Mechanical Engineering in Škofja Loka.

He has received various awards and recognitions: by the Municipality of Ljubljana (in 2002), Award of the Association Manager (in 2005), by the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia (in 2007); he became the Honorary Consul of Malaysia (in 2005) and honorary member of community Žužemberk (in 2007).

He is married to Dragica, a law graduate and since 2007 a Notary, with office in Ljubljana.

Their daughter Katarina graduated in biology and in 2008 completed her studies at Grenoble Graduate School of Business. Their daughter Veronika completed studies at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana and passed the Bar examination.

## On the international map

When I worked in Tanzania I became acquainted with the ideas of Rotary, as the company I was working for sponsored the Rotary Club in Dar el Salaam. I thus came in touch with Rotarians and their ideas, and was immediately inspired by their attitude to the Rotary activities, which has remained very important to me even today and implies the gathering and socializing of people committed to high values in life and are always willing to offer their help.

After my return to Slovenia, the late Tone Valas and me wrote a letter to the Rotary International, where we advocated the idea of establishing a Rotary Club in Ljubljana. At that time there was not much sentiment about Rotary in Slovenia, and we thought we were the first two interested in this idea. In response we soon received a letter explaining that Vladimir Ovca and some other Slovenian emigrants had already taken initiative, suggesting we contacted them.

We established contact and the founding group continued to grow. I was one of the three signatories at the court, which made me feel really good. The authorities and politicians did not receive the news of Rotary Club's establishment so well, and the society of that time was quite wary of this kind of civil initiatives as well.

From the very beginning on I knew what were our tasks and responsibilities, since I had seen how the Club in Tanzania operated. In Tanzania the Rotary had been present since the times of the British administration, and there had never been a ban on this activity, as had happened in former Yugoslavia.

The guiding principle of our club has been to address the issue of socially marginalized. We have proposed the removal of construction obstacles for the disabled, promoted the awards for best teachers, projects for under-represented professions and many more. Today, the need for exposing and addressing these problems has become even greater, and we continue with our work and help people in need. I have no doubts about of the importance and positive contribution of our club to the society.

As part of civilian initiative we have also contributed to important international recognition of Slovenia, due to the placement of our club's members on the international map. We are part of international network of relations with other Rotarians. This started with the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana, and will be crowned with the establishment of our own district.

My motto is to always strive for more than you have already accomplished. You can be satisfied with the accomplished goals, but it seems right to have ambitions to achieve more or to improve what you already have. There are many newly established Rotary Clubs in Slovenia and many desires and ambitions, which contributes to a positive work environment.

What is of utmost importance is the atmosphere in the club. As president I was equally concerned about the atmosphere within our club, as about its external activities. Besides the obvious and externally visible participation in activities, it is also important to provide the members with options for personal growth and socializing. This enriches all and contributes to a positive response of Rotarians.

## Fedor Pečak

Born on 23rd April 1935 in Ljubljana, where he graduated from Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine in 1960. Three years after that he passed the State Professional Examination and found employment at Orthopaedic Department of the General Hospital and in 1965 at the Orthopaedic Clinic, where he passed the National Board Exam in Orthopaedic Surgery. Already in 1966 he became consultant orthopaedist in the Institute for Rehabilitation of Physically Handicapped Children and Adolescents in Kamnik (ZUIM). In 1969 he started with weekly specialist examinations of patients with scoliosis, neuromuscular diseases and myelomeningoceles. He was regularly upgrading his knowledge in many acknowledged orthopaedic clinics abroad. In 1974 he coordinated the work group for cerebral palsy in the Hospital for Handicapped Children of Stara Gora. In 1976 he became a consultant orthopaedist in the Institute Janko Premrl - Vojko in Vipava. In 1977 he defended his doctoral dissertation and was elected Assistant Professor in 1980, and Associate Professor in 1985. Together with Prof. Grančanin and Prof. Dimitrijevič he accomplished a pioneering work in the field of functional and structural changes of transposed muscles of the foot sole in congenital malformations, neuro-physiological therapeutic procedures, kinesiology and developmental neuro-orthopaedy. He has been a member of various associations and has actively participated in social activities. Until his retirement in 1995, he was an indispensable member of Children and Youth Neurology, in particular in more complex and demanding cases of developmental neurology, cerebral palsy, congenital malformations and neuromuscular diseases. In 1995 he was also awarded the title of Professor Emeritus in the international associations SICOT and EPOS. He has been known to home and foreign public as expert, researcher and organizer of important international symposia, and excellent orthopaedist, involved in the solving of children's and adolescents' health and orthopaedic-rehabilitation problems. He managed to combine and join various programmes in a cohesive rehabilitation unit. He functioned as a link between the University Medical Centre Ljubljana, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Rehabilitation, Institute for Education and Rehabilitation of Handicapped Children and Adolescents in Kamnik and other medical, social and educational institutions. He has been a member of Rotary International since 1989, and was awarded Paul Harris Fellow Award in 1998 and State Decoration of the Republic of Slovenia for his contribution to the affirmation of the Rotary movement in Slovenia, for the implementation of its humanitarian mission, and in particular for his professional work in the field of orthopaedy. He has been an advocate and fervent supporter of rights and powers of children and adolescents with motor handicap and disabilities.

## Knowledge and cooperation

My acquaintance with Rotary began far before the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana. It actually started with the initiative of director of the Institute for the Rehabilitation of Handicapped Children and Adolescents from Kamnik, Adolf Prašnikar. When they wanted to introduce electric wheelchairs, the customs regulations impeded the import. Magazine Jana reported about this case, and the article met with great response not only in Slovenia, but also

abroad, even in Germany and Canada. Offers for help came from both mentioned countries.

A Slovenian emigrant, Rajko Bukovec, who was at the time member of Rotary Club St. Catharines and president of its commission for international cooperation wanted to donate 1000 Canadian Dollars on the occasion of his visit to Slovenia.

He contacted the editors of *Jana* and they suggested a visit to the Institute for the Rehabilitation of Handicapped Children and Adolescents in Kamnik, which Bukovec really visited, together with the at the time president of Canadian Rotary Clubs, Charles Complin. The donated money was used for the purchase of computer and vibration saw for the cutting of plaster cast, since wheelchairs had already been delivered from the Federal Republic of Germany.

Upon their first visit we agreed that financial help could not be the most important and useful kind of aid. Instead, we stressed the importance of exchange of knowledge and experience. Soon the invitations arrived from Canada. Adolf Prašnikar was the first to visit their centres, and I was the next to enjoy the Canadian hospitality. Mutual cooperation in the professional field of physiotherapy and work therapy followed quite soon.

This exchange brought much good by encouraging development in the field of handicapped youth and their rehabilitation in Slovenia. Contrary to us, Canada adopted and implemented the idea of integrating handicapped children in normal environment. When possible, Canadian children are rehabilitated in their home environment. We were particularly impressed by the disabled-friendly access to public institutions. Another impressive feature we noticed in Canada, was the willingness of people to help the disabled: there were many volunteers working for free in centres for rehabilitation, and there were constant activities striving to develop the right attitude to the disabled and not with the sole purpose of collecting money.

I first met Rotarians in Kamnik, and later again at the time of my visit to Canada. Our endeavours to spread the ideas of Rotary were starting to bear some fruit; professional cooperation was extending as we absorbed certain thoughts and approaches, and applied them on home ground.

We established contacts mostly with Canadian institutions for the rehabilitation of children in St. Catharines, Kitchner and Hamilton. I also arranged cooperation with dr. Bobeček, director of the orthopaedic department at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, which set ground for cooperation at University level and reconfirmed the opening of Slovenian medicine to the world. Exchange of knowledge continued also in the field of neuro-physical therapy, defectology and logopedic work. I was particularly enthusiastic about new technique of the so-called "bliss" symbols for communication among people who can neither speak, nor use fingers for the sign language of the deaf-mute. On its basis we introduced a new doctrine of substitute communication, which is used in Canada, where people who cannot speak are introduced to substitute communication through certain systems. They are thus provided a new option of communication.

This method was first introduced in the Institute in Kamnik for children who were not able to communicate in any other way, and later also in other institutions. I believe Rotary help was extremely valuable.

Another important action, initiated by our Club in cooperation with the architect Marija Vovk from the Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, was the removal of architectonic barriers. One of the first Rotary missions was to provide wheelchair access to the Opera of Ljubljana. The action was accomplished successfully, and other similar actions followed, which ultimately influenced also the legislators. It is mandatory today that public institutions provide access also

to people with disabilities, on wheelchair, to the elderly and to mothers with strollers. We also demanded that public toilets on airplanes provide access to people on wheelchairs, and airports responded positively by providing assistance to people on wheelchairs.

Many things have been accomplished, but much more still needs to be done. This was also reflected when introducing the new Rotary doctrine - hippotherapy - namely the therapy with horses, which was promoted in Slovenia by the Rotary. Our club joined forces with other institutions, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, and together we established a team for children with special needs. We arrived to the conclusion that hippotherapy could be used as a healing method; also in this case the initiative had come from Canada.

Our collaboration with Rotary Club St. Catharines has been very intense since the beginning, and later we established equally intense collaboration also with the clubs from Austria, Germany and even one Italian. This represented the origin of partnerships. Today, Rotary Club Ljubljana has the following partner clubs: RC Trieste, RC Klagenfurt, and RC Udine, and we often engage in joint activities.

I remained friend with Rajko Bukovec and our families have often visited each other, which has been a common practice among Rotarians, and continues to be passed on to young generations as well. Rajko Bukovec has become an honorary member of RC Ljubljana, and so has Jaka Pucihar, whose contribution to the organization of St. Nicholas's Evenings has been immense. In order to become an honorary member, the candidate must meet strict criteria and pass the debate and the vote in the Administrative Board of the Club.

## Honorary member of Rotary Club Ljubljana

“We have known Mr. Rajko Bukovec for quite some time, and his first aid action was the one related to rehabilitation and health, from 1984. Within the framework of Rotary Club St. Catharines, Mr. Bukovec gathered various wheelchairs and other equipment and sent them to the Institute for Rehabilitation and Education of Handicapped Children and Adolescents in Kamnik. This opened the door to a collaboration that connected us in the years to come and forged a true friendship. . .

Since 1990 both, the Institute from Kamnik and Rotary Club Ljubljana have received constant attention and important gifts by Mr. Bukovec or his Club, among others also: didactic toys, different therapeutic and medico-technical equipment, switches and platforms for the implementation of non-verbal communication, a direct link to experts from Canada, exchange of professional literature and topical publications and journals.

There has not been a visit without a financial donation by Mr. Bukovec, of usually a four-digit number, for the implementation of humanitarian programmes. Among bigger gifts was special surgery equipment set for orthopaedic surgery for the General Hospital Celje, and nearly 100 units of topical professional literature by referential authors from the field of medicine, in particular rehabilitation, which were donated to the Library of the University Medical Centre of Ljubljana and the Institute for Rehabilitation.

Mr. Bukovec also organized a visit of world known orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Bobeck to Valdotra.

Soon after the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana, we received a container full of special wheelchairs and other medico-technical equipment...”

*(From the argumentation for awarding Mr. Rajko Bukovec with the title of Honorary Member of Rotary Club Ljubljana, prepared by M. Golob, on 16th March 2007)*

## Disabled children on Canadian wheelchairs

“Five wheelchairs donated and sent to the Institute for Rehabilitation and Education of Handicapped Children and Adolescents in Kamnik from Canada received new owners. The wheelchairs are electronically guided, worth several hundred million dinars and cannot be purchased in Yugoslavia. Their new owners, five children with severe disabilities, will thus be able to move independently, something for them close to impossible with regular wheelchairs. This valuable gift was donated by two Canadian institutes for rehabilitation of children, through Rotary Club from St. Catharines.”

*(Taken from the daily Dnevnik, on 5th April 1989)*

## Suffering relieved

“Rajko Bukovec has been known to Slovenian public as the President of Rotary Club from St. Catharines (a reputable international humanitarian organization), which has been helping the Institute for Rehabilitation and Education of Handicapped Children and Adolescents from Kamnik, for several years. This time a container of various technical equipment and material for the handicapped was gathered through his club. Besides the wheelchairs (half of them electronically guided and thus suitable for dystrophic children), there are also special stilts, mattresses, gym-rollers, devices for facilitating the use of electronic typewriters, special lifts for moving children from bed to the wheelchair and many more.”

*(Taken from the weekly Jana, on 26th April 1989)*

## Janez Jaka Pucihar

Born on 20th December 1943 in Ljubljana, attended primary school in Kamnik and gymnasium in Ljubljana. He took music lessons for eight years at Moste - Polje Music School and was a longstanding member of Youth Brass Band and Big Band of Moste - Polje Music School. He continued with his education at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology - Department for Mining, and upon the completion of his studies became Engineer of Geology. In 1962 he founded his first band ECHO and performed all over the territory of former Yugoslavia, and from 1966 on also in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy and Russia. After having

completed his military service in Belgrade, in 1972 he started his employment at RTV Ljubljana, and formed the legendary band ŠOK, which continues to perform even today.

He worked at RTV as producer, editor and director, and has received numerous festival awards and prizes for his work (Dani JER Neum 1988 and Budva 1989, JFTK Portorož, SOF Portorož, Golden Drum Portorož and European Festival Epica, where he made it to the finals).

RTV Slovenia also awarded him with Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004.

He is a co-founder and owner of the agency AHA LLC, company for marketing, advertising and consulting, stationed in Ljubljana, established in 2005. He is married and a father to four children: Sašo, Gorazd, Ana and Klen.

He became involved in the activities of Rotary Club Ljubljana in 1990, as its co-founder, and presided over the club in 1997/98. He was a godfather to the RC Domžale and joint godfather to the RC Nova Gorica and RC Čatež. He has participated - musically or organizationally - at nearly all humanitarian Rotary Balls since 1990.

In 2004 he was awarded by the RC International with the Paul Harris Fellow Award, and in 2009 conferred the title of Honorary Member of the RC Ljubljana, due to his exceptional contribution to the success of St. Nicholas's Evenings.

## St. Nicholas's Evenings

I joined the Rotary Club Ljubljana in 1990, and was among the first 25 members confirmed in 1990 by the Charter. My godfather was Tone Glavan, for it is impossible to become a member without your godfather's invitation. I accepted the invitation because I aspired to become member of a group, connecting people from different social spheres and professions, joint by their common desire to help. It also seemed the right thing to do, as I was myself already a father of four healthy and successful children. I felt in a way obliged to the Creator and saw the membership as an opportunity to repay Him by serving to the community, by helping those in need, the disabled, poor children, children with special needs and all others in need.

Establishment of the Club goes back to the period of former Yugoslavia. However, the independence of Slovenia was a herald of many changes to come. I perceived the Rotary as a form of civil action, which could positively influence on the attitude of society towards humanitarianism. At the time the Slovenian civil society was still in its infancy and far from being recognized.

When I became member of Rotary Club Ljubljana, I discussed the situation at length with two Slovenians from Brazil, Vladimir Ovca and Janez Hlebanja. I also met Rajko Bukovec from Canada, who at one of our meetings explained how they had organized a humanitarian auction, which had been also transmitted by the local television. They auctioned various articles that had been donated for humanitarian purpose, from television sets to washing machines. People, watching the auction, were bidding and the money thus gathered was earmarked for a humanitarian project.

At the time I was employed as editor at the Slovenian RTV, and hence the thought of doing something similar also in Slovenia, occurred. Prof. Dr. Fedor Pečak was a great promoter of this idea and he suggested something similar to the Canadian auction. I warmed up to the idea, but not to the auction. It dawned upon me that we could organize a humanitarian event for St. Nicholas's, the day when children in many families receive presents. Why not make this day special, by giving

presents to all children, including the sick and the disabled ones, to children with special needs, and to socially disadvantaged children?

I drew up a synopsis, which presented the evening as a combination of high quality classical and pop music, with documentary inserts on the problems of children who would benefit from the funds raised through the concert. I presented the synopsis to Janez čadež, at the time director of RTV Slovenia, and Janez Lombergar, programme director. They approved of the idea of St. Nicholas's Evening. The event was prepared in every detail by the production of culturally artistic programme, at the time led by Jani Golob, also a member of Rotary Club Ljubljana. Slovenian musicians and artists were invited to participate for free, and not a single one turned us down. This was the birth of the humanitarian event, first called St. Nicholas's Evening, and later renamed into St. Nicholas's Humanitarian Concert.

As initiator and organizer of St. Nicholas's evenings I took part in the creative preparation of programme and scenarios, in the filming of documentary inserts, I was the one who contacted artists and asked them to participate for free, I was the main fund raiser and I also participated actively as musician and singer with my band Šok. I functioned as the main link between the TVS and Rotary Club Ljubljana, and when I look back at those times I can appreciate the accomplished work.

All the TV events are archived and there is for over 34 hours of television programme, with a replay of 69 hours of high quality programme. A great sum of money was raised through St. Nicholas's Concerts, as can be seen from the table in Chapter 4.

The success of St. Nicholas's evenings could not be possible without altruistic help of many good people from Rotary Club Ljubljana and without Sandi čolnik, the legend of Slovenian television, who hosted and participated in all the concerts since 1993 and whose personal touch gave soul and legitimacy to all events. St. Nicholas's events were happening under the caring guidance of dedicated people, in particular: Franc Hočevar, Ljubo Marion, Janez Rogelj, Anton Gradišek, Karel Kuzman, Zlatko Šetinc, Tomaž Bole, Franci Zavrl, Aljoša Domijan and all members of Rotary Club Ljubljana.

The venue for events was changing; at first it was the television main studio, then the Church designed by the architect Jože Plečnik, then we moved back to the studio, and to the Union Hall, from where the concerts were moved to the Plečnik's Church in Barje.

Every evening included the address by the Church Representative, from Cardinal Rode to Perko, missionaries and others. On our first concert, the late metropolitan Alojzij Šuštar delivered his address. This did not represent interfering of the Church into Rotary activities, but the connection of St. Nicholas, as benefactor, with the activities of the Club. If they were taking place in the Church, it was for the environment only. It is also quite common for the Rotary to include members from the rank of priests as well. E.g. Janez Grill, a theologian and editor, is a member of Rotary Club. There are no major changes planned for St. Nicholas's Concerts and we will continue to attract also performers from other countries, which already happened in the past. Different artists from various countries have already participated in our concerts. Perhaps we will even succeed in realizing the idea that used to be a hidden dream of Boris Bergant and me, to prepare St. Nicholas's events jointly with Austrian, Italian, Hungarian, Croatian and Slovenian television. This would connect more nations and events could be organized on yearly basis and on different locations, which would represent a nice example of implementation of Rotarian principles.

## Janez Rogelj

Born on 6th May 1950 in Ljubljana, where he attended primary school and gymnasium; he later continued his studies at the Faculty of Sociology, Political Science and Journalism, study programme Journalism. He was the recipient of scholarship by the then Executive Council of Socialist Republic of Slovenia, for the needs of Yugoslav Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs. He graduated in 1974, completed his internship in journalism with the newspaper Primorske Novice in Koper, and served his military duty in Ilirska Bistrica.

In 1976 he found employment at Research Agency of Slovenia as adviser, where he covered the area of international scientific cooperation. In 1982 he became head of department for joint tasks at the Research Agency of Slovenia, where he focused on the problems of scholarship, information-documentary activities and scientific articles and journals. At that time he was also performing the tasks of Secretary of the Commission for questions related to minorities and emigrants, at the Research Agency of Slovenia. He set the foundations for financing of research activity in the field of emigration. In 1985 he became a member of Yugoslav-American committee for scientific and technical cooperation. He actively promoted scientific and technical participation in COST projects and scientific and technical cooperation with the OECD.

In 1989 he was elected Secretary General of Slovenian Emigration Association, the function he has performed ever since. He is convinced that the link between the country of origin and Diaspora is of utmost importance and requires great effort of all, the emigrants and the country of origin. And it was the Slovenian Emigration Association where first steps were taken in the direction of a revival of Rotary Club Ljubljana.

He has been married to Elda Gregorič - Rogelj, M.Sci. in economy, employed at the Ministry of Health. They have three children - a computer engineer of systems, Rok, aged 27, and 19 years old twins, Ajda - a student of social informatics and Manca - a student of law.

## The merit of emigrants

Acknowledgment for the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana, at least to a certain extent, goes to our emigrants. As secretary of Slovenian Emigration Association I have met with many of them, and some of them were also Rotarians, although this is not very common among emigrants.

It was a custom that emigrants, upon their visit to Slovenia, also stopped by at the Association.

Of those who came regularly, there were Rajko Bukovec, Janez Hlebanja and Vladimir Ovca.

And Rudolf Živec from Argentina should also be mentioned out of respect. I recall their talks about the requested "attendance" they were supposed to make with a visit paid to the Rotary Club Klagenfurt, since they were absent from home for several weeks. And this was partly the reason why they started thinking about a Rotary Club in Ljubljana.

I am quite positive there would be no Rotary in Slovenia, had it not been for the emigrants; the link with them was extremely important. Each country has its emigrants, who move from the South to the North and from the East to the West. This creates certain positive effects upon their return to the country of origin, as they bring new knowledge, skills, experience, influence...

Slovenian Emigration Association used to have a negative connotation, and some even considered it a branch of UDBA (Yugoslav intelligence services) and the Communist Party. There are still some who perceive it a State organ, however, they are fortunately not many. One of Rotary features is also

the tolerance towards people with different opinions and worldviews, and it embraces members with different political affiliations.

Let me return to the beginning of the idea about Rotary Club in Slovenia, which coincided with the intention of Rajko Bukovec to donate hospital equipment as the hospital, where he was working at that time, received new contemporary equipment. Since the old equipment was still usable, he wanted to donate it. Also other emigrants were coming ahead with different donation proposals for humanitarian purposes, but the customs and different regulations always impeded it.

This joined Prof. Fedor Pečak, a friend of Rajko Bukovec, the late Mitja Vošnjak, whom I inherited the secretary function of Slovenian Emigration Association from, Ciril Smrkolj, who married Vladimir Ovca's sister in law, and Franc Jamšek, and encouraged them to spread the Rotary ideas; they were soon joined by others.

Many problems needed to be solved, as there were no Rotary Clubs in Yugoslavia at that time.

This gave start to a special action, involving various organs and services at the level of the Republic, as well as individuals with the Committee for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries, Committee for Health and Committee for International Relations. As it turned out, Rotary Club in Slovenia could only be established as an association; this was permitted by the legislation in force. However, there were two different problems: one was the statute, which needed to be enclosed to the application. International statute regulating Rotary clubs defines the conditions for membership and sets the criteria of high ethical and professional qualifications of potential members. This violated the socialist doctrine and the principle of equality of all, as it implied superiority of some. However, the person responsible for the establishment of associations was inclined to the idea and we somehow pushed the application through.

The other problem regarded the standards of umbrella organization, the Rotary International.

As Slovenia was still a part of Yugoslavia, the first Rotary Club needed to be established in its capital city, namely Belgrade, and not in Ljubljana. We thus had to convince Rotary International that Ljubljana was the capital of Slovenia, and Slovenia an independent republic. We were aided by a lucky coincidence. At the time, the Macedonian member of Presidency of Yugoslavia was Vasilij Tupolovski, who had studied in Canada; Rajko Bukovec established contact with him and we thus obtained the permit to establish an association without any kind of federal document. We had to enclose the statement that Slovenia was an independent Republic and that Belgrade would also establish a Rotary Club as soon as possible, which also came true. This is how we solved domestic administrative and political problems and persuaded the Rotary International.

I was attracted by the Rotary ideas as presented by Vladimir Ovca, in particular the behaviour of the first four Rotary members in 1905, when they brought home a homeless person to celebrate Christmas with their families. They gave a very different Christmas to the homeless, and made their families understand how different a life could be; the life of homeless. Both sides profited from this shared experience. That Rotary was not at all only about the material help, but mostly about personal engagement, was not immediately perceived by all. Some needed more time to understand and accept the Rotary principles into their own life-style.

This was revealed at the time of our first action, when I suggested Rotary members to take position in front of shopping malls and educate people not to park on the spaces reserved for the disabled. Some were sceptical of potential success, while others believed personal example made sense and would eventually lead to success. This is also true for family behaviour.

There was some scepticism at the time of establishment of Rotary Club, as to whether the members would handle their commitments and how they would be understood by their families. Meetings were scheduled for Wednesday evening, but many activities took place also over the weekends. Probably our wives also wondered about our whereabouts, even more so since the Rotary Club Ljubljana has always represented a male enclave. Eventually we started to organize meetings and trips also with our female partners, and they have become traditional for Christmas and for the turn of presidency. Our partners also participate at the annual meeting at three-country-borders (Tromeja), when we meet members of RC Klagenfurt and RC Udine, and they are also invited to presidential trips. Our partners have good and friendly relations. The situation is different, when it comes to children. Some follow their fathers' footsteps, while others do not. Also my son initially showed some interest in the Rotary, however, it was a passing experience. Younger children are easier to influence than older, and they must understand the values of Rotary on their own. There is no general rule here and we can only discuss it individually, case by case.

## **Janez Hlebanja**

Born in Srednji Vrh near Jesenice in 1928. After having served in partisans, he was sent, at the age of 17, to learn for a precision mechanic in Czechoslovakia. When he returned to Ljubljana he realized his ambitions were bigger and felt restrained, thus he decided to move to Austria, where he got employed in 1952 as mechanical engineer. He heard his profession was requested in Brazil and applied for a job. He moved to Sao Paulo, where he found employment as mechanic. Only a few years after that, he started his business of metal products with Vladimir Ovca. He soon became independent and his company Metal Yanes rapidly expanded, employing over a hundred workers already in 1961. He became the third biggest producer of camp equipment in the world. He was a co-founder of the Association of Friends of Yugoslavia, where he promoted development of economic relations between the two countries. A couple of months prior to the independence of Slovenia, a group of Slovenians established the Association of Slovenians from Brazil, in the house of Janez Hlebanja. Members regularly meet twice a year, for Christmas and for the Independence Day. Janez Hlebanja was also the honorary Consul of the Republic of Slovenia in Sao Paulo. He died in 2003 in his hometown, he would frequently return to and where he incessantly repeated: "My roots are here, but my treetop is in Brazil."

## **Four years of effort**

"In 1984, St. Catharines decided to expand their activities overseas, to Slovenia; in that same year Rajko Bukovec opened a series of talks at various levels, from federal to communal, also with some influential individuals. Many problems and prejudices needed to be solved within the organization itself, in particular in the clubs from Austria and Italy. After four years of efforts our chances in 1988 seemed very slim, when a positive answer from the then president of the Yugoslav presidency, Dr. Drnovšek came, which was confirmed also by "let it be" of his successor

Marković. In May 1989, Bukovec was busy settling some final details, and in June 1989 the Rotary Club Ljubljana was established.”

*(Taken from the article by Sandi Sitar “For a happier world”, Dnevnik, 23rd October 1990)*

## The passing of experience

“Soon after the last year’s meeting in Holiday Inn, I contacted Rotary members from Graz, since I had been doing business with them already from the time of my presidency in Sao Paulo. They accepted the idea with enthusiasm, and I provided a list of applicants, so they could proceed with formalities for the establishment and pass their experience on colleagues from Ljubljana. My longstanding friend Boris Lukner was of great help. New members started to meet and the to expand the ranks of Rotary Club Ljubljana, which was awaiting its imminent establishment. In December 1989 about 20 members were already meeting, therefore the necessary quorum was met for the Club to be assigned the name of Rotary Club International. Rotary Club International is a worldwide organization of businessmen. In January 1990, 22 members from Ljubljana and its surroundings were registered with the organization.”

*(Taken and summarized from the interview with Vladimir Ovca, titled “Rotary Club in Ljubljana Again”, Dnevnik, 13th October 1990)*

## Contact club

It is a great pleasure for me to be here, in Ljubljana, among you today in the function of President of Rotary Club Udine, with the purpose of implementing the agreed establishment of a contact club... This international activity to which we have committed as ambassadors of friendship and peace, is a true image of Rotary’s call to “serve”. This initiative represents the founding stone of many Rotary programmes, which have always proven as the right kind of long-term orientation and the promotion of social welfare. President of our international commission, Alessandro Morelli, will continue to strive for the maintenance of contacts with your club and for a positive implementation of the presented initiative. In 2004 Slovenia will join the European integration and it is our desire to perceive today’s meeting as the first step towards mutual cooperation of our clubs. Values of Rotary derive from direct experience of cooperation in “serving”, and we are looking forward to all future initiatives from both clubs.

*(From Inaugural Address of the president of RC Udine, Francesco Rocca, on 17th December 2003)*

## Ciril Smrkolj

Born on 22nd September 1949 in Šentožbolt under Trojane, he finished secondary technical school in 1968 and found his first employment in Melodija Mengeš, and after that in Paper mill Količevo. He advanced his technical and professional knowledge in Brazil, where he worked as technical director from 1973 to 1981, when he returned to his home farm.

At the time of Slovenia's independence he actively participated in the process of democratization of the newly formed state, in particular in the agricultural sector. He was the initiator, founding member and the first president of Farmers' Trade Union (SKS) in Slovenia, and owing to his efforts the Union SKS gained the status of associate member to European Association of Farmers Organizations (COPA).

As member of Slovenian People's Party he was elected to the State Parliament in 1996, and appointed Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia a year later. He held the mandate until November 2000. From 2001 to 2003 he was the deputy director of Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for agricultural market and development of countryside, and as advisor in the Cabinet of Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food. He later got employed in his own company and got actively involved in farming.

In 2004 Smrkolj was elected to the Council of Slovenian Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry (KGZS) and served as president of regional unit of KGZS Ljubljana until 2008. On 1st July 2008 he became the president of Slovenian Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry.

### The only farmer among Rotarians

My late father-in-law Vladimir Ovca was a Rotary member, and so was my friend Janez Hlebanja. They both lived in Brazil, where I also passed eight years of my life, and where they introduced me to the ideas of Rotary and invited me to initiative meeting for the establishment of Rotary Club in Ljubljana. The group seemed interesting and pleasant, and among the founding members were quite some of today's members. To join the Rotary represented for me a chance to relax and enjoy in the debate with people of different professions.

When I was accepted as member, I was the only farmer in the Club, while today there are some other farmers among Slovenian Rotarians. I was glad to participate in projects and to help with the fundraising. Money was and still is mainly gathered from sponsors, and to be a Rotary member has never implied being rich. Annual membership fee is not so high, and it is much more important how much time you are willing to dedicate to others - this is what makes Rotarians rich inside. I have always been inclined to altruism and work, trying to help others from a very young age on. I was socially active already at the time of former Yugoslavia, as active member of local community, and have striven for the wellbeing of the community, paying special attention to elderly and the children. Also today I like to help others in the environment where I live. The ideas of Rotary were thus equally close to me even after my debut in politics.

It is true that Rotary is not about politics, however, some of its members are eminent politicians, e.g. the Chancellor Helmut Kohl. I cannot say that my political function in any way affected my participation in the Rotary Club Ljubljana. The only difference was that as Minister I experienced a severe lack of time for socializing with Rotarians, who always showed great tolerance.

There were no privileges or bias, even though I was Minister and politically active, as Rotarians

make no difference when it comes to help. I myself have never made them on the basis of political or any other affiliation. I have never intended to differentiate among people on the basis of their political beliefs, and do not intend to do so now, as president of Forestry Association of Slovenia. We never ask people who need help, about their political orientation, but only about the kind of help they need. There are about 110.000 members, among whom also the elderly, who need help. We communicate with them and channel the help to where it is most needed.

I have often presented views and problems of farmers to Rotary Club Ljubljana, since it embraces a group of open minded and educated individuals, and it was always met with positive response. When we organized the pan-Slovenian farmers' protest in 1993, where I was one of the organizers, I explained our reasons to the Rotary colleagues. Our club has always been open to debate on topical issues and problems. However, it did not initiate a concrete action in support of Slovenian farmers, as we had defined our target groups differently, namely the youth and their problems with scholarship and other. I have personally organized and realized a few actions in support of farmers, who are usually perceived as second-class citizens in our society. Everybody sees farmers through the number of their tractors, but tend to overlook the hard work behind, the efforts they invest in their survival and the stability of farmers' families, where generations live under the same roof. Farmers' households could be an example to many of us.

Every year about 30 farmers get injured or loose life in tractor accidents, leaving behind deeply hurt families, and farms without master. There is not enough help for these families.

Farmers require additional help at the time of natural emergencies, but this is not systematically organized and prepared. Luckily, there are still many good people in Slovenia, neighbours offer assistance, and solidarity has won many battles.

It is wrong for people to think that Rotary is a humanitarian organization, since it really embraces many different activities. If I were to look back on the past years, I could find many beautiful memories. The contacts with Rotarians have definitely left a positive imprint and the feeling of being useful and appreciated, something I have never experienced in politics, and never will.

## **Darko Zupanič**

Born on 27th March, 1967 in Feldkirch, Austria, and spent his childhood in Maribor, where he has lived ever since. As a child he was an active boy scout and a member of the Association of Young Cooperative Members, he also learned foreign languages and the accordion. He graduated from Secondary School for Militia Cadets in Tacen in 1986. During his school years he was promoted from Detachment Commander to Commander of the Troops and earned several mentions of praise for his strenuousness and special attainments.

He ended his employment with the Police voluntarily in 1989, to continue with the study of political science, programme of international relations, which was interrupted by the Slovenian war of independence. He actively participated in various activities required for a successful and as painless as possible secession and independence of Slovenia. In the battles at Štrihovec and Šentilj he earned the Badge of "Homeland defendant" and the status of veteran of war.

His organizational abilities were revealed already at a young age and also later, when he realized some of the first, and at the time biggest, foreign investments in Slovenia and

real-estate purchases, as well as organizing commercial activities. He was also successful in projects involving the Slovenian Catholic Church (bank, investment company, privatization . . .), and in organizing of non-profit activities.

He organized and promoted the first Entrepreneurs Club, which gradually grew into Slovenian Employers' Organisation, where he worked as secretary general for 10 years, and was several times appointed to Slovenian delegations in the ILO and the EU. He could thus get to know the international political scene and was constantly trained and educated in the field of social dialogue. He participated in some research papers and projects and won several awards for his work and contribution.

As organizational manager he was involved in the implementation of joint venture with Kastner & Ohler, and with IMO Martk from Austria. In both cases well-known Austrian companies made substantial investments in Slovenia. He also participated in the establishment of a Bank (Krekova Banka), an Investment Funds Administration Society (Krekova družba za upravljanje investicijskih skladov), and a Finance Society (Krekova družba za financiranje). He was the initiator of Slomšek's Scholarship Fund, which in time grew into the Slomšek Institute. He was also one of organizers and founders of Rotary Club Ljubljana.

In 1993 he bought a building in the city centre of Maribor, which is used by various sports clubs and associations, and together with his 11 year old son, he practices ju-jitsu.

He is married to Tamara, a graduated journalist, employed at the local radio station.

In 1995 he established his first private beer brewery, after having successfully accomplished the training, passed exams and obtained all the required certificates for brewer and cook (which proves his eagerness to learn). He sold the brewery and in 1998 bought another one, as well as Elektrovina boathouse. The latter was sold three years ago following a devastating fire.

Lately he has been active in lumber trade and indirectly helped some producers from Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Russia in their production adjustment and the sales of their semi manufactures. His motto has always been: persistence, courage, and patience.

## With a trifle of Balkan

My personal Rotary story started in 1988 in Ljubljana, when I established the Entrepreneurs Club where other young people from the faculty and those, who saw their future in entrepreneurship, joined me. This was the time of many business ideas, when half private companies were being established, still operating on the old legal basis. The club was filling a void and paved the way for business. It soon counted over 200 members. We were meeting twice a month, organizing events, concerts, dinners and similar in Villa Podrožnik, as the authorities of the time viewed the club with sympathy.

I was young, enthusiastic, full of vitality and eager to forge ties and do business, which was aptly used also by others who were less communicative. Many were restricted to their professional circles, and apart from the Communist Party, there were no other institutions where we could act and meet. Some did not fit in with the PEN Club environment, golf clubs were very rare, and people searched for company in their home environment. My idea was to provide the environment where we could meet also others, not just our work colleagues. I seemed to have been acceptable to all,

and I was trusted not to engage in something stupid. I followed the interests of my friends and did not think about direct benefits.

Rotary Club Ljubljana presented an upgrade of the Entrepreneurs Club. The founders were of the idea that Slovenia, as a fledgling state, needed such a club for its international affirmation.

My "job" was to make occasional checks to see if people were willing to participate, and I did it with success for a couple of years. It was all about attracting people who have achieved something exceptional in their field, which was far from elitism in the classical sense. Our goal was never to form an elite, but to join people of different profiles whose contributions would enrich us, and who could expand our horizons and make us achieve what lies beyond our reach.

I had contacts in Austria and thus got in touch with Rotary ideas and literature. The ideas were acceptable, however, the rules were totally incompatible with our situation, as they were very strict, prescribing meetings on certain days and to a great extent even defining the agenda. Strict criteria demanded regular attendance, which seemed highly questionable for Slovenia.

This was the time of self-censorships and limitations. Some came to the meeting once or twice and never again, for they failed to see the utility of it all or they had imagined it differently. Among those who came but soon retreated was also Dimitrij Rupel. Fluctuation was quite high, and it turned out it was not easy to gather 20 people committed to the Rotary ideas and rules.

We had to comply with international rules, which presented the most difficult part. We wanted to do it "with a trifle of Balkan", and searched for variations, opt-outs, wanted meetings every fortnight and similar, until it became clear it was the Rotary way or no way at all. The labour pains lasted for two years.

At the time of the establishment of Rotary Club Ljubljana, I was the youngest in the group and among youngest Rotarians in Europe. The idea of humanitarian work was alive, but our options were very limited. We all realized Rotary was not to exist for its own sake and that it needed a social function. Soon the aid programmes started to develop; however, they initially failed to provide the incentive for meetings. They were in the background of our idea what Slovenia would need when it became independent. We felt that by joining its best men, results would be better and that Slovenian social elite would thus find it easier to cooperate with other elites in the world.

The problems burst out when we organized our first Rotary Ball; some members did not even have proper wardrobe, and we all needed some lessons in good manners. This was the topic of one of our first lectures in the Rotary Club Ljubljana, held by Ms. Ana Knežević.

I took an active part in the establishment of Rotary Club Maribor and became close with Leon Štukelj in the last years of his life. He was an extraordinary person and with his death I ended my activities in the RC Maribor.

## All presidents and treasurers

There were 20 presidents of Rotary Club Ljubljana from its beginning to the mid 2006:

year 1990/1991 Franc Jamšek  
year 1991/1992 Anton Glavan  
year 1992/1993 Peter Breznik  
year 1993/1994 Marjan Cerar  
year 1994/1995 Tomaž Bole  
year 1995/1996 Fedor Pečak  
year 1996/1997 Baldomir Zajc  
year 1997/1998 Jaka Pucihar  
year 1998/1999 Anton Papež  
year 1999/2000 Zlatko Šetinc  
year 2000/2001 Karl Kuzman  
year 2001/2002 Ljubo Marion  
year 2002/2003 Aljoša Domijan  
year 2003/2004 Anton Gradišek  
year 2004/2005 Janez Rogelj  
year 2005/2006 Boris Grosman  
year 2006/2007 Filip Remškar  
year 2007/2008 Jani Bavčer  
year 2008/2009 Aleš Jenčič  
year 2009/2010 Vladimir Pezdirc

Besides presidents, there were also treasurers, albeit not as many; the first to have taken upon the function of treasurer was Bojan Prejs (1991/1992), to be followed by Franc Hočevar (whose mandate was the longest, from 1992/2005), who was followed by Živko Bergant (2005/2006).

In 2007 Franc Hočevar again took over and has held the function ever since.

Rotary Club Ljubljana holds its regular meetings every Wednesday at 19.30 in Grand Hotel Union, Miklošičeva cesta 1, Ljubljana. Its mailing address is: Rotary Club Ljubljana, Miklošičeva 1, 1000 Ljubljana; its email address is: [info@rotary-klub-lj.si](mailto:info@rotary-klub-lj.si); and its webpage: [www.rotary-klub-lj.si](http://www.rotary-klub-lj.si).

## Paul Harris Fellow

In 1957, 10 years after the death of Paul Harris, an award in his memory - the Paul Harris Fellow Award - was conferred, for the first time, on most meritorious Rotarians worldwide. Among the awarded Slovenians are also members of Rotary Club Ljubljana: Jani Bavčer, Tomaž Bole, Peter Breznik, Marjan Cerar, Anton Glavan, Franc Hočevar, Franc Jamšek, Karl Kuzman, Ljubo Marion, Anton Papež, Fedor Pečak, Jaka Pucihar, Zlatko Šetinc and Baldomir Zajc.

## Actions and visions

In the past 20 years of activity, the Rotary Club Ljubljana organized and participated in numerous aid actions. Some have become traditional events, while others were smaller, occasional, or one-time only. The following presentation only includes the actions that have become part of regular activities of Rotary Club Ljubljana, or those that stand out for their special purpose or something else. Collections of documents can sometimes provide the numbers of funds raised for aid, and even though the total of raised funds is not always given, it is definitely impressive. It is difficult to know the total and complete scope of aid in a particular action, as can be clearly seen from the example reported in the bulletin Rotarijec, of April 2000, and from many other examples reporting concrete numbers.

“In February the Unit of Neuro-Psychology at the Medical Centre Ljubljana received apparatus with programme software for cognitive rehabilitation of patients with brain injuries due to accident or disease, with impaired mental capabilities, such as memory, concentration, thinking, planning, control and similar. Rotary Club Ljubljana managed to raise 3 million SIT for the purchase of this medical device, intended for cognitive rehabilitation of children, adolescents and adults.”

What the description of actions fails to reveal, are the hours of work invested by the members of Rotary Club Ljubljana, which cannot be measured, as cannot be the willingness to help those in need, nor the efforts connecting RC Ljubljana with the young or with other Rotary Clubs.

These are the ties that have been forged throughout years of cooperation between individuals and Rotary Clubs. All the links, relations, friendships, actions and help cannot be listed or mentioned. In conclusion a few words describe the vision of Rotary and of the RC Ljubljana, which continues the Rotary tradition by spreading its activities to embrace the challenges of today, which face individuals and the society within which the RC Ljubljana operates.

## New times

“The Club very soon got to grips with serious work, and the first three years were marked with humanitarian actions, the first Rotary Ball, and the establishment of “Youth activities”. Unfortunately at that time the war in Yugoslavia started to rage and a great part of our help was earmarked for refugees. But the first years were also the time for acquaintance, for the forging of ties and friendships among members, as we have never forgotten about the pleasant atmosphere and interesting lectures. The Club started to offer scholarships to young talents and to invite tenders for the best teacher - mentor. The fourth year of operation was marked by the preparation and realization of the first St. Nicholas's Evening - the biggest event, which continues to be prepared annually. The awareness of the RC Ljubljana about the importance of young has steadily increased and Youth Activities have become one of the pillars of the Club. We also participated in the establishment of other Rotary Clubs and acted as sponsors in the establishment of Inner Wheel. From the very beginning we informed our members through our Club bulletin Rotarijanec, which was later transformed into pan-Slovenian Rotarijec.”

*(Taken and summarized from the material prepared for 10th and 70th anniversary of the RC Ljubljana)*

## Removal of architectonic barriers

The first action initiated by the RC Ljubljana was the action of architectonic barriers removal, as there were far too many in Ljubljana. This action triggered the interest of a wider public for the barriers impeding access and movement of wheelchair users, the disabled, mothers with strollers, and the elderly. The action resounded also in professional circles and paved the way for a change of legislation. Many barriers were removed - on the sidewalks, in entrances to various buildings, stairs were replaced by wheelchair ramps, new access points were provided and signs were set. . .

### For a friendly city

“One of the goals of the RC Ljubljana was to actively intervene in the problems that were not handled successfully by the State or were not even perceived as problems by the society and the culture of people. The first example of such a problem that was exposed by the Rotary action, were architectonic barriers. Access to public buildings and to the general good is the fundamental communicational demand for certain groups of the disabled. At that time the majority of wheelchair dependent people were definitely degraded, as most of the urban and rural environment failed to provide wheelchair friendly access. We paid serious attention to this problem, held several meetings with local authorities of Ljubljana, and defined the standards for urban arrangement, made to the measure of wheelchair users.

Our first action of providing the access for wheelchair dependent people to the SNG (Slovenian National Theatre) Drama met with good response, and we repeated the same kind of action also for the Opera House of Ljubljana. Special lifting platforms were set up and an example of how to solve architectonic barriers and provide equal access to cultural and other public institutions to all was thus set.

Rotary Club Ljubljana helped construct various lifts for the access of children to school and other public buildings, and these actions were all met with great response, as were many others that followed. They contributed to the change of public perception, so that it has become generally accepted that equal and autonomous access must be provided to all people, including the wheelchair dependent ones.”

*(Written by Franc Hočevar, M.Sci.)*

### Persuading the architects

“Dr. Pečak is personally involved in the problem of architectonic barriers removal and of providing equal access to all (the disabled, the expecting mothers. . .). He emphasizes the existence of many other related problems, as it is impossible to “remove the barriers only by removing the stairs; people who had constructed the buildings need to understand there needs to be an alternative access besides the stairs, providing access to hospitals, banks. . . also for the wheelchair dependent people.”

*(Summarized from no.2 of the Rotarijec, in June, 1992)*

## St. Nicholas's Concerts - synoptic table

The first Evening of St. Nicholas, organized by the RC Ljubljana, saw the light of the day in 1993 and was transmitted by TV Slovenia, as were all others that followed. It was of historic duration and lasted for three hours and 27 minutes. Guests of honour were Leon Štukelj from Maribor, a Rotarian and the oldest Olympic games participant, and the oldest member of Rotary Club Ljubljana, Tomo Knez.

The first three Evenings included also the auction of artistic works that had been donated by the artists, and was twice led by Jože Hudeček and once by Draško Veselinovič. At that time there were no commercial breaks, which started to appear only in later transmissions of St. Nicholas's concert. They brought additional financial resources, of which 65% were earmarked for humanitarian purpose and 35% left to the television.

Each concert is sung to a different tune. Firstly there were more themes, and later only one or two, as the duration of the event started to decrease and ended at 70 minutes. The first event was hosted by Sandi čolnik, as were some of the Evenings in the following years. Different well-known musicians and vocalists have participated, among whom also Irena Grafenauer, Dubravka Tomšič, Marjana Lipovšek, Janez Lotrič, and the whole television corpus, including the Symphonic Orchestra, the Big Band, all the choirs and more. Ratings have always been very high, as have the funds raised.

TV audience and donors provide resources earmarked for a specific group or individuals who need help. Who will benefit from funds raised is defined individually for every event by the board of the RC Ljubljana. How much money was raised and how it was distributed can be seen from the table, representing the period from 1993 to 2008.

**1st. Nicholas's Concert 1993** - we raised and donated 22.000.000 SIT - president Marjan Cerar Funds were earmarked for physically, sensorically and intellectually impaired children.

Gifts: a horse, a van, several computers, mobile phones, computer equipment for the deaf, books, toys and many artistic objects for auction.

**2nd St. Nicholas's Concert 1994** - we raised and donated 11.500.000 SIT - president Tomaž Bole Funds were earmarked for cultural development of handicapped children.

Gifts: the piano, electronic synthesizer, Orff's orchestra, sound system and video equipment.

**3rd St. Nicholas's Concert 1995** - we raised and donated 11.000.000 SIT - president Fedor Pečak Funds were earmarked for final construction works in residential community BARCA in Zbilje.

Gifts: final construction works and furniture for residential community BARCA in Zbilje, educational toys Yomi.

**4th St. Nicholas's Concert 1996** - we raised and donated 10.500.000 SIT - president Baldomir Zajc Funds were destined for foster families and children in Slovenia and for the construction of lift in SNG Drama.

Letters of support were signed by nearly all RC in Slovenia (RC Ljubljana, RC Bled, RC Maribor, RC Rotary - Emona, RC Portorož, RC Slovenj Gradec, RC Novo Mesto and RC Ptuj), committing the clubs to raise 1.000.000 SIT for higher education fund for selected candidates from foster families in Slovenia.

Gifts: eight scholarships donated by the RC of Slovenia in the total amount of 8.000.000 SIT to foster children for their university study and the construction of a lift for the handicapped in SNG Drama.

**5th St. Nicholas's Concert 1997** - we raised and donated 12.038.000 SIT - president Jaka Pucihar  
Money was earmarked for children from abusive families, socially disadvantaged children, children with brain injury and mentally handicapped children from the Training, Occupation and Care Centre of Dolfka Boštjančič, from Ig.

Gifts: dental surgery instruments for the Centre Dolfka Boštjančič, summer camp for 120 children in Zambratija and Kranjska Gora (socially disadvantaged children, children with brain injury, children from abusive families). During the concert individuals have donated 13 summer holidays for families in hotels or private accommodation, books, equipment, diagnostic instruments, while painters and sculptors donated 8 art objects for the auction at the Rotary Ball.

**6th St. Nicholas's Concert 1998** - we raised and donated 18.500.000 SIT - president Anton Papež  
Funds were earmarked for Paediatric Clinic at the Medical Centre Ljubljana, department of paediatric oncology, and for paediatric department at the Institute for Rehabilitation, for children injured in traffic accidents.

Gifts: the most advanced and complex software for Paediatric Clinic at the Medical Centre Ljubljana, department of paediatric oncology, and for paediatric department at the Institute for Rehabilitation, therapeutic toys and Tilt table for changing of patient's position.

**7th St. Nicholas's Concert 1999** - we raised and donated 6.335.318 SIT - president Zlatko Šetinc  
Funds were earmarked for Institutes for handicapped children and institutes where children with head injuries and patients with paraplegia were treated.

Gifts: a trip with museum train and lunch for children at McDonald's, holidays for children with head injuries, establishment of centre for distance learning at the Institute for Rehabilitation of the Republic of Slovenia.

**8th St. Nicholas's Concert 2000** - we raised and donated 9.500.000 SIT - president Karl Kuzman.  
Funds were earmarked for children with brain injuries, school dropouts, for the establishment of residential communities for children and adults with special needs and for families in distress.

Gifts: a trip with museum train for children with special needs and lunch at McDonald's, hippotherapy Kamnik, holidays for children with brain injuries, computer equipment for the Youth Center Nove Jarše, financial resources for residential communities of humanitarian society Sožitje.

**9th St. Nicholas's Concert 2001** - we raised and donated 8.500.000 SIT - president Ljubo Marion  
Funds were earmarked for socially disadvantaged children who were not able to go on holidays (due to financial or other problems of their families).

Gifts: within the framework of the action "A wink to the sun" 141 children participated in the holiday programme. A trip with museum train and lunch at McDonald's was organized for 250 children with special needs.

**10th St. Nicholas's Concert 2002** - we raised and donated 9.500.000 SIT - president Aljoša Domijan Funds were earmarked for traditional actions "A trip with museum train", "A wink to the sun" and for the training of a guide dog for the blind.

Gifts: A trip with museum train for 210 children with special needs and lunch at McDonald's, holidays in the framework of the action "A wink to the sun" for 76 children, financial help to families in distress and for the training of a guide dog for the blind.

**11th St. Nicholas's Concert 2003** - we raised and donated 5.600.000 SIT - president Anton Gradišek Funds were earmarked for children holidays in Zambratija and Kranjska Gora for a trip with museum train for children with special needs and for financial help to families in distress.

Gifts: A trip with museum train for 240 children with special needs and lunch at McDonald's, holidays in the framework of "A wink to the sun" for 25 children, financial help to families in distress, 530 children received a ball, 26 children received a one-year subscription to National Geographic, t-shirts and badges with Rotary logo were printed and distributed, cookies with Rotary motif - Škofja Loka honey bread cookies (designed by Ljubo Pezdirc), donation to AGRFT (Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television) for the filming of St. Nicholas's Concert - 700.000 SIT, SMS-gifts were offered by Mobitel - 173.000 SIT and a donation of RC of Slovenia for St. Nicholas' Concert - 480.000 SIT.

**12th St. Nicholas's Concert 2004** - we raised and donated 8.800.000 SIT - president Janez Rogelj Funds were earmarked for the purchase of furniture for a protected apartment - Crisis centre for women and children from abusive families, for the action "A wink to the sun" offering holidays to children from socially disorganized families.

Gifts: A furnished shelter - Crisis centre, holidays for 65 children in Kranjska Gora.

**13th St. Nicholas's Concert 2005** - we raised and donated 6.782.000 SIT - president Boris Grossman Funds were earmarked for scholarships of children from large families, for waterworks construction in the village Štatenberg near Trebelno and for the action "A wink to the sun".

Gifts: 4 scholarships were given to children from large families (with more than eight children), with partial help of RC Ljubljana the waterworks in the village Štatenberg were built, 60 children were given holidays through the action "A wink to the sun".

**14th St. Nicholas's Concert 2006** - we raised and donated 7.980.000 SIT - president Filip Remškar Funds were earmarked for Clinical department of child surgery and intensive therapy at the Medical Centre Ljubljana, for improvement of diagnostic procedures in treatment of critically ill babies and children. Holidays were paid for children from socially disadvantaged families.

Gifts: purchase of ultrasound machine for deep veins. 36 children were taken on holiday with "A wink to the sun".

**15th St. Nicholas's Concert 2007** - we raised and donated 42.200 EUR - president Jani Bavčer Funds were earmarked for the Centre for Child Diseases in Šentvid near Stična, for the purchase of medical equipment and improvement of residential conditions for sick children.

Gifts: Defibrillator, infusion pump with heater, parenteral pump, chest sensor, special hospital bed

for infants, and a part of the funds for the building of attic with classes and therapeutic areas for children.

**16th St. Nicholas's Concert 2008** - we raised and donated 41.521 EUR - president Aleš Jenčič Funds were earmarked for primary school pupils from socially disadvantaged families in Slovenia - for the payment of extracurricular activities and schooling, and for the purchase of medical equipment for the Centre for Child Diseases from Šentvid near Stična,  
Gifts: 17 Slovenian primary schools answered our invitation for tenders and sent 103 suggestions for children who needed financial help. Centre for Child Diseases bought three special hospital beds.

## Ties of humanitarianism

“Hundreds of children were helped and made happier with RC Ljubljana’s resources, which offered them their first chance to experience the sea, spend holidays in the mountains, and helped them study better. They helped families after tragedies, also the two little girls who witnessed their father’s suicide. RC Ljubljana helped the two girls go to school, get the books and go on holidays, which took the burden of their sick and exhausted mother.

Marjana, a 15-year-old girl who has never seen the sea, got the chance this year, within the framework of “Boom Holidays”. And we could provide many other examples.

Ties of humanitarianism have been forged with families in need. We were discreet in offering our help and compassion, and brought some sense back to their lives. We helped heal the wounds in those fragile children, who experienced optimism and even the first sparks of love through the help of Rotary. Throughout our operation, the value of donations has constantly increased through the years of our operation.

For many years RC Ljubljana joined the Association of Friends of Youth in the pursuit of providing equal opportunities to children, adolescents and families. Not two years were equal and a shadow of recession started to crawl upon our financial contributions. However, the most important thing to offer is still our joint effort in helping those in need.”

*(Taken and summarized from the letter of thanks by Anita Ogulin, the president of Humanitarian Commission with the Slovenian Association of Friends of Youth)*

## Mentors' awards

In 1992 the Rotary Club Ljubljana established the Rotary Ljubljana Mentors' Award, destined to the most successful teacher mentors. It aimed at influencing and changing the perception and attitude of people and society to teacher mentors' work. The task of teacher mentors is of utmost importance at the time when children are becoming adults. A good mentor, who can inspire enthusiasm into adolescents, can make a difference.

Mentors' award has become part of regular annual programme of Rotary Club Ljubljana and

reflects constant work and commitment of Rotarians to help the youth, be that in terms of health security or education through international educational and social exchange programmes, with scholarships, with the setting up of Roteracts and other activities for the young.

At the same time the award was supposed to promote quality teachers' work, ultimately leading to the achievement of high professional standards, to cultivation of ethical and moral principles, to cultural and creative relationship between teachers and students, to the implementation of contemporary teaching methods and to education of the young for a better connectedness.

To be fair in selecting the most qualified candidates, RC Ljubljana established a seven-member committee, which annually selected the award winners from the list of applicants from primary schools of Ljubljana. A call for tenders is published every year, and the selection and award follow.

The award itself represents a public recognition of the importance of teachers' work in our society. It also helps expand and understand the importance of knowledge, education, linkage with the world, penetrative force of intelligence and research acuteness of young generations.

Among the recipients of mentors' award, there have been many more or less known, but always extremely ambitious and unselfish teachers, among whom only some are mentioned:

In 1994 the award went to Prof. Jasna Neubauer - Gogala, proposed by the Gymnasium Poljane. Besides her regular pedagogic work as professor of French, she promotes the sense of civilization and cultural richness of France and with her students regularly attends various events. She also encourages students to participate in language competitions at home and abroad.

In 1996 the award went to Prof. Zora Lavrenčič for her pedagogic and educational achievements in the teaching of Slovenian language. She is also pedagogic adviser at Gymnasium Šentvid and it is largely owing to Prof. Lavrenčič that Gymnasium is known for excellent and original achievements (from the students' gazette Šentviška napetost to the welcome party with the baptism of first-formers and with the gymnasium yearbook...)

In 1998 the award went to Prof. Barbara Gostiša from Gymnasium Bežigrad where he has taught since 1970. She encourages students to learn foreign languages and introduces them to special features of English and to new communication technologies.

In 2000 the award went to Breda Novak, M.Sci., professor of chemistry at the Secondary School for Chemistry and General and Vocational Gymnasium in Ljubljana. She is active in numerous commissions and associations and is involved in different projects. Her bibliography of professional articles and independent publications is long and her work with students participating in the International Chemistry Olympics is outstanding. Slovenian students participating at the Olympics have always achieved excellent placing.

In 2005 the award was given to teacher mentor Bruna Antauer, professor of class teaching at the Primary School Prežihov Voranc in Ljubljana. She is a mentor of school gazette connecting pupils, teachers and parents. She volunteered to teach Italian for 4th class pupils, when she sensed children were eager to learn. Under her guidance pupils have achieved 6 of 10 bronze Vega Awards on mathematics competitions. Together with the actress Draga Potočnjak she runs a drama circle.

Also other recipients of RC Ljubljana's mentors' award were outstanding pedagogues, teachers and educators of children and adolescents.

## The Grand Rotary Ball and Scholarships

The Rotary Club Ljubljana organized its first Grand Rotary Ball in 1993 and its success paved the way for others to follow. The motto of this gala event is: Ljubljana's festive dance for pleasure and beneficence. It is designed for all good-natured people of noble intentions and not just Rotarians. The organizer usually invites some well-known artists whose works are sold by auction. Rotary Club Ljubljana earmarks the raised funds for scholarships of talented high school or university students, and in its 20 years of existence the scholarships have been the "fil rouge" and the most important product of Rotary Balls. Around 17.000 EUR were yearly destined for scholarships, and the total sum of about 350.000 EUR for over 50 scholarships in these 20 years has been donated.

Every year, the Rotary Club Ljubljana fund assigns scholarships on the Grand Rotary Ball. They are aimed at promoting the study and quality work of the young, leading to the highest professional knowledge, and help develop high ethic and moral principles, and cultural and creative relationships in Slovenian and international environment. They also help provide international recognition and assertion of young experts. Rotary Club Ljubljana supports high school and university students in their studies at home or abroad.

Among others, the Club awarded scholarships for the study of violin manufacturing in Cremona, for jazz and solo singing in London, for the study of a refugee at the Faculty of Dentistry in Ljubljana, for post-graduate study at the Royal College of Art in London, for the study of drama in the USA, for the study of oenology in Italy, for the study of drama and ballet in Ljubljana, for the study of solo-singing at Trinity College of Music, for specialisation in medicine in Leeds, for the study of piano at School Cantorum in Paris, for the study of flute at RCM in London, for the study at the Music Academy in Malm, for the study of drama at State Theatre in Peterburg, for post-graduate study at Oxford, for the study of diplomacy at Vienna's Diplomatische Akademie, for doctoral study at the University of Cambridge, for post-graduate study of film at Vancouver Film School in Canada, for post-graduate study of philosophy at Sorbonne, Paris, for complementary study of violin in New York and many more.

### Encouragement instead of help

"From the very beginning the scholarships have not been defined as help, rather as encouragement for the study at university level and in those fields that somehow strengthen and affirm our national character and features. This was the original point of departure, which was later complemented with our desire to raise the level of post-graduate study in Slovenia to the level of world-known universities, and to promote the areas of study that would open the doors to specific contents, which had not been adequately promoted and established in Slovenia. Scholarships were granted to talents in the field of music and drama.

Besides scholarships for various forms of study, the RC Ljubljana also participated in the purchase of different musical instruments (harp, viola, violin) and different computers and software for the needs of schooling and education.

*(Written by Franc Hočevar, M.Sci.)*

## Dilemma

“Most people believe social element should be one of our criteria, but also merits of students should be taken into account; others again see certain incompatibility in such attitude, as they believe that highest skills and knowledge cannot be mixed with social issues. Our policy should thus be to assign scholarships on the basis of social criteria only and forget about high quality and most talented applicants. What should be done, however, is to include some sort of feedback that has been missed until now, and add the obligation of scholarship recipients to report on their use of received funds. The purpose of this would be to supervise the use of funds and adequately sanction violations of this rule, or the recipients’ failure to report.”

*(Summarized from the minutes of regular meeting on 27th May, 2009)*

## Future belongs to the young

“People are treasures filled with a myriad of new ideas and capabilities. And even though we often need just some encouragement to break through, many of the treasures remain forever hidden. An old Slovenian proverb says that future belongs to the young. It is namely the young who know what they want, and that is why the members of Rotary Club Ljubljana have striven for years to help the young and encourage their hopes and ambitions with scholarships.”

*(Janez Rogelj in his address at the opening of exhibition in Zala Gallery, on 19th January, 2004)*

## **Demining and help for the victims of war**

Rotary Club Ljubljana has substantial experience in helping the victims of war from South-East Europe, be that in the form of financial, material, organizational or advisory aid. The club started with aid immediately upon its establishment and continued throughout the raging of war and bloody battles in the Balkans, but also afterwards. Actions were following one another and many Rotary Clubs participated. The actions were fast and efficient. The first to win credit in these actions were Slovenian emigrants and others who donated for the victims of war and demining. Rotary Club Ljubljana took it upon itself to function as coordinator and mediator, confirming the reputation and confidence it has enjoyed ever since its establishment.

## Medical treatment in Slovenia

“Soon after the establishment of the RC Ljubljana we started discussing the destiny of former republics of Yugoslavia. Discussions never ended with the forecast of cruel events we witnessed so soon. In view of the fact that we were the first ones to experience the fate of war, our club became a good and referential option for lobbying around the world and represented our political interests in the recognition of Slovenia. We established a quick and efficient network of connections,

which met with a surprisingly fast and good response. The lobbying environment of Rotary International proved as efficient and we can thus infer that our activities contributed to a fast(er) recognition of our new State.

A special story is related to the war in Slovenia, when we received immense support and offers for help from Rotary clubs all over the world. Quite a few donations were carried through our club, and channelled to various humanitarian events and actions. The aid, which received the widest response, came from St. Catharine, Canada and our fellow countryman Rajko Bukovec, who gathered, with the help of his and other Rotary Clubs, a full two containers of different rehabilitation equipment, clothes and expensive gifts, which were adequately channelled and distributed. The most valuable gift was financing of training for rehabilitation experts in the field of non-verbal communication. Through international connections with Rotary Clubs, Slovenia was able to establish great professional relations with Canada in the field of rehabilitation.

The third phase of aid was channelled to other areas of former Yugoslavia. We took part in a very important project, and logistically supported the transport of several trucks with trailers from Italy through Slovenia to Bosnia. At that time this was not something you would take for granted, and we needed many connections, a great deal of luck, effort and also some tricks, to transport aid from Europe to the war zones in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our club organized a few concrete activities of a relatively large scope. We raised funds for the purchase of very specific medicines for concrete cases and treatment of war wounds and injuries. We collected medically technical equipment for the treatment of wounded and disabled in South-East Europe. Through matching grant we participated in the purchase of video-production technological equipment for Sarajevo. With other Slovenian clubs we organized the fund raising for the rehabilitation of children with amputations at the Institute for Rehabilitation of the Republic of Slovenia.

A resounding action, organized jointly with Austrian clubs, was the rehabilitation of some dozen children, victims of mines from South-East Europe. Rotary Club Ljubljana at the time represented a link between the war zones in South-East Europe and Europe. With our help and on our initiative, many victims of war were offered medical treatment and later rehabilitation in Slovenia. For this purpose we also developed cooperation with the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance. Together with Croatian clubs we took part in concrete demining projects in the vicinities of Karlovac and elsewhere.

*(Written by Franc Hočevar, M.Sci.)*

## **A wink to the sun**

The action "A wink to the sun" started in 1999 in response to the initiative of The Association of Friends of Youth, which attracted also others. In 2000 11.000.000 SIT were raised for holidays of 281 children; in 2001 there were 29.900.000 SIT which covered free holidays for 712 children; in 2002 the results were quite surprising, as we raised 48.800.000 SIT and offered free holidays to 928 children. In 2003 14.600.000 SIT were raised, which covered free holidays for

593 children etc. Numbers have been growing and results of the action are praiseworthy. The credit goes to all participants, including the RC Ljubljana.

## Great donator

“The Rotary Club Ljubljana as important donator in the framework of the action “A wink to the sun” has been implementing its mission of helping the young with various club activities. Upon the signing of donators contract the club’s president Anton Gradišnik M.D. said:” This is the fifth consecutive year for the Rotary Club Ljubljana to sponsor this action with the sole purpose of offering children, whose parents cannot afford it, the joys of childhood. Compassion and philanthropy have been the guiding principles of Rotarians and we are happy to promote this initiative. We are glad to see the circle of donators and friends expand also due to our inclusion in the project.”

A wink to the sun - let us provide holidays to all children, organized for six consecutive years by The Association of Friends of Youth, Lek, and RC Ljubljana and under the aegis of the president of parliament of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, is the initiative which aims to reduce social exclusion of children and to provide them with equal opportunities for the quality spending of their free time.

*(Taken and summarized from Lek’s web page notice titled: The Association of Friends of Youth of Slovenia, Lek and RC Ljubljana joined in providing children holidays)*

## One-time aid

On 7th May 2001, the administrative board of RC Ljubljana earmarked a single time financial assistance to Jasna Hribernik in the masterly schooling of documentary film directors at the so-called Discovery Campus Masterschool, organized by Discovery Campus München. Financial help amounted to 340.000 SIT, and the decision was confirmed by the club’s president Karl Kuzman. This is only one example of one-time help, and RC Ljubljana yearly earmarks from two to five one-time contributions to various projects or individuals. This is how we also contributed financially to the project of waterworks in the local community of Trebeljevo. The action lasted for two years and was brought to a successful conclusion.

In the autumn of 1990, a great part of Slovenia was flooded due to heavy rains in November, and the upper Savinja valley suffered most damage. Also RC Ljubljana with its members helped with resources from their social programme and with contributions of other Rotary Clubs from District 1910. The resources were earmarked for Health Centre in Ljubno, where a mobile electric aggregate and UKW-mobile and stable systems, for connecting the health centre with field workers, were bought. Assistance was also provided to Darinka and Marjan Rakar from Ljubno, for the construction of a substitute house, as the flood had taken away their newly built house they were just about to move in. It also destroyed the shed and surroundings of the house. A member of the club, Ciril Smrkolj, donated a heifer to the farmer Vid Prušnik, whose family with three under-aged

children remained without the stall and farming land due to a landslide, which had also threatened the house safety.

Another one-time help was the donation of 3000 EUR for the Botanical Garden on the occasion of its 100th anniversary, earmarked for the maintenance of the garden and reconstruction of the old greenhouse. Sources of one-time help come from the funds raised at St. Nicholas's Concerts, the Grand Rotary Ball, annual fee and donations offered by members on regular meetings, once they have decided for one-time help, which is assigned on the basis of applications upon careful examination of each case and its circumstances (natural disasters, accidents...).

## **Exchange and experience**

Options, relating to the initially one-way exchange visits, were not to be missed, and since there were more posts available in summer camps, than were the Rotary children, this stimulated the forging of ties with Bežigrad Gymnasium. Of twenty to thirty most successful students the best candidates were selected to participate in international summer camps. Due to the war in the Balkans, which impeded the organization of a summer camp or similar activities, our club was allowed to partake in this activity, even though this violated the principle of reciprocity. More than that, Slovenian candidates were gladly accepted as we represented a presumably exotic state, formerly part of Yugoslavia, and could provide some first-hand information on the situation in the Balkans. After a couple of years we managed to persuade the Rotary members from other European countries that Slovenia was safe in spite of the war in the Balkans, and thus organized our first Slovenian-Austrian two week camp, which proved to be very successful. A couple of years after that, the Slovenian Rotary Club Bled organized its first independent camp, while others clubs joined him in the organization a bit later.

Short-term exchange visits - participation in summer and winter camps, as well as in the cruises - has become the most popular programme of all youth activities. If only about ten girls and boys took part in the (one-way) exchange programme abroad in 1991, their number has been steadily increasing ever since. Parallel to the expansion of Rotarianism in the States of former Eastern Europe, the number of summer camps has increased to more than a hundred, once even to a hundred and twenty. Slovenian camp participants abroad have inspired enthusiasm of the organizers who continued to invite them to our great satisfaction, which was reflected in a record response of nearly 80 Slovenian participants in a year. This was a true success, as clubs from all European countries could propose and register their candidates, and the average camp accepted only from ten to twenty participants. We were actually very fortunate; due to a high number of Rotarians, young participants from other countries were normally only selected once to participate in a camp, whereas in Slovenia our number was so restricted that our young candidates participated even as many as seven times. This enabled them to acquire great experience and become true ambassadors of Slovenian culture.

A meeting of a year's camp participants with participants from previous years was organized annually, which enabled the sharing of experience and made us familiar with diversities of Rotarian life and customs in different European national cultures. Short term exchange visit within the EEMA (Europe, East Mediterranean and Africa) area have recently expanded to include the

whole world, with Rotarians from South Africa and Canada who are particularly active. However, we were less fortunate with other types of youth activities. One of worldwide most popular options, namely the exchange programme of duration of an entire High School year, has not taken roots in Slovenia and remained limited to occasional attempts, which failed to produce enough success for the activity to spread and become established. Rotaract Clubs proved to be more successful, and young Rotarians from Ljubljana, Maribor and Celje have been extremely active ever since their beginning and have proven their commitment inside and outside of their district.

As a longstanding leader of youth activities in Slovenian clubs, I had the opportunity to make acquaintance and establish contacts with all the governors, who were as a rule Austrians and therefore quite patronizing of former Eastern European States. However, for the twentieth anniversary of participation in the Youth Activities I managed to pressure them into adopting the statement that we could organize Slovenian youth activities on our own, which represented the first steps towards the formation of the independent district.

*Written by Tomaž Bole*

## Summer and winter camps

“The most famous and attractive activity is represented by summer and winter camps in different European countries, Turkey and Israel. 70 young people from different parts of Slovenia took part in this activity only this year, which clearly shows that time has become mature enough for Slovenians to organize such a camp ourselves”, said Tomaž Bole. Camps for the disabled children, called also the handycamps, are particularly important and successful. Participation cost is minimal and amounts to 10.000 SIT of registration, plus the additional cost of journey and health security for each individual. The organizer covers all the expenses in the hosting country. Such camps are undoubtedly a memorable experience and beautiful holiday for all young people. Short-term exchanges take place at the time of school holidays, and last from 10 days to two or three months. Based on the agreement between two Rotary Clubs, districts or families, children and adolescents from the world can participate in this programme.

*(Taken from Rotarijec, October 1998)*

## Ties of friendship among the young

“Since 1974, when youth exchange was recognized as official club activity, Rotary International has published various guides and brochures, videos and other material, aimed at helping the clubs organize exchange visits. Even though the programme is supported at the highest level of the organization, its success depends on Rotarians themselves and their communities. Based on the RI evidence from 1994 to 1996, there were more than 26.000 high-school participants in short-term

and long-term youth Rotary exchange visits. In the years 1997 and 1998 more than 7000 young people took part in exchange programmes supported by 238 Rotary Districts from 80 countries. This year also 180 young people with special needs joined the exchange programme and special camps were organized for them.

Numbers are positive and inspire the hope that more and more clubs will join this programme in the future. This is how new friendships will be forged that will continue to last long after the visit will have finished. And this is how it should be; such friendships help change lives and build bridges of tolerance among different countries and cultures of the world.

*(Summarized from The Rotarian, September 1999, and Rotarijec, September 1999)*

## **International projects**

Rotary Club Ljubljana has been involved in international projects since its establishment, contributing its fair share to the projects. In some cases we were the initiators of an action, and attracted also other clubs, often from another state, thus providing the international dimension. Such an example was the project of demining in Bosnia and Herzegovina, already mentioned in the part about demining and help for the victims of war. In other cases RC Ljubljana responds to the invitation of other clubs and participates to its best capacities. Such is the example of Polio Plus. There are also other forms of cooperation with clubs from different countries, but they are not always crowned with concrete actions of aid and cooperation. In some cases they represent only friendly relations among members, a chance for socialization, acquaintance and familiarization.

### **A one-room apartment for the handicapped**

“Since our poet Prešeren wrote that Carniola possessed no place that would resemble the Paradise more than Bled, it is only understandable that this part of Slovenia regularly hosts foreign guests, among whom there are many Rotarians, who often join our weekly meetings. We have thus met friends from all over the world, from Finland to Australia, from USA to Ukraine. We are particularly in touch with contact club Kassel Wilhemshoehe from Germany, and are at present involved in the project of providing a bed sitting room for the handicapped in the national park of Triglav, which would be available to the handicapped and their attendants. We are also trying to revive the relations with contact club Brixen from Italy. Together with the RC from the Austrian Wolfsberg and the Institute for South and Eastern Europe from Vienna, we created a one-time scholarship for the selected candidate to research the importance of the Abbey of St. Paul in the Lavant Valley for education and culture of Slovenians.

*(Summarized from Rotarijec, June 1995, No.2)*

## Polio Plus

Children palsy is a deadly disease causing many child deaths or lifelong paralysis among the children that had not been vaccinated. Initiative for the action named Polio Plus was already given in 1985, however, it was not until 1988 that an international resolution, confirmed also by the WHO, was adopted. This can be credited to Bob Scott, a Rotarian and initiator of fight against the children palsy.

The project Polio Plus has become a central project of Rotary International, sustained also by the UNICEF, WHO, Centre for diagnostics and prevention of diseases in the USA and other institutions. It has the most ambitious plan in the history of RI. It includes volunteers and makes them global partners in the fight for the eradication of children palsy. With this project the RI managed to animate the world public and establish connection and cooperation between the public and private partnership, joined in the pursuit of a humanitarian goal.

In 2006/2007 the RI managed to raise 10 million dollars from the contributions of over 33.000 clubs all over the world. The district 1910, with RC Ljubljana among others, contributed 1 million dollars.

The action helped reduce Polio for 99%, and only 13.000 children from four different states fell sick with polio in 2007, compared to 350.000 children from 124 countries of the world in 1985. More than 19.000 Rotarians attended the International Rotary Convention, held in LA from 15th to 18th June, 2008, when the notice came out that the Foundation of Bill and Melinda Gates joined the RI in the Polio Plus project, with a donation of 100 million dollars. The project was additionally financed by the Canadian government, with a donation of another 50 million dollars. Both donations were supposed to pave the way for a successful and faster completion of the project.

## Sunflower seeds

RC Ljubljana joined the Polio Plus initiative three years ago, and in 2009 a new action joined the pool of formerly established related activities. This was the action "Sunflower seeds". Each member bought 20 seeds, thus contributing 50 EUR to the Polio Plus action.

## The role of co-founder

The RC Ljubljana, as co-founder of the Gallus Institute has since its establishment directly or indirectly supported many young musicians. Some of them have become well known and formed artists, while others are still preparing to head on the path of independent artists. RC Ljubljana keeps regular contacts with them through Gala Rotary Ball, St. Nicholas's Concert or other Rotary events.

Young talents from Gallus Institute usually perform at RC Ljubljana meetings, and the Institute regularly presents young artists to its active co-founders, including the RC Ljubljana, thus providing the Institute's protégés, scholarship-holders and selected candidates a public presentation, referential concerts and performances, as enshrined in its programme.

## Connected with art

“It customary for Rotary Clubs to connect their activities with art. In presenting the cultural identity of Slovenia before the world Rotary public, the RC Ljubljana has added a touch of J. Gallus to one part of its activities. For the occasion of solemn establishment of the Club in 1990 we inspired enthusiasm in our guests and friends from different countries. Since then, the Rotarians from all over the world have often had the chance to enjoy in the art of J. Gallus. This can be credited to the commitment and aspiration of two of our members, namely Tomaž Bole and Črtomir Frelj, who contributed greatly to the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the death of J. Gallus, which took place in 1991. ”

*(Taken from the publication Hommage a Gallus, 1991)*

## Where there is a will, there is a way!

In June 1998, the president of Rotary International, James L. Lacy, established a nine member “Dream team for the future”, which would research the needs and focus of Rotarians in the future. Some reproach the Rotary with obsolete and non-flexible rules, claiming that changes are necessary. Others believe time will tell and adequately adjust the course of the Rotary. All the clubs have been invited to participate by providing suggestions on how to modernize and freshen up the organization. About 2000 Rotarians submitted their visions.

Also the members of RC Ljubljana have their visions, and for the 10th anniversary of the Club’s existence, they stated as follows:

“Now that we have become more mature, our club should take upon itself the activities that have so far not made it into the limelight, such as: affirmation of the club, care for the community and environment, professional activity, integration in different formations. We will continue to help with the establishment of new clubs and wait for Slovenia’s chance to become an independent district. It becomes a mature club to have its members affirmed in international committees and Rotary International. In sum, maturity brings new and more demanding tasks, which we will handle and implement with pleasure and success.

This volume is a proof of what we have accomplished, and it ends with the words of Vladimir Pezdirc, the RC Ljubljana president in 2009/2010:

“In these times of constant changes we are often faced with obstacles or situations, when we do not know how to integrate our ethical principles in the world often so different from ours. My answer would be: with optimism and adjustment. Our cohesion and solidarity will have to meet the challenge and responsibility of independent district, which will be assigned to Slovenia already next year.

I am positive we will rise to the occasion. Where there is a will, there is a way!”

## Photos





**Skupina rotarjev pred Trgovskim domom, kjer se je vršila v dneh 26., 27. in 28. aprila 1935 distriktna konferenca. (Spredaj stoječi od leve proti desni: podpredsednik R. I. Walter D. Head iz New Jersey, sedanji guverner jugoslovanskih klubov dr. Viljem Krejči, bodoči guverner za poslovno dobo 1935/36 dr. Viktor Ružić s Sušaka.)**





*Friend Glavan by the plate on the building of Rotary Club Chicago*



*Rotary One. Rotary International World Headquarters in Evanston, where the Slovenian flag is exhibited as well*



*Electronic clock,  
a gift of Rotary  
Club Ljubljana  
to its city*



*Rotaract Action  
»From mine  
to St. Nicholas's basket«*



*Members of Rotaract  
taking phone calls of dona-  
tors during the TV trans-  
mission of »St. Nicholas's  
Evening 2003«  
Rotaract members with the  
president Anton Gradišek*



*Camp 2007  
(international exchange)*



*Inner Wheel Ljubljana Charter, November 28th 1998.  
Sitting next to the president Joži Drese, is the guest  
of honour, Ms. Ida Dubbeldam,  
the president of world organization*

*The president of RC Ljubljana (2004/2005) Janez Rogelj  
presents the president of Inner Wheel,  
Ms. Dragica Papež, with the club donation  
Photographs below: A visit of Trieste Inner Wheel Club  
in Ljubljana (2008)*

= Inauguracija Rotary Kluba Ljubljana =  
= dne 14. marca 1931. =



Pirkic (Ljubljana) Lavčič (Graz) Dr. Nincus (Ljubljana) Križič (Maribor) Polaković (Maribor) Naglas (Maribor) Janković (Maribor) Lorant (Zagreb) P. Golia (Zagreb) ing. Korvat (Ljubljana) Paul (Ljubljana) Dr. Kersnik (Zagreb)  
 Circa (Ljubljana) Lorger (Belovar) Čaplari (Maribor) Knez (Zagreb) Kock (Maribor) ing. Dračar (Maribor) Rosenberg (Maribor) Dr. Kmet (Zagreb) Vasić (Maribor) Dr. Hamel (Maribor) Dr. Stanke (Zagreb) Bauer (Zagreb) Jarcob (Zagreb)  
 Dr. Leitner (Maribor) Synoda (Ljubljana) Dr. Dobrila (Ljubljana) Dr. Kokar (Ljubljana) Polič (Maribor) Dr. Hoj (Maribor) ing. Lukič (Zagreb) Dr. Kurnič (Zagreb) Proyer (Zagreb) Dr. Mijarić (Zagreb) Štefard (Zagreb) ing. Kovat (Zagreb) Provet (Zagreb) Dr. Boric (Zagreb)  
 Ing. Kowar (Ljubljana) ing. Solenc (Ljubljana) Paller (Ljubljana) Kalkhardt (Zagreb) Dr. Kavšek (Zagreb) Šebotky (Maribor) Dr. Potler (Zurich) Dr. Zvonček (Zagreb) Dr. Willek (Zagreb) Dr. Minudjic (Zagreb) Dr. Šušter (Zagreb) Dr. Antrovič (Belovar) Dr. Tom's (Ljubljana) Dubsky (Zagreb)

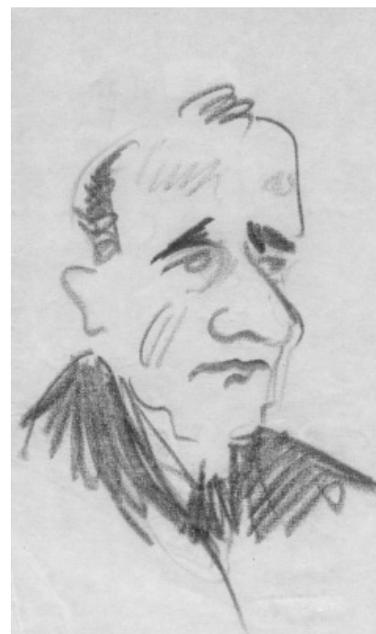
**R. C. LJUBLJANA**  
 Sastanci (Meetings):  
 Sreda (Wednesday) 20.00  
 Grand Hotel Union

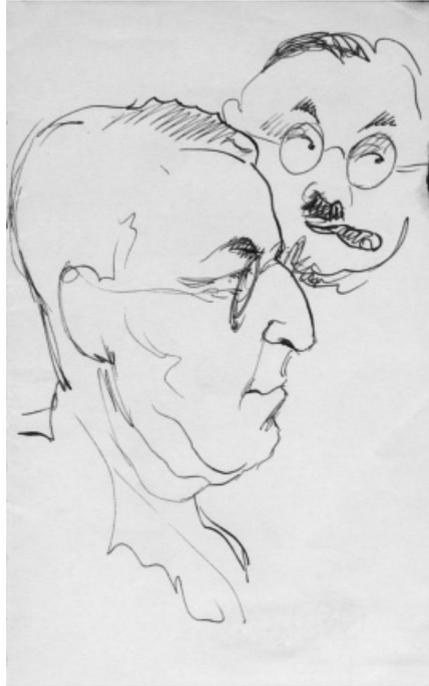




Dr. Viljem Krejči,  
president  
of Rotary Club  
Ljubljana  
(1932-33, and  
1937-38).  
In 1935 he also  
served as  
president of the  
77th national  
Yugoslav district.











GODINA VI  
15. I. 1939

# JUGOSLOVENSKI ROTAR

BR. 7

UREDNIK: DR. IVAN SLOKAR, GUVERNER 77. DISTRIKTA,  
LJUBLJANA, MIKLOŠIČEVA C. 10, TELEFON BR. 20-57

IZLAZI SVAKOG 15.-OG U MESECU  
CENA GOD. DIN 144 - BROJ DIN 12

## S A D R Ž A J :

DMO MESECNO PISMO GUVERNERA.

ANCI:

Cestitanje Nove Godine doživotnom počasnom guverneru Nj.  
Kr. Vis. knezu Namesniku Pavlu.  
Deset godina beogradskog kluba.  
Naši Franjevci.  
Problem Sredozemnog mora ne postoji.  
Konvencija u Clevelandu.

PRESEDNICI I TAJNICI KLUBOVA NAŠEG DISTRIKTA.

NAŠEG DISTRIKTA:

Promene u članstvu. — Rad naših klubova. — Gde se sastaju  
i gde otkodaju rotari. — Prisustvovanje na klubskim sastancima.

UKM, R 25287/1939

## SEDMO MESEČNO PISMO GUVERNERA

Prešednicima i tajnicima svih klubova

Ljubljana, 11. januara 1939.

Mila braćo!

I. U svome poslednjem mesečnom pismu imao sam čast, da Vam čestitam novu godinu; to znači da sam Vam tom prilikom želeo u novoj godini uspešni i blagoslovljen rad. Sasvim prirodno se te želje odnose na rad u svakome pravcu Vašeg udejstvovanja a meni, kao predstavniku naše organizacije za jugoslovenski distrikt stavljena je u dužnost briga i želja, da bi se rad rotara kretao uvek i samo u pravcu rotarskih ciljeva. U tom smislu moja je želja, da bi svim klubovima uspelo da podignu nivo rotarskog idealnog shvatanja u radu njihove braće i da bi preko toga zdravom ekstenzijom postigli i povećanje kruga ljudi, koji se mogu dičiti članstvom i veseliti sudelovanjem u našoj zajednici.

II. Decembra meseca sam Vas u svome mesečnom pismu pozvao i zamolio, da ispitete svoju savest u pogledu rotarskog rada u prošlom polugodištu. Nisam tražio odgovora na postavljena Vam pitanja nego jedino sugerirao, da bi klupski funkcioneri sami sebi odgovorili. Držao sam se načela, da je poznavanje samoga sebe najteže i da je kritika lakša od stvaralačkog rada. Ipak smatram za svoju dužnost, da kažem nekoliko reči o svojim vlastitim iskustvima u pogledu rada klubova našeg distrikta. U našoj su državi prilike mnogo skromnije nego u Severnoj Americi, Engleskoj, Francuskoj i nekim drugim državama a i imovne



*Photograph of Rotary Club Ljubljana members from 1996. In the center of the front row, seated between the first president of the club Franc Jamnik and the president of the club from 1996-1997, Baldomir Zajc, is the late member Tone Knez, who had been a member of pre-war RC Ljubljana from 1933 on.*



*Godfather Günter Perner  
from Rotary Club Gradec  
(Graz)*

*President Franc Jamnik  
receiving the charter  
document from district  
Governor Papousek*

*Celebration at the National  
Gallery*





*The gathering of Austrian,  
Italian and Slovenian  
Rotarians at  
three-country-borders  
(Tromeja)*



*The Rotary regatta*



*October 14th, 2007.  
The watching of Regatta  
Barcolana upon the  
invitation of friends from  
Rotary Club Trieste - Nord.*



*Barcolana and the  
gathering of Rotarians  
from Ljubljana, Trieste and  
the Austrian Club  
Klagenfurt - Wörthersee*

*The President of Friuli-  
Venezia-Giulia region,  
Riccardo Illy, welcomed the  
Rotarians at Barcolana.*



*Donation to  
the Botanical Garden  
of Ljubljana,  
October 10th, 2009*



*A visit at the Museum  
of Liaunig with friends  
from Klagenfurt,  
September 26th, 2009*



*A visit to Brioni with  
friends from RC Pulj,  
June 27th, 2009*









Visit at the RC Klagenfurt -  
Wörthersee



*May 8th, 2010. A visit of RC  
Klagenfurt - Wörthersee  
in Ljubljana*





*When visiting the Slovenian Rotarians, the president of Rotary International also paid a visit to the Slovenian National Theatre, Drama, to see the lift for wheelchair dependent people, donated by the RC Ljubljana (June, 2002)*



*Donation to the Paediatric Clinic. The action of RC Forbach from France, Alsace and RC Ljubljana*

*The Club donated visual baby-cry alarm transmitters to eleven hearing-impaired families. At the event the Slovenian Human Rights Ombudsman, Ms. Zdenka Čebašek - Travnik was present as well (2010)*



*RC Ljubljana donated the Paediatric Clinic at the Medical Centre of Ljubljana the rent for an air-conditioned vehicle for the transport of children patients during summer (2003)*







*A wink to the sun. Joint action of RC Ljubljana and the Association of Friends of Youth of Slovenia.*





*At the Grand Rotary Ball, the RC Ljubljana assigns scholarships to the selected young and talented students for post-graduate education at renowned educational institutions at home and abroad*





*There are many respected musicians, performing at Rotary Balls. The photo of Lado Leskovar and Mojmir Sepe during performance*

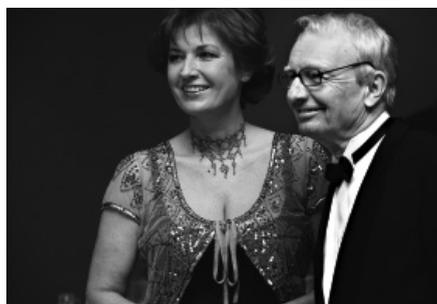
*The Ball was organized in pre-Carnival period. On the photo: guest from RC Trieste - Nord.*



*The Mayor of Ljubljana, Mr. Zoran Jankovič is always a welcomed guest*



*Presidents of three clubs (2007/2008): RC Trieste Nord, Claudio Verzegnassi, RC Klagenfurt - Wörthersee, Viktor Oberlojer and RC Ljubljana, Jani Bavčer*



*Also the friendly Lions gladly respond to the Ball invitation*



*Holiday party-time within  
the framework of the action  
"A wink to the sun!"*

*A visit paid by the President  
of the National Assembly  
of the Republic of Slovenia,  
Borut Pahor, and a press  
conference of the  
organizing committee.*

## Members of Rotary Club Ljubljana

The number of members of the Rotary Club Ljubljana has been changing through its twenty years of existence, and has grown from initial 25 to 40 and then slightly dropped again. In mid 2010, there were 54 members. (They are presented in alphabetical order):



Jani Bavčer



Živko Bergant



Tomaž Bole



Peter Breznik



Marjan Cerar



Miha Dobrin



Aljoša Domijan



Borut Geršak



Anton Glavan



Anton Gradišek



Janez Gril



Boris Grosman



Igor Grossman



Andrej Guček



Franc Hočever



Franc Jamšek



Aleš Jenčič



Tomaž Klemenc



Franc Košir



Božo Kralj



Dušan Kramberger



Karl Kuzman



Andrej Lazič



Ljubo Marion



Franci Mugerle



Leopold Oblak



Marjan Ocvirk



Anton Papež



Fedor Pečak



Danijel Petrovič



Vladimir Pezdirc



Edo Pirkmajer



Matjaž Plaustejner



Janez Jaka Pucihar



Črtomir Remec



Filip Remškar



Janez Rogelj



Boris Simončič



Mitja Sonnenwald



Zlatko Šetiinc



Paul T. Stuller



Branko Šutila



Jurij F. Tasič



Borut Uršič



Baldomir Zajc



Franci Zavrl

The following members are not presented with a photo:

Aleksander Čolnik  
Gerard Drese  
Marko Golob  
Aleš Kristančič  
Hotimir Lesničar  
Janez Pirnat  
Tomaž Slivnik  
Edvard Škodič

Ljubljana 1910