



Photo by Jal Schrof

# CroatiaFest Newsletter

**A Celebration of Croatian  
Culture and Heritage  
CroatiaFest 2008 -  
Croatian Hands at Work**

## CroatiaFest - October 4 & 5, 2008

Dear Fellow Croatian Americans & Friends of CroatiaFest,

This year's CroatiaFest will shine a light on the lives of Croats in the Pacific Northwest and their history in local communities, in mining and manufacturing.

Aberdeen, Bayne, Roslyn, Cle Elum, Ruston, and Wilkeson, are some of the towns where Croats dwelled and laboured. Their names can be found in town hall and lodge records of former mining communities and on the miners' memorial in Roslyn. These names can also be traced into the present community life of the Pacific Northwest.

The Croats who settled here put down roots, worked hard and raised families. As

miners, metal workers and lumberjacks, they helped shape the America we know today. Coming from poor backgrounds and circumstances, they found new hope in a new country. Their lives and their contributions are woven into the fabric of this country.

Come celebrate the lives and stories of Pacific Northwest Croatians during CroatiaFest 2008.

*Frank Brozovich*

Frank Brozovich  
Honorary Consul, Republic of Croatia  
Chairman, CroatiaFest Committee

## Croatian Hands at Work



Photo by Jal Schrof

On this 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **CroatiaFest** local Croatians are presenting diverse cultural and historical experiences with "Croatian Hands at Work" shining a light on the lives of Croats in the Pacific Northwest and their history in local communities, in mining and manufacturing. Eastside coal mining communities of Roslyn and Cle Elum to the Westside communities of Bellingham to Bayne and Wilkeson were towns where Croats dwelled and laboured.

And on the maritime side--one of the "Pearls of the Adriatic" is the 90 year old internationally acclaimed *Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra*. On its first tour to the

Pacific Northwest, the orchestra and the Bravo! Vancouver, WA Chorale will perform a variety of music by Croatian and American composers, as well as traditional classical repertoire at the Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup> festival, immediately following the 12-noon festival opening.

Music and dance are an integral part of the Croatians' cultural and the Center House will come alive on Saturday evening beginning with *Pam Kelley* and *Melissa Obenauf*, co-founders and co-directors of Ohio's Živila Dance Company, teaching Croatian folk dances and kolos. Sinovi and Ruže Dalmatinke, local musicians and performers, will entertain for dancing and singing songs passed down from generation to generation. *Mary Sherhart*, a renowned performer & singer of Croatian and Bosnian music, will once again guide the audience through their day at Croatia Fest as Master of Ceremonies.

The festival also includes a Croatian cooking demonstration by Chateau St.

Michele's Culinary Director *John Sarich*, activities for kids, seminars and exhibits. A Croatian marketplace provides an essence of today's Croatian culture, from specialty foods and jewelry, to Croatian art and music, and a taste of traditional Croatian coffee. Also visit the Croatia Today booth hosted by the Honorary Consul of Croatia. One of central Europe's undiscovered jewels, a video tour highlights Croatia's breathtaking landscapes.

*Continued on page 4, Hands at Work*

## CroatiaFest

**October 4, 2008**

**6-10pm**

**Festive Events  
& Dance Party!**

**October 5, 2008**

**12noon - 8pm**

**Seattle Center**

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# CroatiaFest Yellow Pages Deadline

By Kristen LeMieux

"Businesses Wanted!" Advertisers are loving the new look for the 2008 CroatiaFest brochure and this is a reminder that the deadline to buy advertising space is August 29, 2008.

CF committee member Nikki Lovrić is designing a brochure that will provide schedule information, program notes and other useful information for the public attending this year's festival.

Businesses will be able to purchase individual ads using their logos and business information, a new opportunity this year. "I would also encourage parents, grandparents, friends and family members to consider buying ad space congratulating a performer, wishes for a future graduate or even family memorial," Lovrić suggested.

Purchasing an ad helps fund Croatia Fest and insures our ability to bring wonderful artists and exhibits together to share the Croatian heritage with the community! Over 12,000 people attended last year's festival and your advertisement will reach a truly unique audience. Ads are \$75.00 per 2" x 2" space. Please contact Nikki Lovrić for

information, questions or to purchase an ad: [nikki@windermere.com](mailto:nikki@windermere.com); 360.420.5846 or return the enclosed order form. See the sample ad below:

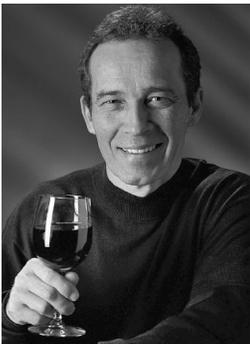


**Congrats on your 5th Year of CroatiaFest!**

**Nikki Kanani Lovrić**  
Licensed Real Estate Assistant to Sue Hilton  
Serving Whatcom County  
Direct: 360.296.7343  
Business: 360.734.7500 ext. 343  
E-mail: [nikki@windermere.com](mailto:nikki@windermere.com)  
Web: [suehilton.mywindermere.com](http://suehilton.mywindermere.com)



# Cooking demonstration by renowned Chateau Ste. Michelle Culinary Director, John Sarich



Experience *John Sarich*, Chateau Ste. Michelle Culinary Director, "in action" at CroatiaFest. Renowned chef Sarich will give a cooking demonstration in the Center House at Seattle Center, 1:30pm, Sunday,

October 5. (We are convinced it is John's Croatian heritage which makes him such a renowned chef!)

As culinary director for the winery, John travels the globe conducting cooking classes, wine and food tastings, wine dinners, and special events, all designed to further people's enjoyment and understanding of wine and food. In 1980, John founded Seattle's highly acclaimed *Adriatica Restaurant* and later opened *Dalmacija Restoran* in Seattle's Pike Place Market. While at *Adriatica*, John was selected by *Esquire* magazine as one of the country's "hot new chefs," and listed by the *Seattle Times* as one of the city's top five chefs. His first cookbook, *John Sarich's Food &*

*Wine of the Pacific Northwest*, was published in 1993 and his second book, *John Sarich at Chateau Ste. Michelle*, was published in the fall of 1997. Both books continue to inspire cooks across the country. Television viewers in select, syndicated markets also enjoy John's renowned approach to casual, easy dining. His lifestyle and cooking show, *Best of Taste - Flavors of the Pacific Coast*, debuted in September 2000.

Photo © Chateau Ste. Michelle

**CroatiaFest Director:** Alma Franulović Plancich

**Chairman of the Board:** Dr. Frank Brozovich, Honorary Croatian Consul; **Officers:** President, Cathryn Morovich; Vice President, Richard Major; Treasurer, Mike Rancich; Secretary, Beverly Read. **2008 CroatiaFest Committee:** Dr. Frank Brozovich, Joanne Abdo, Bob & Peggy Gunovick, Vjeko Ivanković, Louise Petrich Iverson, Maria Plancich Kesovija, Kristen LeMieux, Priscilla Lisicich, John Lovrić, Nikki Lovrić, Richard Major, Colleen Mavar, Darci McKinley, Cathryn Morovich, John Morovich, Veronica Mratinich, Alma Plancich, Mike Rancich, Beverly Read, Kristin Tarabochia, Igor Vuletić. **Community Representatives & Volunteers:** Nancy Freeman, Jana Harvey, Greta Kos, Bret Lunsford, John Petrinovich, Maria Petrish, Janet Segur, Antonija Stipetić, Richard Tarabochia

*CroatiaFest is produced by the local Croatian-American Community and is part of Seattle Center's Safeco Insurance Festál, a year-long series of world cultural events that honors the richness and diversity of our region, presented with generous support from Safeco Insurance, Western Washington Toyota Dealers, Wells Fargo, Verizon Wireless and KUOW 94.9 FM.*

## CroatiaFest

c/o Ethnic Heritage Council  
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Seattle, WA 98109  
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**A special thank you to all CroatiaFest participants & volunteers!**

Email: [ehc@seattle.gov](mailto:ehc@seattle.gov)  
[www.croatiafest.org](http://www.croatiafest.org)  
[www.ethnicheritagecouncil.org](http://www.ethnicheritagecouncil.org)

Newsletter Editor: Maria Kesovija  
CroatiaFest Logo by John Lovrić

*CroatiaFest Newsletter is a publication of the CroatiaFest Committee. Please send submission materials to the EHC office via mail, fax or email, attn: Maria Kesovija. If you wish to be removed from, or added to the CroatiaFest mailing list, or have corrections, please contact: 206-443-1410; [ehc@seattle.gov](mailto:ehc@seattle.gov).*



August, 2008

Dear Friends,

It was just five years ago that several Croatians came together to showcase our heritage and contributions to the building of America at a one day festival at the Seattle Center.

The festival has grown to include Saturday afternoon and evening, Sunday and an extended time for the exhibit in the Harrison Street Art Gallery. More volunteers have come aboard but we still need more especially during set up and tear down.

Let me tell you of this year's experience in exploring and researching for the history of coal mining in Western Washington. Not only did I find a cousin in California who has sent me a lot of pictures and history but I interviewed the grandson of my elementary teacher who taught grades 1-8 in Cumberland. His grandfather was a Croatian immigrant and worked in the coal mines. He has provided a wealth of information and will be the moderator of a panel of coal miners.

The funding for CroatiaFest has been behind schedule and we really want you to help us to finish making all the arrangements to bring speakers, performers, pay the printer and the postman and everything else it takes to put on the festival.

***Simply we need you to write a check. Anyone making a donation of \$100 or more will receive an invitation to a Dignitary Reception on Saturday evening and be listed in the newsletter as a donor. Sponsors of \$500 or more are welcome and will get special recognition.***

If you would like to volunteer at the festival or have any questions or suggestions please call or e-mail me. Visit: [www.croatiafest.org](http://www.croatiafest.org).

Hvala - Thank you!

*Beverly Prkačin Read*

Beverly Prkačin Read  
CroatiaFest Fundraising Committee  
206-940-4875  
[bread@windermere.com](mailto:bread@windermere.com)

**View this newsletter on-line!**  
**[www.croatiafest.org/newsletter.html](http://www.croatiafest.org/newsletter.html)**

# CroatiaFest 2008 Activities

**Saturday, October 4  
6:00-10:00p.m.**

**6:00pm: Special Donor Reception  
&**

**7:30pm: Folkdance Instruction &  
Dance Party**

Folkdance instruction by  
Pam Kelley and Melissa Obenauf,  
followed by your favorite kolos and more!  
Music by local Croatian bands!

**Sunday, October 5  
12-noon—8:00p.m.**

**Featured 2008 Performance, 12noon  
Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra  
& Bravo! Vancouver Choral**

### Throughout the Day

Activities for Children

Art Gallery

Community Historical Displays

Cooking Demonstration by John Sarich,

*Renowned Chateau Ste. Michelle Culinary Director*

Croatia Today! Exhibit

Croatian Variety Store

Foods with a Croatian Flair

Genealogy Lecture by Barbara Budinich Starkey

Lectures & Lessons

Marketplace

Miner's Memories, a Croatian Coalminers Panel

Movies & Activities for Kids

Music & Dance Performances

Watercolor Demonstration by Ivo Raič

**Visit: [www.croatiafest.org](http://www.croatiafest.org)**

Full schedule coming soon!

All activities are FREE, open to the public, and held  
in the Center House at Seattle Center.

### Visiting Genealogist

*Barbara Budinich Starkey*, is one of a few genealogists specializing in information helping Croatians to find their roots. A Seattle native, Barbara is a Croatian American living in Mapleton, Utah. A graduate of the University of Washington, she has lectured throughout America and this is her second appearance at this festival. Barbara will give a Power Point lecture Sunday afternoon upstairs in the Media Room.

### Harrison Street Art Gallery

*Ivo F. Raič*, visiting artist from Sarajevo, will exhibit and demonstrate an artist's hands creating a water color painting during the Sunday festival. Other featured art will be local artist, *Gloria Barello*, *Marylou Ozbolt-Storer* and her FIBREARTS creations of distinctive art to wear, jewelry by local artisan, *Louise Petrich Iverson*, and historical costumes. Also featured is the historical exhibit featuring "Croatian Hands at Work" in the mining communities from Roslyn, Cle Elum to Wilkeson and Bayne. The gallery exhibit runs from October 1-7.

### Visual Art & Exhibits

**Historical photo exhibits** illustrate the stories of industrious immigrants and contemporary Croatian Americans in the Puget Sound region. Contributing to the historical exhibit are the mining communities of Ronald, Roslyn, and Cle Elum, and the communities in Western Washington from Wilkeson to Bayne and Bellingham, the fishing communities of Gig Harbor, Tacoma, Everett, and Anacortes, and the logging communities of Grays Harbor County. This exhibit also includes artifacts. Croats in Washington State number about 40,000.

**Film screenings** include Croatian movies, a video tour of Croatia, and documentaries.

### Activities

Workshops and seminars are offered throughout Sunday afternoon. Children can learn some simple, but fun, Croatian dance steps and get their favorite Croatian design or a butterfly drawn on their face!

### Music & Dance

Performers from around the Northwest include nationally acclaimed **Vela Luka Croatian Dance Ensemble** and the **Ruže Dalmatinke Orchestra, Sinovi, Seattle Junior Tamburitzans, Radost Folk Ensemble, Dave & the Dalmatians, KlapaDooWopella** and from Vancouver, BC, **Tamburaški Orkestar Kardinal Stepinac**. Dances represent regions, traditions and various stages of Croatian history, and are presented with elaborate costumes, lively music and singing. Croatian traditions meld with the outside influences of Spanish, Greek, Italian, Hungarian and Central European folk traditions. Costuming also reflects these influences - contrasting the red and white flax, wool and silk of colonial styles with bright, bold embroidered colors and woven textures.

Sunday evening wraps up with a Croatian sing-a-long led by Sinovi Tamburitzans.

Produced by Croatian American community partners in partnership with Seattle Center's Safeco Insurance Festival, 4Culture, The Croatian National Tourist Board and The Ethnic Heritage Council.

*Hands at Work, from page 1*

### Croatian Hands at Work: Miners' Memories—Panel Discussion

This year's theme '**Croatian Hands at Work**' highlights the daunting experiences of new immigrants who found work in the mining industries upon their arrival here in the Northwest. Sunday's day-long festival pays tribute to that hearty group. Learn about the traditions and innovations in coal mining and manufacturing, and hear life stories at the Sunday afternoon panel discussion, with moderator Bill Kombol.

# So much to experience & learn at CroatiaFest...

## Miners' Memories

The intrigue and stories of coal mining in Western Washington will come alive as a panel of coal miners including *Rich Miller, John Ferro, 2007 Coal King of Roslyn; Agnes Ferro, 2006 Queen of Centennial Cle Elum; Fred Krueger*, historian and *Honorary Consul Frank Brozovich* share their experiences and memories.

*William J. "Bill" Kombol* will be the moderator of this CroatiaFest 2008 featured panel on Sunday afternoon from 2-3:30 in the afternoon. Kombol's grandfather, Anton Kombol, was a Croatian immigrant and worked in the coal mines near Ravensdale and Durham. His coal mining career was cut short by a mining accident in the mid 1920s which mostly blinded him. His father, Jack Kombol, worked in and around the coal mines of Black Diamond, Franklin and Ravensdale for 28 years.

Bill Kombol started working at the Palmer Coking Coal mine office on Saturdays while still in high school. He was privileged to have had underground coal mining experience at Rogers No. 3 mine, the state's last underground coal mine, in the mid 70s, followed by surface coal mining.

Kombol is the General Manager of Palmer Coking Coal Company in Black Diamond. He is involved in all facets of company management, including surface mining, reclamation, forestry planning, marketing, land development, employee management, investment strategies and implementation of company goals. He lives in Black Diamond with his wife of 18 years and three sons.

## Artist's Hands at Work

Returning to CroatiaFest with an exhibit in the Harrison Street Art Gallery on the upper level of the Center House is artist, Ivo F. Raič. New this year is a demonstration by the artist as he uses his skills to paint aquarelle (watercolor) as you watch.

Raič is traveling from Sarajevo to his "second love Seattle" where his children and grandchildren live.

## Genealogy Presentation

"I am excited about presenting again for Croatiafest. My presentation this year will take participants on a "genealogical" tour of Croatia. We will briefly visit Veli and Mali Lošinj, Trstenik, Doli, Brod Moravice, Mrkopalj/Sunger, and Gornji Ostrc. We will explore not only the countryside, but also genealogical records available there. We will see records in the form of pedigree charts, family group records, and actual parish records from those areas. Participants will also learn a few tricks for finding their own families."

Barbara Budinich Starkey was born in Seattle to a parent with Croatian roots. She graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in History, Evergreen State College (Olympia, Washington) with a BA in Secondary Science Education, and City University (Seattle) with a M.Ed.

She has taught church groups and was a presenter for the Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies, the Jewish Historical Society, Utah Valley Regional Family History Center, the BYU Family History Conference, the Croatiafest (2006), and has been a contributor to Ancestry.com.

Barbara compiled and published an index of the vital records of Veli Lošinj, Croatia and Mali Lošinj, Croatia. These indices are published under the name of *Stepping Back, Volume 1 and 2*.

Barbara has done private consulting for several years and has helped numerous people find their roots in Croatia and Posen, Poland. She has traveled to both countries and is familiar with what is available for research.

Barbara will be available throughout the day to answer your questions.

## FIBRÉARTS, INC Marylou Ozbolt-Storer

"A Native of Washington State, I was born into a family just one generation from the old country. My father's Croatian heritage engendered rich family values and a strong work ethic. My mother's British culture greatly exposed me to colour, working in a family florist shop at a very early age. Both parents instilled in me the importance of goals and encouraged me to follow my dreams.

After getting my university education in the U.S., I attended a school in London, England, for "Fashion & Textile Design." It was there that I was first introduced to patternmaking and challenged in my every creative process.

A weaver since the mid-60's, my focus was on colour and surface embellishments, a process I ran with for approximately 20 years. The style changed in the 80's and, at first whimsical and playful and as the years progressed, my designs became more sophisticated. My passion for travel and cultures have had a major influence on my designs. A trip, every other year, provides stimulation to my senses. My goal is to create "wearable art" which is an extension of my experiences and compliments the wearer.

I have been honored by being included in some of the most prestigious shows, galleries and boutiques in this country and abroad."

Marylou lives with her artist husband on a five acre farm in Maple Valley, WA. Designs by Marylou will be at Croatia Fest for viewing.



# The Croats of the Coal Mining Fields of Roslyn-Ronald-Cle Elum

*By Frank Brozovich, CroatiaFest Chairman; Honorary Consul, Republic of Croatia. Acknowledgement: Coal Towns in the Cascades, John C. Shideler*

For a time in Washington State coal was "King." Coal supplied the power that drove the locomotives of Pacific Coast railways and fueled the ships that departed from the harbors of the Pacific coast. The Croats of Roslyn, Ronald and Cle Elum brought much of that coal from the depths of the earth to the light of day.

The Roslyn coal fields were discovered in 1886 by a Northern Pacific surveying team. Coal mining operations commenced in 1887. Parallel to that, the migration of Croat workers to the coal fields of Roslyn began in the early 1890's. These Croats came from many parts of Croatia, but mainly from the mountainous region of Gorski Kotar.

Most of the early Croat workers came to the West as single men or as married men who later sent for their wives and young families. Many of the single men wrote back to Croatia for "Croatian picture brides," while others never married. Very few ever saw the land of their birth or the families they grew up in again.

The single men, for the most part, lived as boarders in Croatian households. There were often as many as a half dozen Croatian boarders in one household at a time. My father's mother, my grandmother Stimac, had such a boarding house. My father lived with her and his stepfather, along with dozens of boarders, for several years before he sent for a "Croatian picture bride," my mother.

The working conditions in the Roslyn coal mines were as difficult as the conditions in mines anywhere. The work was arduous and the circumstances dangerous. Accidents resulting in fatalities or injury were not uncommon. Having worked in those mines during college day summers, I got a taste of what it was like.

The coal veins seldom exceeded 5 and 1/2 feet in height and their pitch was from 5 to 30 degrees. Miners were always stooped and fighting the incline. The mines were a place of total darkness; the air was dead and the dust

blackened your nasal passages and lungs. The danger of the coal dust igniting and causing an explosion was always present.

Room and pillar removal was the method of mining employed in the Roslyn coal fields. From the main entry way, coal was removed from swaths of coal 40 feet in width. These rooms extended from the main entry way to the end of the coal seam (vein). The ceilings were supported by placing and propping up huge "12 x 8 inch" cross bars across the width of the room, every 10 or 15 feet. These bars had to hold up hundreds of feet of bed rock above. Pillars of coal 40 feet in width were left in between every room, as each area was worked. The pillars in between the rooms were mined using the same method.

There was a constant danger that pieces of rock weighing tons could drop from the ceiling without warning. When the pillars were removed, the huge cross bars would splinter as if they were tooth picks. At the end of the process, the entire earth above would come down in an implosion.

But the early Croat coal miners endured. They left the place of their birth for a new beginning. They lived for family and friend. Their legacy was the building of America.

The first Croatian Fraternal Union (CFU) lodge in the Pacific states, "Dr. David Starčević' - Lodge 56," was formed in Roslyn in 1897. By 1904 Lodge 56 was the largest CFU lodge in the entire CFU network. Succeeding years saw the formation of several more Croatian Lodges which eventually all merged with Lodge 56. Lodge life played a significant role in the lives of the area's early Croats.

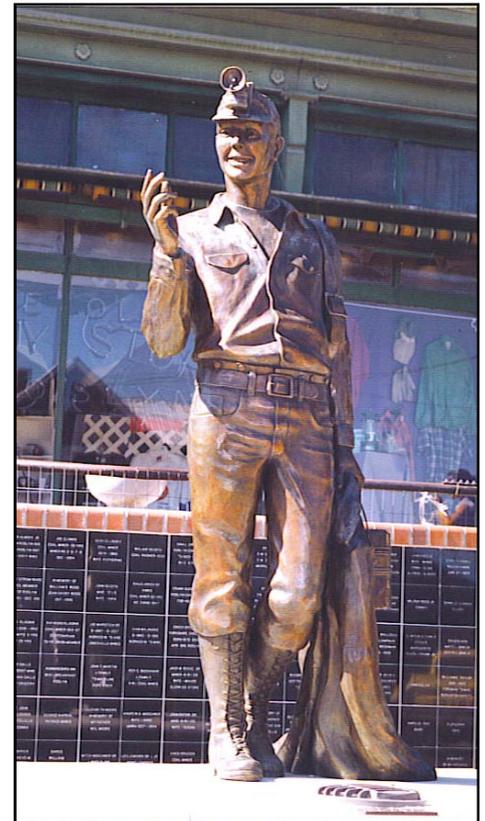
There is a significance embodied in the names of some of the lodges. Dr. David Starčević' Lodge 56 and Stjepan Radić' Lodge 763 were both named after advocates of Croatian nationalism.

In the 1920's, the population of Roslyn was 4,000. It was said that about half of Roslyn's population was Croatian. Croats lived in all towns of the area, including some towns that have long since disappeared.

The Roslyn coal fields reached peak production of 1.5 million tons in 1910, and again peaked during and after the mobilization of World War I. By 1920 production was 1.75 million tons. Production steadily declined from that time through 1963, when the last mines of the area ceased operation. Although the quality of the coal was still high, it was expensive to mine and economically uncompetitive with other western coal fields and oil.

The photos in this issue of the CroatiaFest News Letter portray aspects of the life of the Croats in those early times. CroatiaFest 2008 will display memorabilia of mining and Croat family life during the mining days of Roslyn-Ronald-Cle Elum.

The Committee for CroatiaFest invites you to come and see this Northwest memorabilia. During CroatiaFest, we will also hold a panel presentation describing early day coal mining in Washington State.

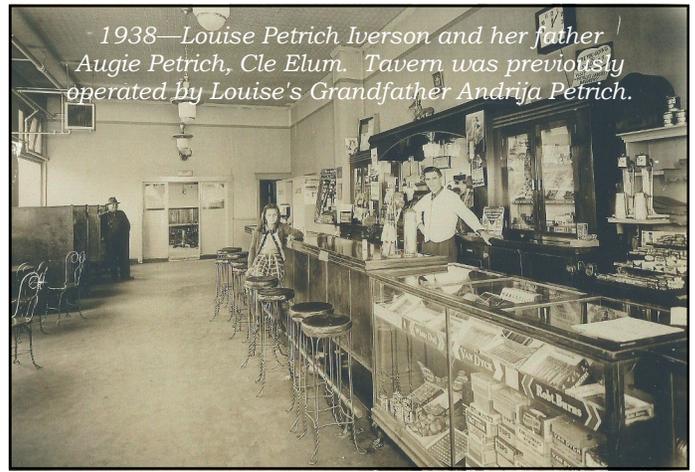


**Coal Miner Statue**

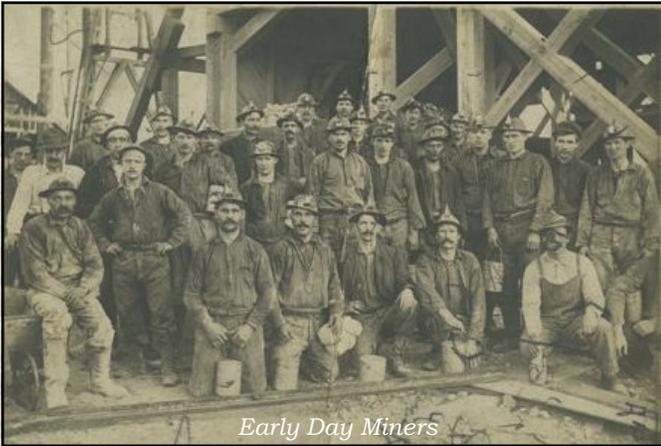
*Roslyn Ronald Cle Elum Heritage Club granted CroatiaFest permission to use the image.*



1911—Lodge Meeting, Roslyn, Washington



1938—Louise Petrich Iverson and her father Augie Petrich, Cle Elum. Tavern was previously operated by Louise's Grandfather Andrija Petrich.



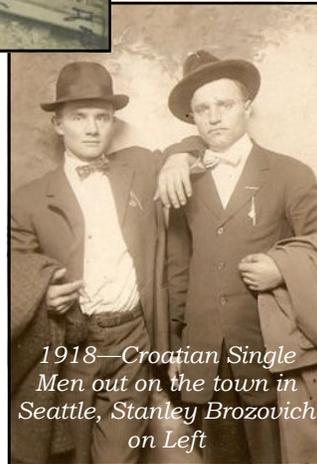
Early Day Miners



1927—Lodge Meeting  
Back Row - left, unknown; center, Andrew Petrich; right, unknown;  
Front Row - left, unknown, right, Toma Petrich



1910—Antonija Stimac's boarders on front porch, Cle Elum



1918—Croatian Single Men out on the town in Seattle, Stanley Brozovich on Left



Stimac's new boarding house after Cle Elum fire in 1918



Butkovich Wedding



Anthony Pozaric - Marija Mance Wedding

# The Croatian Cemeteries in Roslyn, Washington

By Richard Major (Original: 1983)

There are probably not many communities that refer to cemeteries in their advertizing brochures. But Roslyn does, and judging from the number of tourists that view the cemeteries, the unusual advertizing gimmick is a successful one.

Being that three of the cemeteries are Croatian, the present article is being prepared as a matter of interest to Croatian history buffs.

Roslyn is a small town on the eastern side of the Cascade Mountains. The community is dispersed, with the main section lying in a rather elevated valley, overlooking a broad panorama below. The remaining sections are situated on the surrounding hillsides. Forests pick up immediately at town's edge.

The discovery of coal in the mid-1880s hastened the development of the area but, judging from the names on the early disaster reports, no Croatians were there during the first decade of mining. By 1897, however, they were present in sufficient number to have founded Lodge 56 of the Croatian Fraternal Union.

## 1929 Documentary

As to the number of Croatians that eventually settled in Roslyn, we refer to the 70-page document "Medju Našim Narodom u Americi" written by Ivan Lupis-Vukić in 1929. The author, retiring as editor of the Chicago newspaper "Hrvatski Glasnik" had visited Roslyn in 1927 as part of a western tour before returning to his home in Split, Croatia. According to Lupis-Vukić, about 2,000 of the 4,000 people living in Roslyn were Croatians.

Roslyn was the main stop on Lupis-Vukić's tour as he spent 3 weeks there visiting his sister and her family. He described the Croatian community in detail, including the fraternal organizations, job conditions in the mines, family life, the lives of the women, the evils of moonshine, etc. Finally, he described the Croatian cemeteries with considerable emotion--noting that there might soon be more Croatians dead than alive in Roslyn.

The present article is based on Lupis-Vukić's 1929 work plus discussions

that I had with John Butkovich, secretary of Lodge 56, when I visited Roslyn on July 17 this year (1983).

## 24 Cemeteries Altogether

It must be pointed out that Roslyn's Croatian cemeteries are but three of the approximately 24 cemeteries there. Each major ethnic group has their own--the Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, Serbians (mostly Montenegrins), Blacks, etc. The non-ethnic fraternal, such as the Masons, Redmen, etc., also have their own and then there are a couple regular town cemeteries and one for veterans. There are a lot of Croatians buried in these latter cemeteries as well.

The first two cemeteries holding Croatians lie side by side on a high hill. They are the original graveyard of Lodge 56 (Dr. David Starčević) and that of St. Barbara Lodge 39, American Fraternal Union (a Slovenian organization). Croatians, it should be said, made up almost all of St. Barbara's membership. Because of the inherent dangers of coal mining, it was wise in those days to belong to as many beneficial organizations as possible. Judging from the oldest dates on the headstones, both cemeteries accepted their first occupants in about 1905.

The third cemetery, lying at a lower level, was originally the property of a rival Croatian lodge--one that belonged to the nationwide Croatian League of Illinois. The two organizations eventually merged and thus the lower cemetery became available to all members once the original (upper) cemetery was filled.

## Most from Gorski Kotar

Gorski Kotar, the mountainous region lying inland from Rijeka, Croatia, was the homeland of the vast majority of Roslyn's Croatians. The communities of Delnice, Mrkopalj, Lič, Lokve, Fužina, Brestova Draga and Sunger were particularly well represented although there are a few family names from Primorje, Lika and Dalmatia as well. Common on the tombstones, therefore, are names such as Starčević, Majnarić, Radošević, Mataya, Pleše, Kauzlarić, Bruketta, Paškvan, etc. No one knows how many Croatians are buried in Roslyn's cemeteries but there must be a thousand or more.

One difficulty in trying to work up an estimate, according to John Butkovich,

is that the extremely poor members and the infants were often buried without headstones, and once the wooden crosses and fences that marked these graves yielded to time, the graves were often overlooked. Nonetheless, many of the children's graves are still identifiable as little mounds--row after row of little mounds. It is difficult to imagine how many bitter tears were shed over the loss of these children. Or to imagine the tears that flowed over the loss of young husbands and sons in the mines--many in the prime of life. Take, for example, the tombstone which reads:

Ovdje počiva Vinko Kučan,  
rođen 22. lipnja, 1884. u  
Gorskom Kotoru, selo Mrkopalj,  
Hrvatska, umro 21. srpnja, 1910.  
u Roslyn, Wash. Počivaj u miru.

One poor woman, pointed out John Butkovich, married three times and three times lost husbands to the mines.

Of all the ethnic and fraternal cemeteries in Roslyn, those belonging to the Croatian Fraternal Union are among the best maintained and this is due almost solely to the efforts of John Butkovich. "I've got the lower one in fairly good shape--with a new fence and sign and all," states John, "but next year I've got to get a little more help and do the upper one too."

## The Future

It is tough to guess about the future, according to John Butkovich. Some members are growing apprehensive about the perpetual care aspect--probably asking themselves who will maintain the cemeteries after the first generation of American-born Croatians go the way of their immigrant parents. A few are even opting for the town cemeteries rather than the Croatian cemeteries. "But on the other hand," he continues, "one of your members over there in Seattle recently made arrangements to be buried here, and another fellow in California swears that he's going to join Croatian Fraternal Union Lodge 56 just so he can be buried amongst his fellow Croatians."

Now that is determination!

# Memories of a Coal Miner's Daughter

By Bev Prkačin Read (pictured below)



"Well, I was born a coal miner's daughter" the lyrics that Loretta Lynn belts out ring true to me and many others whose Croatian fathers worked in the coal mines of Western Washington.

Born to a coal miner and his wife in Cumberland, Washington we were "poor" but rich in family, friends and natural surroundings of streams, lakes and rivers. "He shoveled coal to make a poor man's dollar. Daddy loved and raised eight kids on a coal miner's pay. Mama scrubbed our clothes on a washboard every day".

Life was tough but we managed to work together and lived off the land - planting a huge garden and canning fruits and vegetables to last the winter. We had a mini farm and took advantage of the open range law to allow our cows to wander during the day and then bring them back at night for the milking. Hogs and steers were butchered and memories of the blood sausage and kielbasa linger. Hams,

bacon and sausage were cured by apple wood smoke in the two story smokehouse. Chickens, geese and ducks added to the larder.

"I'm proud to be a coal miner's daughter. The work we done was hard. At night we'd sleep, cause we were tired".

"Well a lot of things have changed, since way back when". Many of the mining communities no longer exist "just a memory of a coal miner's daughter".

Visit the historical displays of coal mining communities, miners and their families from Roslyn-Cle Elum to Wilkeson and Burnett at CroatiaFest 2008.

## Wilkeson, Washington—Another Community of Immigrant Croatian Coal Miners

By Richard Major

Much has been written about the immigrant Croatian coal miners in Roslyn/Ronald/Cle Elum-- and for good reason. From the 1890s to the mid-1920s that coal rich area on the east side of the Cascade Mountains attracted the largest number of Croatian immigrants to Washington State. On the other hand, less has been documented about the Croatian miners who toiled in western Washington-- in mines stretching from Bellingham to Centralia. One such community was Wilkeson, which lies about 30 miles southeast of Tacoma in Pierce County.

Here is some information about the Croatians who immigrated to Wilkeson. This data, gleaned from the archives of the Croatian Fraternal Union Home Office in Pittsburgh, PA, gives the name, date of birth and home town of 317 immigrants who enrolled in Wilkeson CFU Lodge 189 between 1902 and possibly up to the early 1920s. Thereafter, mainly because of the decreasing demand for

coal and recurring labor strikes, most Croatians left Wilkeson-- many going to Tacoma or Grays Harbor. By 1925 Wilkeson was a relative ghost town.

Most (95%) of Wilkeson's Croatians came from the same general area in the old homeland. This followed a pattern found in most communities and came about via word of mouth or perhaps recruiting activity by professional agents. Wilkeson's Croatians came from the Neretva River Delta (50 miles northwest of Dubrovnik) or from areas of Dalmatia and Hercegovina within a small 30-mile radius of the delta. By far the largest subgroup (190) came from the Neretva basin and the adjacent Pelješac Peninsula. Of the 190, 76 came from the village of Desne near the right bank of the Neretva. (One can imagine the negative impact of a small village such as Desne giving up that many of its young men!) Also from this main subgroup, Bačina, Dalmatia provided 33 members, Plina (20), Komin (12) and Kuna (12).

Coastal Dalmatia, northwestward from

Gradac to Baška Voda, provided 30 members while the Dalmatian hinterlands north of the Neretva stretching into Hercegovina (Ljubuški and Klobuk) yielded 35--led by Pasičina (12) and Borovci (9).

Hercegovina east of the Neretva (centered on Stolac and Ravno) contributed 44.

Other diverse regions of Croatia and Slovenia provided the final 18 members.

Surnames of the immigrants ranged from (A)ndrijašević to (Z)vono. Most common were Medak (17), Šetka (14), Bebić (8) and Batinović, Jerković and Tomašević (7 each).

Year of birth ranged from 1856 to 1894.

This is just a sample. For a detailed list of the 317 immigrant Croatian coal miners to Wilkeson and other information about their lives there, be sure to visit CroatiaFest 2008. Or, if you have something to add, please contact: Richard Major, 206-282-1424.

### Shop in the CroatiaFest Marketplace!!!

Adriatica Croatian Lavender; Balkan Market; Croatian Fixation; CroatianTV-America; Dalmatian Kitchen; Heart of Croatia; Croatia Today Cultural Exhibit; CroatiaFest Festival-wear & Information Booth.

### ...and Croatian Foods in the Center House!!!

Visit participating Center House merchants for their Croatian foods at CroatiaFest!!

# Memories of the Tacoma/Ruston Smelter

By Robert Gunovick

I grew up over 65 years ago in the North end of Tacoma – Ruston, in the shadow of the Asarco Smelter smoke stack. I have fond memories of this tight-knit Croatian community. The Croatian immigrants living there were like my father, from the Neretva region of Croatia or from Istria, and most of them, like my father, worked at the Asarco smelter. There were five “Ma & Pa” grocery stores within one square mile run by Croatian families. We had our own hall separate from the hall in the Old Town neighborhood where most of those Croatians were commercial fishermen from the Dalmatian Islands. (Oddly enough, both halls were called “the Slavonian Hall” – also, this was the name most Tacoma Croatians called themselves.) Ruston had its Croatian lodge, the CFU Local #246, founded in 1903, eight years before the Seattle Lodge.

Two weeks after my father, Matt Gunovick (Grgurinović) arrived in America, he went to work for the smelter, but four months later he found himself on the picket line with bullets flying over his head in one of the most dramatic happenings in the history of Ruston. The following is an article giving details of this strike written by Judith Kipp and published in the News Tribune, January 15, 1989:

*The first week of 1914 turned the small town of Ruston into a war zone. Striking yard workers at the Ruston smelter exchanged gunfire with deputies over several nights. The strike took a tragic turn when a bullet fatally wounded one of the strikers.*

*Andrew Aronke, an immigrant from Pasin, Croatia, in the war-torn province of Austria-Hungary, walked to the edge of the cliff above the smelter on the night of January 7, a week after the strike began. A searchlight from the plant flooded*

*an earthen hump east of the smelter's smokestack where Aronke stood. Shots ran out and the 30-year-old Croatian tumbled down the embankment.*

*He was carried to the Kruzich house at the top of the hill where Mrs. Kruzich, a midwife, attempted to aid the mortally wounded man. Taken from the house to the hospital, the striker later died from the gunshot. The strike had begun at the smelter plant on New Year's Day. Yard workers walked out when the management increased their work day from nine to 10 hours without raising the daily wage of \$2.25.*

*At that time, other major employers were lowering the work day to eight hours. Strikers argued that the hourly wage of workers at the Montana copper mines was \$3.50 a day. Most of the 315 yard workers were recent immigrants from Croatia. Young men fled the Balkan Wars and many from the areas of Istria and Dalmatia settled in Ruston where they found work at the smelter.*

*During the first week of the strike, strikers blocked the main entrance to the plant. Women relatives and sympathizers of the strikers joined in, shouting at the squad of deputies brought in to keep order and at the workmen not on strike. Strike breakers and supplies came into the smelter by boat. At night, the deputies exchanged fire with the strikers who were stationed in the houses above the smelter. Bullets riddled holes in many of the houses. Some still carry the scars of that battle.*

After the funeral for Aronke, 5,000 people marched in downtown Tacoma in a demonstration led by a woman dressed in a bridal gown taking the place of his fiancé in Croatia. They were preceded by flags of Croatia and United States. There happened to be a

national convention of Hoboes in Tacoma at the time and they joined the procession with the Croatians.

The strike was broken three months later and as my father put it, anybody with an “ich” at the end of their names were banned from working at the smelter for two years until demands for copper from the 1<sup>st</sup> World War forced Asarco to re-hire them. The smelter closed down over 20 years ago and a few years later, the smokestack was imploded.

Due to many dedicated individuals, Ruston today is keeping the Croatian heritage alive with its CFU lodge activities and the young descendants learning and performing folk instruments, dances and songs of Croatia. Especially prominent, the Krilich/Joyce family, whose “Matriarch”, Mary Krilich Joyce recently was honored for her 38 year membership on the Ruston city council by naming the new community center, the “Mary Krilich Joyce Community Center.”

This year's CroatiaFest will have a large display of Ruston with pictures and stories. This is all part of the theme this year, “Croatian Hands at Work”. If you have anything to share for this display, please contact me at [bobgunovick@yahoo.com](mailto:bobgunovick@yahoo.com), or call: 425-603-1142.

Ruston today is changing fast. Some of the older modest homes are being replaced by condos and new homes because of their incredible views overlooking Commencement Bay and the Puget Sound.

My father was a 72 year member of the Croatian Fraternal Union Lodge 246 and served 17 years as its president. If he were alive today, I know how proud he would be to know that CroatiaFest is dedicated to preserving the heritage of Croatia and honor the memory of the hard working smelter workers and their families.

## Croatian Variety Store

Once again, CroatiaFest 2008 will feature the **Croatian Variety Store**, a consignment shop for miscellaneous Croatian items. Last year, this popular booth did a bang-up business selling items such as: musical tapes and CD's; videos; hand crafted greeting cards, dolls, carvings, sculptures; books; records; clothing; shoes; socks; post cards; small musical instruments; art and photographs, etc. A small percentage of all sales will go to CroatiaFest, and a Seller's Agreement Form must be filled out prior to the sale by the sellers.

If you have items you would like to be considered, please contact me at 425-603-1142, or email me at [bobgunovick@yahoo.com](mailto:bobgunovick@yahoo.com). Deadline is September 29. The Variety Store is located behind the Center House stage. Come one, come all and let's make this another interesting treasure of Croatian items for people to buy. -Peggy Gunovick, CroatiaFest Committee

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