

# Serbian Diaspora Meet U.S. Ambassador-Designate to Serbia

by Milos Rastovic

On January 12, 2016, the Serb National Federation (SNF) initiated a meeting with Mr. Kyle R. Scott, the new U.S. Ambassador-Designate to Serbia at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. After a long pause, the Serbian Diaspora in the U.S. activated their efforts to improve the relationship between the U.S. and Serbia.

Present at the meeting were representatives of the Serb National Federation John Martich, President, Dane A. Medich, 1st Vice President, Gregory Volitich, Treasurer, Cheryl M. Leydig, Office Manager, Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator, Vanessa Rastovic, Lawyer, Nikola Lonchar, President of the Tesla Science Foundation, Philadelphia, PA, and Obrad Kesic, Co-founder and Member of the National Democratic Ethnic Coordinating Council (NDECC)-Serbian Community, Washington, D.C. Also present were Ms. Meghan Bradley, Senior Serbia Desk Officer at the U.S. Department of State and Ms. Nikolina Kulidzan, Serbia Desk Officer (TDY) at the U.S. Department of State.

Mr. Scott welcomed everyone and all present representatives of the Serbian Diaspora introduced themselves. Participants stressed the importance of improving political, economic, and cultural relationships between two countries. Mr. Scott was interested to hear about the work and activities of American-Serbian organizations, their cooperation with Serbia, and the position and influence of the Serbian Diaspora to Serbia. The new Ambassador-Designate was interested in improving cultural and athletic re-

lations and yet open to improving and increasing ties between the SNF lodge activities in the U.S. and Serbia. Everyone agreed it was productive and informative meeting. Participants gifted the books "Serb National Federation First 100 Years," "Christian Heritage of Kosovo and Metohija," "Tesla: The Wizard of Electricity" by David J. Kent, and "The Immigrant – The Judge Fisher Story" by Aleksandar Slavkovic to Mr. Scott. On behalf of the Serb National Federation, representatives of the SNF gifted two books "Serb National Federation First 100 Years" to the U.S. Department of State.

Mr. Scott was recently working at the German Marshall Fund in Washington, D.C. since 2014. He is a member of the U.S. Foreign Service for 35 years. As an expert for Eastern Europe and Russia, he served in different positions with the U.S. Department of State in Hungary, Russia, Israel, Croatia and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations (UN) and at the Office of the Organization for Security Cooperation (OSCE). He earned his Bachelor's Degree at Arizona State University, and he speaks Serbo-Croatian, Russian, Italian, Hungarian, Hebrew, German and French.<sup>1</sup>



Photo credit: the SNF

Picture from left to right: John Martich, Cheryl Leydig, Milos Rastovic, Nikolina Kulidzan, Gregory Volitich, Vanessa Rastovic, Nikola Lonchar, Dane Medich, and Obrad Kesic.

1 U.S. Department of State Diplomacy in Action: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/coc/2015/247210.htm>

## SRBO ON THE ROAD

### MARTI KASOVAC IN ARMENIA

Email is a wonderful thing. Back in the 1960s when the Peace Corps was a romantic dream for many Baby Boomer, volunteers would have been cut off from their families for months at a time. Today's technology doesn't make the sacrifice any smaller, but it makes it easier for some.

We heard from Marti Kasovac of Phoenix, Arizona, who is currently in Getashen, in the State of Armvir, Armenia.

"When my husband Mitch died almost three years ago, I decided to do something I had always wanted to do - join the Peace Corps. He would always say, that his idea of roughing it was a Holiday Inn," she joked. But, with her idea firmly in hand and the firm determination to fill what was nearly a lifeline dream, she sought and received the "blessing of all the kids and became a Peace Corps volunteer."

Her stay altogether, along with three months training, is 27 months. "I have been here six months and so far still enjoying it," she wrote from Armenia.

In addition to email, Marti apparently has another big advantage over most of the other volunteers. "I live with a family that has an indoor bathroom and I couldn't be happier. I think the PC staff felt sorry for me when they chose this family."

In her work there, Marti is co-teaching English

with an Armenian teacher which she says has been very interesting and "so far pretty rewarding."

Her "kids" sent her a package for Christmas which she received sometime in February. In it was a copy of the American Srbobran along with a note from them saying they thought they had seen something about taking a photo with the paper when on the road. And so, we received these great photos of Marti in front of a road sign announcing the town.

Marti also has a blog with more about her assignment, and she welcomes everyone to take a peek: [www.martisenior.com](http://www.martisenior.com).

Thinking, as many do, that I work from the Home Office in Pittsburgh (I live in Indiana and work from wherever I am), Marti added a few personal notes to Natalie Wuchench and others. "I do know Natalie. Give her a hug for me and please tell Natalie to give Chad a hug for me and send my best to Topsy and Joyce. Tell her I can hear Topsy now, "That Marti sure does crazy stuff."

She signed off: OOO's Marti Kasovac, Phoenix by way of Armenia.

--Sandi Radoja

