

## SNF MOVIE FESTIVAL, SCREENINGS IN SEVERAL CITIES

by Milos Rastovic

IN WASHINGTON

In cooperation with the Republic of Srpska Office for Cooperation, Trade, and Investment, St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church, and Embassy of the Republic of Serbia to the United States the Serb National Federation sponsored the Serbian Movie Festival in Washington, D.C., October 20 – 21. The first day of the festival was at St. Luke in Potomac, MD. Shown were “Santa Maria della Salute” by Zdravko Sotra, and for children: “The Throne of St. Sava” by Jakov Popov, “In the Beginning It was Letter” by Jakov and Zlata Popov, “Mihajlo I. Pupin – Path towards the Light” by Sava Sajko and Lav Jerzabek, and “Twice Upon a Time” by Vojin Vasovic.

After Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Grace Bishop Irinej of the Eastern American Diocese, host priest Rev. Vasilije Vranic opened the festival and expressed thanks to all sponsors including the Serb National Federation. His Excellency Djerdj Matkovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia, His Excellency Bojan Vujic, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Obrad Kesic, Director of the Republic of Srpska Office for Cooperation, Trade, and Investment were also in attendance.

On behalf of the SNF, I spoke to the audience about the SNF role in preserving our identity and heritage, and about the movie “Santa Maria della Salute” and Laza Kostic, one of the most famous Serbian poets.

The movie was well received. Following the screening, there was an interesting discussion. Children also enjoyed the movies about great Serbian figures of culture and science. This was an opportunity for them to learn more about Serbian culture, science, and tradition.

On the second day of the Festival, the movie “Tesla Nation” by Zeljko Mirkovic was screened in the Landmark Theaters E Street Cinema. Spanning more than 200 years, the film recounts the stories of many Serbian-Americans throughout history from Judge George Fisher, the first famous Serbian immigrant to the United States, to Mihajlo I. Pupin and Nikola Tesla, Serbian-American Scientists and Inventors, World War I and II immigrants up to the present time. The movie stresses how Serbian-America’s contributions helped build America and the world. Before the screening of the movie, a cocktail reception was held giving guests an opportunity to socialize. In the crowded hall, I had the privilege of being Master of Ceremonies. I described the movie “Tesla Nation” and introduced Ambassador Matkovic who thanked everyone who participated in the organization of the event and who attended including the many distinguished guests.



From left are Drina Rajic, Representative of the Republic of Srpska Office in Washington, Screenwriter Milos Rastovic, Obrad Kesic, Director of the Republic of Srpska Office in Washington, D.C., “Tesla Nation” Director Zeljko Mirkovic, and Rev. Vasilije Vranic

After the screening of the movie, David Vuich, spoke of his work in the Apollo Program along with other Serbs. The “Serbian Apollo Seven” were Serbian-Americans who worked on the Apollo Space Program from the 1960s to 1970s. Milojko “Mike” Vucelic, Danilo Bojic, Paul Duich, Milos Surbatovich, Peter Galovich, and Slavoljub “Sam” Vuich.

Jack Dimich, the actor who plays Nikola Tesla in the movie discussed his experience in playing Tesla. Zeljko Mirkovic, the Movie Director, emphasized the importance of this movie in building ties between the Serbian Diaspora and the homeland. Obrad Kesic talked about Serbian people who played important roles in the political life of the United States. As the movie’s screenwriter, I accentuated the Serbian-American role in building American history and their contribution to the United States of America and the world. Voice of America in Washington, D.C. released a segment “Teslin narod: priča o srpskim iseljenicima u Americi” in Serbian about the Serbian Movie Festival in Washington, D.C. on October 22, 2019, at <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/teslin-narod---prica-o-srpskim-iseljenicima-u-americi-/5135060.html>.

### ON TO CAMBRIDGE

On November 10th, 2019, the Serb National Federation in cooperation with the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox continued on page 11



## Serb National Federation 2019 Convention Minutes

President John Martich opened the convention by welcoming attendees, thanking the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Cathedral and Pittsburgh Lodges #6, #10, and #11 for serving as hosts of the convention, and thanking all delegates for their active participation in the SNF’s 23rd Quadrennial Convention. While the SNF serves as a fraternal insurance agency, President Martich (L78) reminded delegates, that the SNF is also the greatest promoter of Srpstvo on this continent.

Very Reverend Nedeljko Lunich (L97) led the delegation in prayer, reciting The Lord’s Prayer. Father Ned remarked that 600 SNF members have passed away

and fallen asleep in the Lord since the last SNF convention. In their memory, Father led the delegation in singing “Vjecnaja Pamjat.” May their memories be eternal.

Sister Andrea Medich (L76) led the delegation in singing the “Star Spangled Banner” and “O Canada.” Sister Cissy Rebich (L23) led the delegation in singing “Boze Pravde.”

President Martich (L78) informed delegates that, thanks to the internet, the SNF home office is better able to expedite information, therefore enabling the SNF to shorten the duration of the convention. President Martich said that the

number of our youth membership has dropped unfortunately. The message for today is for us to work in the spirit of friendship, with no room for personal attacks, to strength our SNF organization and love of our Serbian heritage.

Roll Call was taken by Brother Michael Borkovich (L347), SNF Secretary. The committee seated 83 delegates out of 102 potential delegates. Thirty-two lodges are represented.

Brother Ted Potkonjak (L74) was chosen chair of the convention for the fifth time. Brother Ted said that it was good to see

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# MOVIE FESTIVAL, SCREENINGS IN SEVERAL CITIES

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Cathedral, Cambridge, MA sponsored a Children's Serbian Movie Festival. The Serbian Movie Festival was held in the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Cambridge, MA.

After Divine Liturgy, Father Aleksandar Vljakovic opened the Festival and invited his parishioners to join the SNF. As Cultural Outreach Coordinator, I outlined the history of the SNF as well as the program of the Festival. The following movies for children were presented: "The Throne of St. Sava" by Jakov Popov, "In the beginning, it was a Letter" by Jakov & Zlata Popov, "Twice Upon a Time" by Vojin Vasovic, "Mihajlo I. Pupin – Path Towards the Light" by Sava Sajko & Lav Jerzabek, and "Radiovision" by Gregor Zuponc, Igor Simic, Vladimir Slavic, Jelena Milunovic & Milos Tomic. Children enjoyed the program and learned more about our language, history, Orthodox faith, tradition, and culture.

This was a great opportunity for many people to hear more about the SNF and its work. We hope that these events will continue in the future to strengthen ties with Serbian-Americans throughout the United States of America. These events play a key role in enabling the SNF to grow. As the SNF promotes cultural work, the organization has gained value and respect from both Serbian and American people.

Sava Hajdin, founder of the SNF, said that the seeds which we are sowing now "can grow into a strong tree, which spreads its branches wherever there are Serbs in America and Canada." His vision was to make the SNF a beacon of the Serbian cause.

## "TESLA NATION" AT UNITED NATIONS

Last October, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia in the United Nations sponsored a screening of "Tesla Nation" at the United Nations in New York in the headquarters of the United Nations with several foreign diplomats, ambassadors, and other distinguished guests in attendance. This was an extraordinary event in which Serbian-Americans showed their achievements, many of which guests were not aware. On behalf of the SNF, Milana Milosh, Secretary of the SNF Executive Board, George L. Milosh of Aliquippa Lodge 23, and Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the SNF were in attendance.

## "TESLA NATION" AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

In November, the Harvard College South Slavic Society hosted a screening of "Tesla Nation" in the William James Hall at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Los Angeles, CA qualified "Tesla Nation" for the nomination of the Academy Award Oscar 2020 for feature documentary. Students, professors, and other guests were in attendance and

heard Director Zeljko Mirkovic summarize the concept of the film. As screenwriter, Milos Rastovic explained the main idea of the movie in the context of Serbian-American history. A discussion followed, and stressed the importance of preserving Serbian heritage and the accomplishments of Serbian-Americans in the United States of America and the world.

## "TESLA NATION" IN CHICAGO

At another screening last December, "Tesla Nation" was shown during the Serbian Movie Festival at the AMC Theatre in Rosemont, Chicago, IL. The Festival was opened by Milos Bikovic, one of the most famous Serbian actors today who is in the "The Balkan Line" by Andrey Volgin. Once again as screenwriter, I introduced the movie and spoke of its content when welcoming the audiences in two theaters at AMC. When the first Serbian immigrants came to the "new land," they brought not only their talents, readiness to sacrifice their lives for ideals, but also their souls. Their souls are what distinguished and raised them above others. Today, our soul is the magnet that connects Serbs in different countries and continents. Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic, who was also an immigrant, described Serbian-American history with the following words: "It is all an amazing epopee begun by those Serbian farmers who escaped from tyranny and came to this country of freedom not to enjoy, but to become more capable to carry worries of Saint Sava and helping their families in the homeland to carry

out the same worries and thus for more than 100 years until today."

Through the lives of Nikola Tesla and Mihajlo I. Pupin, you can introduce stories of other distinguished Serbian-Americans such as Walt Bogdanich, Gordana Vunjak-Novakovic, Peter Bogdanovich, Karl Malden, Helen Delich-Bentley, Steve Tesich, Milana Bizic, John Martich, David Vuich, Branko Terzic, Branko Tupanjac, Obrad Kesic, Alex Machaskee, Michael Djordjevic, and Dr. Nenad Janicijevic among others. The audience was delighted with the movie.

The movie was archived in the Permanent Core of the Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Los Angeles, CA; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Harvard University Library; Columbia University Library; Yale University Library; Princeton University Library; Hilandar Research Library at the Ohio State University; New York University Library (Elmer Holmes Bobst Library); Hillman Library at the University of Pittsburgh; Duquesne University Library; University of Pennsylvania Libraries (Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center); National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg in Russia; Moscow State Institute of International Relations Library (MGIMO University), Moscow, Russia; Bodleian Libraries at Oxford University, the United Kingdom; Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria, Egypt; Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France; and others.



Ambassador Djerdj Matkovic, from Republic of Serbia



David Vuich, member of the "Apollo Space Program"



Director Mirkovic, left, with H.E. Milan Milanovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations, Milana M. Milosh, Secretary of the SNF Executive Board, Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the SNF, and George L. Milosh, in front of the United Nations in New York



Director Zeljko Mirkovic and Screenwriter Milos Rastovic with professors and students at Harvard University



Screenwriter Milos Rastovic, right, speaking at the Serbian Movie Festival in Chicago



Zeljko Mirkovic, left, with actor Jack Dimich and Milos Rastovic on way to the Landmark Theater E Street Cinema



Actor Jack Dimich, left, with Milos Rastovic and Zeljko Mirkovic