

SND HOSTS IMPORTANT GATHERING



SND President Dragan Vujosevic



H.E. Nikola Selakovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

by Milos Rastovic

On January 8, 2022, the Serbian National Defense of America hosted a meeting in its Home Office with representatives of some Serbian-American organizations, distinguished individuals from the Chicago area, and representatives of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. H.E. Nikola Selakovic, Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arnaud Gouillon, Director of the Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region, and H.E. General Counsel Damjan Jovic were present. Representing the Serb National Federation

was Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator.

SND President Dragan Vujosevic warmly welcomed the guests. In his opening remarks, he stressed the importance of strengthening the ties between the Serbian-American Diaspora and the Homeland. "The SND was founded by Mihajlo I. Pupin, Serbian-American Scientist and Inventor in 1914. Pupin sent 20,000 Serbian-American volunteers to defend Serbia against the Austro-Hungary invasion in World War I. He collected \$550,000 and delivered it to Serbia in 1917, including military equipment

and medical supplies..." He also mentioned Pupin's contribution to protecting the Serbian borders at the Paris Peace Conference thank to his relationship with US President Woodrow Wilson. He concluded by saying that Nikola Tesla was the best Serbian scientist who came to the United States, but Mihajlo I. Pupin was the best Serbian benefactor.

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From left are H.E. Damjan Jovic, H.E. Nikola Selakovic, and Mr. Arnaud Gouillon



SND President Vujosevic presenting a recognition to Arnaud Gouillon

"Serbian World" Establishing Cultural Diplomacy

by Milos Rastovic

When I attended the January 8 event hosted by the Serbian National Defense in Chicago, as Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the Serb National Federation, I introduced the project "Serbian World – Speak Serbian So the Whole World Can Understand You" in front of all the distinguished guests. The project's main idea, "Serbian World," is to systematically promote Serbian culture in the United States and the world by establishing a department of Cultural Diplomacy within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

Raising awareness of Serbian culture can improve or change the image of Serbia through the eyes of the public. Joseph Nye, Political Scientist from Harvard University, formulated "soft power" as a

tool by using culture, science, and sport to promote a country and its national interest. The effect of «soft power» influences public opinion and diplomacy.

Promotion of the Serbian culture should be one of the priorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Smaller nations by number can compete with larger ones through culture, science, and sport. Therefore, the project "Serbian World" should be the joint effort of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, State institutions of the Republic of Serbia, non-

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profit organizations and societies, the Serbian Diaspora throughout the world, distinguished individuals, and others who are interested in promotion and developing the Serbian culture in the United States and the world.



Milos Rastovic presenting a gift to Arnaud Gouillon, Director of the Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region



Milos Rastovic presenting a gift to H.E. Nikola Selakovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia



SNF Board of Directors Meeting — July 17, 2021

Location: SNF Home Office
920 Poplar Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Attendees:

President Dane Medich
1st Vice President Ted Potkonjak
2nd Vice President Brian Pyevich
Past President John Martich
Secretary Milana M. Milosh
Board members at large: Cheryl Leydig,
Sasha Pribich, Zoran Zlojutro, Milan
Martich, Tijana Raketich

Absent: Brothers Greg Volitich and Michael Borkovich

After leading the Board in the reading of the Lord's Prayer, President Medich called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.

Minutes of the February 21, 2021, meeting was presented via email prior to the meeting. Brother Milan Martich made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Brother Pyevich seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence

Sister Milosh reported that no correspondence was received. However, moving forward Sister Milosh will partner with President Medich and the Home Office staff to ensure that electronic communication sent to the President that predicate Board of Directors involvement and/or awareness will be saved and forwarded to Sister Milosh.

Financial Report - Brother DePersis

Board members received the treasurer's report via email prior to the board meeting. Brother Nick DePersis presented the following in the absence of Brother Volitich.
- 2020 Summary of operations.
- April and May 2021 Financial Summary
- Financial operations Report on 2020 year of operation

After a discussion and questions and answers provided by Brother Depersis, the following action items were identified for the Home Office staff:

1. A list of who is receiving the commissions so that we can see who is producing new insurance and annuities. Sister Slavkovic will provide to the Executive Committee.
2. Year to date "new annuity" money received.

Sister Slavkovic will provide 3. Brother Depersis will provide an estimated forecast of income and expenses for the balance of 2021.

After reviewing the Financial Operations Report on 2020 Operations in more detail, Brother Zlojutro inquired if the SNF should assess a potential acquisition for our Savez. Sister Milosh will add this topic to the next Executive Committee agenda.

Brother DePersis emphasized that our goal is to add \$ 5 M annually in new annuity income in 2021.

Sister Milosh motioned to accept the treasurers report as submitted. Sister Raketich seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

Committee Reports

- Athletic Committee Sister Raketich – the 2021 Basketball tournament was well received and a success from our Canton, Ohio, lodge and community. Positive feedback was received relative to all aspects of the event. Thank you, Canton.

Sister Milosh motioned that we move to executive session to discuss leadership development. Brother Pyevich seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Brother Medich motioned that we end executive session. Sister Milosh seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Sister Raketich reported that we have 191 golfers for the Summer Golf Tournament. The tournament has reached capacity!

Membership Committee – Sister Milosh has stepped back as the committee chair. Sister Milosh provided names of the members from which we may be able to identify a new chairperson. Brother Pyevich recommended that our new Sales Director, when identified, may desire to be instrumental in selection and leadership of this committee.

Home Office Update – Brother Medich reported that he has spoken with multiple board members at large about the consistency in service levels provided to our membership. Sister Milosh will partner with the home office beginning in August on service levels and expectations, staff development, and goal setting.

Scholarship Committee: Sister Slavkovic reports that the home office staff is currently assembling packets of the applications received to provide to the Scholarship Committee. The deadline was extended to June 30th for the scholarships.

Building Update – Brother Martich recognized the following people for their efforts in preparing for our move:

- Sisters Milosh and Leydig painted the downstairs file room. Sister Milosh partnered with Sister Slavkovic in organization of files in our new policy file room.
- Brothers Milan Martich, John Martich, and Greg Volitich had 8,500 pounds of metal removed from the building.
- Our computer server and internet are in place and functioning well.
- Kitchen needs upgraded. We will do so once we have our occupancy permit in place.
- Occupancy permit: The Electrical inspection was done twice. By end of month, we should have our permit.

Sales Director Criteria— Brothers Pyevich and Potkonjak

Sales Director: Proposal sent out and they received input. Brother DePersis provided a sample employment agreement. It is in alignment with our handbook. Sister Allison Bilak provided excellent input and guidance.

The Committee will be moving forward on a National Sales Director Search
- Brother Potkonjak committee chair
- Brother Pyevich, Committee co-chair
- Committee members: Brothers Volitich and Zoljutro, Sisters Leydig and Pribich
- Sister Pribich will contact Sister Bilak for additional support.

Following this discussion, it was agreed that the Board members would benefit from a "meeting readiness packet" to be provided at least one week prior to each Board Meetings. Sisters Milosh and Slavkovich will create the packet.

New Business

- Bid for 2022 Midwinter golf- Phoenix is only bid.
- Brother Milan Martich motioned to award Phoenix the Midwinter Golf Tournament. Sister Raketich seconded the motion. Motion carried Unanimously.

The Midwinter will be held February 23 – 27, 2022

- Social Media Report was submitted by Sister Brnjilovic.
- Digitization of the *American Srbobran* will be launched in November 2021; the month to send out all of our invoices.
- Price Options
 - Options of paper or digital. If you get the paper version you get the digital version. If you don't want the paper version, cost for digital only is \$5.99 annual.
 - Action item: We must digitize the payment process. Deadline October 1 to digitize process.

Cyber Space Solutions, Ivan Naumov has expressed an interest in expanding his relationship to the SNF. No discussion moved forward with action items on this.

Sister Pribich asked for clarity on our cyber security risk, phishing emails, etc., in the past George Lopata, a consultant for the DePersis Group. Conducted and finalized a Cyber Security Assessment and implementation of Cyber Security Measures for the SNF. This policy was provided to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as per their request.

- What do you we do?
- How secure are we?
- Should we have an Annual Training?
- Sister Leydig inquired if we have a contract with our current IT provider, John Daniel, and Associates. Are we paying him? Should we be paying him? Was he included in our vendor approval process?
- What is our position on potential acquisitions?

President Medich began to present a potential Contract for our printing/copy services. Sister Milosh recommended that we move this agenda item to the Executive Committee.

Next Meeting:

September 25, 2021, in Pittsburgh
Final Meeting of the year schedule for December 11, 2021.

Brother Zoljutro motioned to Adjourn. Sister Leydig seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Milana M. Milosh
Secretary

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H.E. Jovic, General Consul of Chicago, said that the visit of H.E. Selakovic to Chicago is historical because it has never happened that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia spends Christmas with members of the Serbian-American Diaspora. This is the longest Minister's staying in a foreign country while serving as Minister. He accentuated that the door of the Serbian General Consulate in Chicago is open to everybody.

H.E. Nikola Selakovic, Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressed honor to spend the Christmas with the Serbian-American Diaspora: "Christmas is usually spent with family, and you should not go anywhere to be a guest. I feel that I am not a guest here because I came to my people." During his first year serving as a Minister of Foreign Affairs, he appointed General Consul Jovic to the General Consulate in Chicago. His job is to keep contact with members of the Serbian-

American Diaspora and help solve their problems: "Serbs in the Diaspora and Region are one of the priorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. Our biggest Diaspora in the world lives here." He discussed the economic achievements of Serbia as well as the great potential and capital of the Serbian Diaspora. He added that he spoke with over 90 foreign ministries and 10 Presidents of countries in the world, and they asked about the success of Serbia. He answered that Serbia succeeded

by working together: "Serbia became the country with the fastest development in the region, and we saved peace. The direct foreign investments in Serbia were \$4 billion last year, the greatest number in Serbian history. Serbia is building ten new highways now. In February, it will launch the Belgrade-Novı Sad high-speed railway with a speed over 200km/h, and traveling will last only 27 minutes. In addition, 230 new factories have been opened in the last seven years. In March, we will have a second factory