

Croatian Fraternal Union of America
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Zajedničar

FRATERNALIST

Sports and Cultural Activities Abound Summer Calendar Filled With Festive CFU Events

By: Edward W. Pazo/National President

PITTSBURGH, PA - Croatian Fraternal Union, for the better part of eighty years, has sponsored and encouraged member participation in sports and Croatian cultural events. Long more than just an organization to buy your life insurance and saving plans with, our society has made great efforts over the years to develop a varied sports program for member participation.

Additionally, the National Executive Officers have traditionally supported various activities that served to promote, preserve perpetuate our shared Croatian Heritage.

Most notably, we list the Croatian Singing Societies which were prevalent in the early days following our inception through to the CFU Junior and Adult Tamburitza Federations, the CFU Cultural tour and other events in which Croatian folklore ensembles were hosted here in the United States and Canada.

The CFU National Bowling Tournament, the granddaddy of CFU Sports Tournaments, just concluded its 83rd consecutive year of drawing together CFU members to the hardwood for CFU glory and bragging rights. Host for this most recent bowling tournament was St. George Lodge 354 of Cokeburg, Pennsylvania who rolled the red carpet out for all members in attendance. Sister Bernadette Luketich-Sikaras, our colleague in the National administration, and Brother Derek Hohn, CFU Director of Cultural Programs, did an outstanding job in making sure all bowlers and guests were taken care in true Croatian style.

We were pleased to meet with and greet CFU members from Ontario, the Midwestern States and our own Western Pennsylvania bowlers. This tournament, while smaller in size due to the reduction in the number of bowlers nationwide, remains an excellent opportunity for CFU members to join together in a spirit of fraternalism and harmony.

Tamburitza music filled the weekend with the ladies of Sarena entertaining on Saturday at the alleys and in the evening at a social at the host hotel. On Sunday during the teams bowling, Pittsburgh's own, Stari Prijatelji played throughout the afternoon while the members knocked down pins with thunderous accuracy.

As we look forward into June, we anxiously await the 42nd National CFU Golf Tournament which will be hosted by our St. Lawrence CFU Lodge 13 of Steelton, Pennsylvania. The officers and members of St. Lawrence are active in all CFU sports activities and have proven to be excellent hosts in the past. We are confident that this year will be no exception as the chosen course is once again the links at Dauphin Highlands with all social activities at the spacious and comfortable St. Lawrence Croatian Home. President and Secretary/Treasurer of the Lodge, Scott Kuren and Virginia Michtich, have promised to make all golfers feel most welcome during their stay in the Steelton area during the June 8-10, 2017 time period.

All CFU members are well aware of our fabulous children's music festival sponsored by the Croatian Fraternal Union and the Junior Cultural Federation. For the past fifty years the CFU and Federation have staged a simply magnificent Croatian folklore program through the participation of our affiliated junior tamburitza ensembles. Last year's festival, the Golden Jubilee, was held in the city of Chicago to the delight of thousands of CFU members and guests. We were honored to have then Archbishop and now Cardinal Blasé Cupich, leader of the Chicago area Catholic diocese, celebrate holy mass with all in attendance.

For this year's festival, we look forward once again to witnessing the cultural programs of each of the fifteen (15) participating ensembles at the downtown Hilton Hotel in Cleveland, Ohio, over the period June 30 through July 2nd. The directors and children practice their songs and dances in earnest prior to their big performance at festival. We extend our sincere gratitude to them and applaud their efforts in preserving Croatian folklore here in North America.

Next year's festival is scheduled for Croatia and we are confident that it will be equally as successful as the previous six (6) CFU Junior Tamburitza Festivals held at Lisinski Hall in Zagreb. Fifteen junior ensembles have indicated their intent on participating in this special festival in Croatia. We look forward to working with Hrvatska Matica Isejlenika (Croatian Homeland Foundation) in order to make the festival memorable for all of the children and guests while visiting our beautiful homeland of Croatia. This event is an exceptional opportunity for our children and young adults to visit the homeland of their ancestors and to see firsthand the wonders of Croatia. Sretan Put!

When we continue looking into the calendar for July, we are pleased to report that the second staging of the newly commissioned CFU National Soccer Tournament is scheduled for July 22-23, 2017 in Washington, Pennsylvania with our CFU Lodge in Cokeburg once again answering the fraternal call to service by accepting the duties of hosting this CFU National Tournament. CFU Cultural Director Derek Hohn is working on, as this article is being written, the arrangements and teams that plan on participating in this fun tournament of "European Football". We encourage any lodge officer or member who has an interest in entering a team in this tournament to contact Brother Hohn at the CFU home office in the very near future.

Rounding out the month of July is the Joe Rady Golf Tournament, dedicated to a fine fraternalist and true sportsman from the annals of CFU history. The tournament is traditionally held in late July and is sponsored by a Midwestern CFU Lodge from Indiana, Illinois, Missouri or Nebraska. This year's Joe Rady will be hosted by Ss. Peter and Paul CFU Lodge 101 of Omaha, Nebraska, with James "Jimmy the Croatian" Kresnik leading the efforts of the host committee. An avid sportsman who attends numerous CFU and Croatian events throughout the year, Jimmy and his fellow Lodge 101 members will undoubtedly ensure that all golfers and guests enjoy their participation in the tournament and their visit to Omaha.

The CFU Cultural Tour featuring TS Sarmeri and female vocalist Vlatka Kopic-Perkovic TENA will once again fill the CFU cultural calendar during the latter half of August into September. At the present time, a schedule of appearances is being confirmed for this talented group of musicians and singers and we encourage our members to refer to future issues of the Zajednicar in order to attend a concert near their respective location. This tour has been a mainstay on the CFU Croatian cultural promotional agenda for years and is enjoyed by thousands of CFU members and friends throughout Canada and the United States.

Concluding the cultural calendar for year 2017, we are pleased to recognize the upcoming 31st CFU Adult Tamburitza Festival that will be held in Lake Buena Vista, Florida over the November 2-4, 2017 weekend. The Lake Buena Vista Hilton, directly adjacent to Disney Springs entertainment complex, is the chosen venue for this edition of our annual Tamfest.

We are encouraged by the number of Croatian Tamburitza member ensembles that have indicated their intent on participating in this year's festival and once again look forward to enjoying the Croatian folklore talents of our senior musicians, singers and dancers. We certainly appreciate the efforts of all those members who take part in this festival and thank them for their love of our Croatian culture evidenced by their dedication in learning new songs and dances each and every year.

Our society is certainly blessed to have such an active membership base that participates in the rich and varied social, sports and cultural programs sponsored by Croatian Fraternal Union of America. We are the "Society that Cares". Kapa vam dolje, Sestre i Braco!