



NEWSLETTER

CROATIAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

December 2005



Golf Tournament Benefits CSF

Zlatko Vasilj known in the Croatian community as “Big Joe,” with the help of his son Marko, held a very successful annual golf tournament at the Whitney Country Club near Sacramento this past June. Over 175 golfers participated in the tournament and competed for various prizes. While Zlatko has been holding the golf tournament for a number of years, this year was very special for the CSF – it was held to benefit the Croatian Scholarship Fund!

Zlatko was born in Medjugorje, Hercegovina and came to the United States as a young man. He arrived in the Sacramento area in 1969 where he settled and became a respected member of the Croatian community. Zlatko was always willing to participate and support the Croatian cause, especially during the Croatian homeland war. He started a successful auto body repair business from which he recently retired. He is still involved and helps his brother Jozo and son Marko run the business. We are glad that now Zlatko has more time for his beloved golf course.

Big Joe attended the CSF Dinner Dance at the Croatian American Cultural Center (CACC) last April. He learned more about the CSF program and its various fundraising events and wanted to participate. He was particularly impressed with the organization’s commitment to helping young

students in Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina to attend a university in Croatia. He knew that with a college education, they would be the future leaders of Croatia.

Zlatko decided that his annual golf tournament was the perfect way to further CSF’s cause. With the help of his son, Marko, he raised over \$16,000 from the tournament. After covering expenses, he donated some of the funds to St. Mary’s Catholic Church in San Jose and a most generous \$10,000 to the Croatian Scholarship Fund.

Nothing is more important to the future of our homeland than the education of the next generation of its leaders. Donors such as Zlatko Vasilj are making an immeasurable difference in that future.

Thank you Big Joe and Marko for all your hard work in organizing and executing a very successful event, and for your generous contribution to the CSF program. You are playing a most important role in the future of your homeland.

Special thanks also, to CSF past president Gary Allen who represented the CSF in the tournament and to CACC leaders Mike Spalj and Mile Zupan for encouraging support for the tournament.

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**CROATIAN SCHOLARSHIP
FUND**

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*The Croatian Scholarship Fund
is a non-profit organization
that seeks to develop leaders in
Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina
by providing university
scholarships to outstanding
young men and women.
Scholarship winners are selected
based on academic excellence,
financial need, leadership
and geographic diversity.*

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the new president of CSF I wish to thank the many Croatian Americans who have supported the CSF throughout this year, as well as for the past 15 years of our work. A special and sincere "Thank You" to the many benefactors, contributors, sponsors and others who have given their support for a noble cause, to help provide scholarships for the education of young students in Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina.

A heartfelt thank you goes to my fellow CSF officers for the work they have done throughout the years to keep the organization going. CSF is one of very few Croatian organizations that function with clear goals in mind, are non-political, and have integrity in all they do. This has been our vision and determination. It has guided us for the last 15 years since the CSF inception and will continue to help us function and support our mission.

We have been both blessed and very lucky this year, and wish to express a grateful thank you to the Croatian Cultural Center in Sacramento for their continued support of the annual dinner/dance, the proceeds of which were generously given to the CSF, and to Mr. Zlatko "Big Joe" Vasilj for donating the proceeds from his annual golf tournament to the CSF. Both have been very generous in helping the CSF and we look forward to their continued support.

The Board of Directors and a Student Selection Committee have selected 12 new students for the 2005/2006 school year. They are bright young students in many academic fields, working on pursuing their education. This year's six graduates are ready to enter the work force in Croatia, and will be contributing to a free enterprise system that will allow them a better quality of life and a brighter future.

In summary, we need your continued support and contributions because without this support many of these young capable Croatian students would not be able to pursue their dream. We can look forward to them becoming future leaders of Croatia.

Nina Jurjevic, President



*Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year!*

Cestit Bozic i Sretna Nova Godina!

Scholarship Recipients Share Their Stories

by Dijana Zilic

My name is Dijana Zilic. I was born in Konjic, a small multi-national city in Bosnia and Hercegovina in 1975. I lived there happily for seventeen years with my mother, father and brother. I had always been a good pupil and after elementary school I studied math, physics and computer science at my home town high school.

But my happy childhood and education were cut short in 1992 when the war started in Bosnia and Hercegovina. During the summer my father died suddenly from a heart attack. My brother went to Zagreb to continue his education and my mother and I stayed in Konjic which was exposed to bombs every day from the Serbian army. Life in the town was at a standstill; people were dying every day from the shelling; factories and schools closed. Things became even worse the next year when the war between Croats and Muslims started. After several months in military encirclement, my mother and I had to leave our house in Konjic and go to Zagreb as refugees. After 17 months I returned to school and attended high school in Zagreb. The only income my family had was a survivors' pension from my father (about \$100 per month), which was miserably below the normal standard of living in Croatia. My brother had to quit his schooling in order to work and

by Dario Nikic Cakar

I was born 22 years ago in the small Slavonian town of Nova Gradiska. My father was a laborer and my mother a housewife. From an early age, I learned what hard work and commitment means to me. I've realized that everything was achievable, every goal I set could be manageable if I only worked hard. My motto was, "I can do it!"

During my high school days I discovered my interest in politics – in both forms: theory and practice. I started to read a lot of books concerning the political aspect of our everyday lives. I was always willing to know more, and soon this became my passion. It seemed logical for me to go to university, to the School of Political Science in Zagreb. Of course, money was a problem in realizing this dream.

Then, completely unexpectedly, I found out about the Croatian Scholarship Fund's contest published in one of Croatia's daily newspapers. Two months later I received

my mother found employment as a cleaning lady in the rich houses of Zagreb. Through my high school, I learned about the Croatian Scholarship Fund. I applied and received a scholarship for my future education and in 1995, I finished high school as one of the five best pupils of the year.

I then went on to study physics at the School of Science at the University of Zagreb. My mother and I, my brother, his wife and their baby now shared a rented apartment. With regular attendance and a high grade average I received a fellowship of \$100 a month which was more than welcome. In 2002 I graduated in experimental solid state physics and I was employed at Rudjer Boskovic Institute in Zagreb.

Today I am a research assistant in the laboratory for magnetic resonance, where I am working on my Ph.D. in molecular magnetism. I also work as a teaching assistant at the University of Veterinary Medicine, where I teach medicine physics. Last year, I bought my own apartment (of course with a 30-year mortgage) so finally I am no longer a sub-tenant. My life today is much better and I am very grateful for all the help I received, and especially for my CSF scholarship.

CSF's scholarship. From that time, I've become the happiest man on earth! These were great things for me!

CSF scholarship has meant a lot to me during my study. My family was having financial troubles in the early days of my university life, and help from all those lovely people involved in CSF became priceless for us. My brother was a student also, and with the average income our father was receiving, it was very hard to finance two students in different towns and to live a normal life.



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Scholarship Recipients *continued*

The CSF scholarship was a salvation for us. First of all, without it I wouldn't be able to go to university. It's not all about money in life, but my case shows that money can sometimes be crucial. And because of this financial aspect of your unselfish help, I want to THANK YOU!

From the beginning of my study I've worked hard to learn and to gain as much knowledge as possible. I realized that only with knowledge could I make my way up.

And now after four years of studying I can proudly say that I'm one of the best students of my generation. This hard and committed work was recognized by others – colleagues and professors.

I discovered that CSF was founded to financially help young women and men in Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina to build their dreams. I realized that the greatness and significance of the Croatian Scholarship Fund and all people involved in it is not only in financial help, although the money is important. What makes me proud of CSF is actually a CARING. It's an exceptional feeling to know that there are people on another part of the globe who care about me. There are Croatians in a foreign country who have succeeded there, who have built their homes and raised families far away from Croatia, who live and die there. And these fellow countrymen of mine unselfishly sacrifice their time, their hard-earned money to help someone

by Petrana Valjan (Prskalo), as written to CSF Student Liaison, Vesna Brekalo.

Warmest greetings to you and the foundation. I am happy to tell you that I graduated on July 15 and for the past five months I have been working for Arox in Ljubaska, as a commercial purchaser trainee.

While at school I worked part-time in a Medjugorje souvenir shop but even before I graduated, I got a job in my chosen profession that took me to the Spoga fair in Kolenu, Germany, where I attended tax seminars. In January, our new tax law will take effect and although I don't work in accounting, we all must be ready for the

they don't know and probably will never meet. In these ideas lies the real magnitude of the CSF organization. I'm extremely proud and deeply touched to be chosen as one of the CSF scholarship students. Through us students, you express your genuine love for your real homeland, Croatia. Helping us succeed, you greatly contribute to Croatia's success! This makes my life richer and gives me wings to fly higher. I would like to say THANK YOU again.

I would like to express my special gratitude to my sponsor, Ms. Tatijana Grgich. She has financially helped my study during the last three years. All these positive things I say about CSF are incarnated in the person of Ms. Grgich. Every time I think about CSF, I think of it as the person of Ms. Grgich. She cares, she helps and she unselfishly sacrifices. THANK YOU, Ms. Grgich!

Finally, let me say that I'm at the end of my university education. There are reasonable chances for me to stay and work at the School of Political Science, and this would be a great reward for all of my work during the last four years. Looking forward, I can see that CSF has left a deep impact on my life. Inspired by your example, I want to help to all those young students who have dreams and ambitions, to realize their goals. The CSF experience changed my motto. Now I'm saying: "I'm doing it!"

passing era and be aware of the changes. You may visit our web site www.arox1994.com.

In these few months I have learned a lot and every day I am learning more. I hope that getting my diploma will not be the end of my institutional education and that I will get more chances to evolve as an individual.

There is more good news in my life! I got married on August 13 and my new last name is Valjan.

Heartfelt thanks to everyone.

George Kumparak Memorial Scholarship Fund

CSF has established a special scholarship fund in memory of our friend George Kumparak, who passed away in November, 2004. The fund was started by many of George's friends and will continue with support from Mrs. George Kumparak and the CSF Board members.

We have selected a special student, Marijana Babic, to receive this scholarship in George's name. She was born in Split, which is close to George's hometown of Zaostrog. Marijana's story is among the "2005/06 Scholarship Recipients" on pages 6-7.

Bill Belichick

by Robert Bronzan



Superbowl's Croatian Coach

Having guided the New England Patriots to three NFL Superbowl championships in four years, Bill Belichick is regarded as the leagues' premier coach of the past decade. Though millions of football fans know his record, few are aware of his family background.

His grandparents were immigrants from Croatia who settled in Youngtown, Ohio, where they struggled to survive the great depression. A son, Steve, was born there. Their true family name was Bilicic but when his first grade teacher had difficulty spelling and pronouncing his name, she changed it to Belichick.

Steve played football in high school. When he received a scholarship to Western Reserve, it changed his life. He chose coaching football to be his life's vocation. His dedication to that goal led him to serve on the football staffs of Vanderbilt University, University of North Carolina and The U. S. Naval Academy. In

all, he coached for 60 years, 33 of which were at the Naval Academy.

In 1952 a son, Bill, was born. At four or five years of age, he started watching his father coach and as he grew older, his passion for football increased. He was at his father's side for hundreds of hours observing the breakdown of game film. His cherished reward was to accompany his father to scout opponents.

At Annapolis High School, Bill was the starting fullback. It was unlikely he would be granted a scholarship at institutions that played at the highest level. The father and son agreed that he should attend a good, small private college. Upon graduation, Bill enrolled at Andover. There he met Steve Sorota, a son of Polish immigrants who was the football coach; a title he held for 41 years. Mr. Sorota's coaching philosophy, methods, and character were closely observed by the aspiring coach.

As graduation loomed, Bill Belichick was concerned that he had little prospect of employment as a football coach. At the suggestion of a friend, he applied for a job with the Baltimore Colts as virtually an unpaid assistant. This was the opening chapter to his amazing career.

The life's story of Bill Belichick is similar to many others whose Croatian grandparents, with little or no finances or education, immigrated to the U.S. to provide a better life for their children. Overcoming many obstacles and hardships, they fulfilled their hopes. The first generation of children born in the U.S. inherited their parents' determination to become all they could be. Today's third generation of children are successful in business, professions, technology, education, and virtually all other fields of endeavor requiring intellect, perseverance and aspiration.

Vice President Honored at Sugar Bowl Reunion



CSF Vice President **Dr. Joe Cindrich**, a former Pennsylvania All-State and All American guard joined former University of

Pittsburgh football teammates for the Pitt Panthers 50th Sugar Bowl Reunion on October 8th at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh. Joe played at Pitt in 1953-54 before joining the US Marines and later played for the Parris Island Marines before receiv-

ing a serious knee injury that halted a professional career in pro football.

Joe was honored by the invitation from his former teammates. The Sugar Bowl Team was introduced on the field before the game between Pitt and the University of Cincinnati. His wife Karen joined him and they both enjoyed the weekend of celebration.

A first generation Croatian-American, Joe has been very active with his leadership and support by helping young Croatians to pursue an education in Croatia while serving on the CSF Board of Directors

for over twelve years. He has also been a leader with the National Federation of Croatian Americans (NFCA) which he helped to establish in 1994 and later served as the president.

CSF greatly appreciates the many contributions Joe has made toward the success of its program over the years. Joe knows first-hand the importance of an education, having been both a teacher and football coach. He is dedicated to helping our Croatian students seek a better quality of life so they may become future leaders of the country.

2005/06 Scholarship Recipients



Marijana Babic, *Economics*
Marijana was born in Split. She has three younger siblings who are attending high school and elementary school. She loves to speak other languages and is fluent in English and German. She has participated in various competitions on regional and state levels and has achieved positive results.



Mislav Gogic, *Law*
Mislav was born in Split and lives with his parents and two siblings. His hobbies are tennis, singing, composing and playing the piano. He is a member of a church choir, *Gospe od Zdravlja*, that has performed all over Croatia. His desire is to be a lawyer like his mother, who unable to find employment.

Vjeran Filipovic, *Management*

Vjeran was born in Sarajevo and currently lives in Vares with his parents and two brothers. During the war he emigrated to Germany for three years where he attended grade school and learned to speak and write German. He is a member of various youth groups and the primary school coordinated English language summer school program in Vares, sponsored by the University of Denver.



Mihaela Homjak, *Philosophy*

Mihaela was born in Pula and has an older brother. She comes from a divorced family and after her mother passed away, her older brother became her guardian. Even with her traumatic family situation, she persevered and involved herself totally in her studies and positive extra curricular activities. She would like to study architecture.



Ilija Rados, *Architecture*
Ilija was born in Zenica. He lives with his mother and has three older siblings. His father was killed in the last war. He loves math and has participated in numerous state-level competitions with positive results.



Josip Kocur, *Medicine*

Josip lives with his mother and maternal grandparents in a small village near Osijek. He has successfully competed in regional math and history competitions during his elementary and high school years. In addition to his studies, he is very active with youth organizations through his church, and is a member of the tamburica group, *Braca Banas*.

Dalibor Funtak,

Maritime Engineering

Dalibor was born in Varazdin but lived in a small village called Ljubescici. He has a younger brother who is currently attending high school. Dalibor is interested in maritime engineering. His mother is the sole support of the family.



Magdalena Matijevic, *Teaching*

Magdalena lives in Busovaca with her parents and three siblings. Ever since she was a little girl she had a desire to speak other languages and her goal is to become a professor of English.





Marijana Milkovic, Law
 Marijana was born in Dubrovnik and lives with her mother and two younger sisters. Her father is deceased. Their only income is from renting their house to a small business. Marijana has participated in numerous competitions and achieved many awards. Her ambition is to become a lawyer.



Kristijan Raic, Maritime Engineering
 Kristijan was born in Stolac, B&H and still lives there with his parents and four other siblings. Math, physics and computers are his favorite subjects, in which he has successfully participated in many state competitions. Kristijan loves music. He sings with the church choir and plays the tamburica.

Ana Tecic, Medicine

Ana was born in Travnik, then lived in Uskoplje, B&H. During the war her parents sent her to live in Zagreb with her grandparents, where she attended the first year of school. After moving back to Uskoplje, she again went to Zagreb to complete high school. She has been actively involved with the Seeds of Peace organization and participated in numerous summer camps where youths from various countries gather and discuss conflict resolutions.



Ana Marija Flegar, Natural Science

Ana Marija was born in Pazin. She lives with her parents and a younger sister in a one-bedroom apartment. She has competed in over 50 math and physics competitions during her elementary and high school years and achieved many awards. Her desire was to become a swimmer but since that sport is too expensive to pursue, she has trained and played basketball for eight years.



**CSF . . . DEVELOPING CROATIA'S LEADERS
 FOR THE 21st CENTURY**



Coming Events

For more detailed information about these and other events, please visit our web site at www.croatianscholarship.org

SATURDAY, APRIL 1

Seventh Annual Dinner Dance
 Croatian American Cultural Center in Sacramento

SATURDAY, APRIL 8

A Special Wine & Hors'd Oeuvre Fundraising Party
 At Quarry Lake Estate, the home of John and Lydia Vidovich

“What happened to CSF’s annual dinners in the Bay Area?”

Some of you have been asking, “Why doesn’t CSF have dinners in the Bay Area any more?” We want to share with you some of the dilemmas and frustrations we face in organizing such an event. We would love to have these events but the cost associated with them in the Bay Area is very high, for us and for attendees as well. After all the expenses are paid, CSF raises very little money, and sometimes only breaks even.

We are looking into various ways to have fundraisers in the area. One way is to have events in private homes where the cost is low, such as the wine and hors d’oeuvre party that was held at the Vidovich’s estate. If you have a large home or know someone who does, and would be interested in hosting a fundraiser, please contact Nina Jurjevic, (408) 323-9370.

Help Support CSF

Wouldn’t you like to help CSF develop leaders in Croatia? The Executive Board invites you, your company, or your organization to contribute in any of the following ways:

✓ CSF CONTRIBUTOR

Make a contribution to the general scholarship fund. It will be applied to general operations and scholarships. Any contribution is welcome and will automatically make you a CSF member.

✓ CSF BENEFACTOR

Support one student for an academic year by donating \$1,200. You may designate the geographic area from which the CSF will select the most qualified student.

✓ ADOPT-A-STUDENT

Make a 4-year commitment of \$4,800 to ensure college funding for a student, which may be paid annually or monthly. You may designate the geographic area from which the CSF will select the most qualified student.

✓ ENDOWMENT FUND

Your contribution to the CSF Endowment Fund will be invested in a permanent fund from which only the interest will be expended. Contributions of any amount are welcome.

The CSF is a non-political non-profit organization, and all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For your convenience, CSF now accepts VISA and MasterCard.

Please take a moment to fill out the response card below. Thank you for your contribution to CSF!



CROATIAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND FUNDRAISING DRIVE

- CSF CONTRIBUTOR (any amount) \$ _____
- CSF BENEFACTOR – 1 Full Scholarship: \$1,200 \$ _____
- ADOPT-A-STUDENT – 4-year Scholarship: \$4,800
- \$100 monthly \$1,200 annually \$ _____
- CSF ENDOWMENT FUND (permanent fund, any amount) \$ _____

In Memory/Name of: _____

Check enclosed Credit Card: VISA MasterCard

Card _____ Exp. date _____

Signature _____

Please send to:

CSF

P.O. Box 290

San Ramon, CA 94583

For information call (925) 867-3768

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____

Thank you for your contribution to CSF!