

MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS

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Tapescripts**GREEN IMPULSES FROM VALJEVO***Attachment to nature in lifestyles and traditions of Valjevo***Chapter 1 - Yule Log**

by Stefan Radovanović, January 2004

Christmas is one of the best holidays in Serbia. It begins on the 6th of January. Everyone likes Christmas, so do I.

We celebrate this holiday in a circle of family. The day before Christmas we cut a yule log, which is mostly a log, stump, or a branch from an oak tree, and put it next to the door. The yule log is cut ceremoniously, in silence, before the sun appears in the east part of the horizon, as a sacrifice to the rising sun. Burning of the yule log and its sprinkling with wheat and coating with milk and honey, first of all serves to foster fertility and crop prosperity and good health, at the same time representing a transition from the old to new year.

The day before Christmas is called "Christmas Eve". In the evening our parents put presents in a sack with straw under the table. Then we sit under the table and start looking for presents in the sack, but we must peep like chicken.

On Christmas morning we cut the yule log into little peaces and put them in the fire. Then we say a prayer and go to our grandparents, who live in a village.

The first person who comes to our grandparents' house is a person called the "layer". He stirs up the fire with a poker, to produce lot of sparks, which symbolise prosperity and good health.

The symbols of Christmas are the yule log, straw, candle, corn, prunes, nuts, apples, and Christmas cake.

This is a symbol of Christmas too, a piglet on the spit, and this is a special little branch, which we eat for good health.

We put a dinar or a golden coin in the Christmas cake before baking. Then we break the cake and who finds the dinar, he will have luck for the whole year.

Last year I found the golden coin and I went to Switzerland in the summer. I would like my brother to find the golden coin this year.

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Chapter 2 Petnica Swimmer's Dream

by Katarina Vićentijević, spring 2004

7 km away from Valjevo, there is the village of Petnica with pools, old church, Petnica Science Centre and school.

This is Petnica Sports Centre.

The pools were made 20 years ago on several hectares of natural park with lawns, fields and the river Banja which flows there. There are facilities for basketball, mini football, volley-ball, handball and mini golf. Petnica Sports Centre also includes an olympic pool, half-size olympic pool for nonswimmers and two pools for children. Every summer there are over a thousand visitors: children, young people and older people who are lovers of swimming. Numerous guests are surprised when they see this “paradise on earth”.

In Petnica, owing to the pools, there is a Swimming and Water-pollo Club called “VALIS”. I’m member of this club. I have been training there for 3 years. My first teachers were my mother and older brother. The next one was the coach Snele, and now Bane and Bole. We have won many medals in competitions all around Serbia. Owing to swimming I have seen the places Ada, Jagodina, Krusevac, and Zrenjanin.

Our big problem is that we don’t have an indoor swimming pool for winter. Because of that we have to go to the spa Vrujci, which is 30 km away from Valjevo, almost every day. All people in “Valis” live for the day when the pool will be covered with a “balloon” covering, which costs 80.000 Euro. Such a balloon already exists in Subotica, and they say that it’s good. Still, people in Subotica must heat their water and we have naturally warm – thermal water, which has the temperature of 27 degrees C in winter! Valjevo and the world, please help us to realise our dream!

Chapter 3 Protector of Families and Crops

by Vlada Đuričić, February 2004

The Martyr Tryphon was born in Asia, from his early years the Lord granted him the power to cast out devils and to heal the ill. He once saved the inhabitants of his native city from starvation.

He also cast out the devil from the daughter of the Roman emperor Gordian. He was greatly rewarded by the emperor, but Tryphon gave everything he received to the poor.

When the emperor Decius entered upon the imperial throne, the saint was arrested and subjected to interrogation. He was fiercely tortured and finally, decapitated.

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The frescos represent St. Tryphon wearing plain clothes, with the sickle and the sheaf in one, and the crucifix and the vine in the other hand. He is the protector of crops. It is believed that if it is raining or snowing on this day, the whole year will be fruitful.

Chapter 4 Petnica Lake

by Predrag Milićević, spring 2004

Petnica lake is the biggest lake in the vicinity of Valjevo. The distance between the lake and the center of Valjevo is about five kilometers, and it presents a real paradise for lovers of nature.

Here we are, right at Petnica Lake.

The depth of the lake in the shore area is a half meter and in the deepest area 12 meters. Petnica lake abounds with a lot of different fish: carps, pikes, sheat-fish and many other kinds. Every year people stock the lake with fish and owing to that the lake is always full of fish. My friends and I almost always come to fish here. Competitions are often held on the lake. People from the whole Serbia come to participate in the competitions, to socialize and to relax in the beauty of nature.

This is my fishing gear.

It's interesting that when people come to fish with wobblers and when they lose them, the waves usually bring the wobblers back to a sandbank on which my friend and I always find a few.

The surroundings of the lake is overgrown with a forest in which all kinds of animals live. There are also birds such as storks, herons and sparrow-hawks. A friend of mine told me that now there is a large number of sparrow-hawks because in the past the population of mice was so big that the people had to bring the birds to reduce the population.

People also come to camp and to swim here because the water in summer is cool. Near the lake is the Petnica cave which was put in order last year by a land developer Vujić, and it became a sort of a tourist attraction. Very often in summer months people from many towns come to visit the cave.

For me every visit to Petnica lake is really relaxing and so I would like everyone who hasn't seen it to come and see for themselves the beauty surrounding our town.

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Chapter 5 The Emerald River

by Danilo Ristovski and Vljako Mihailović, spring 2004

One of the most beautiful canyons in Serbia is the canyon of the river Gradac, which lies south of the town of Valjevo. Local people know it very well, but it is not so well known among the general public of Serbia, except for ecologists and nature lovers. Owing to their efforts, the area of Gradac is protected by the state.

The river Gradac rises here and empties out into the River Kolubara. Gradac is about 20 km long.

It is also rich in animal species which are rarely found in other areas of Serbia, such as otters, grey partridges, horned vipers and brown trout. Its water is so clean and full of oxygen and plancton that there are two trout farms on its course, which provide healthy food to restaurants in Belgrade and other towns in Serbia.

Gradac also has its enemies – irresponsible local people who illegally dump their garbage along its banks. Luckily more and more citizens of Valjevo are becoming aware of the preciousness of this river, and they also give their contribution to its protection by educating their children to look after it as common treasure of all the people of Valjevo.

This is the dam.. It's a nice place to swim. It's not very deep but there is mud on the bottom, so it's not safe to jump into water, but some people find it fun.

This place used to have loads of water, but now it's just another ordinary place. The water from the river is used for supplying the town. Many springs are now capped and that is why the river is shallower than it used to be. It has a popular name "Beach of Pensioners". It has been called like that since the leaning willow was cut.

This place is Anatem. It used to have loads of water but now it's shallow. Anatem means curse. It has been called like that since lots of people drowned here. There used to be a whirlpool over there but since the water is shallow, there is no longer a whirlpool.

This beach is "Ploče". It means slabs. I don't know why it's named like that, I guess it's because the land is flat in this place. Now, since Anatem is no longer popular, Ploče is the most visited beach.

Next to Ploče is a watermill. It's called Sava's Watermill. I think that you can guess why it's named Sava's Watermill. It's pretty obvious. Sava is the man who lives here. Most of people leave their bikes and motorbikes for Sava to keep.

This is an ideal place for people who like horse riding.

This is the cave in Degurić, in the gorge of Gradac. This is interesting for caving lovers, who are attracted by many different forms of underground karst erosion. Even though it is

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relatively short, Gradac has almost 70 caves, and new ones are discovered every year. The Deguric cave is the largest – it is 2030 m long.

Before hot summer days, there is another big occasion when the people of Valjevo visit the river in large numbers. It is the traditional pre-dawn outing on 1st May when both old and young, families and groups of friends come to Gradac to have fun around the camp fires with barbecue, music, and traditional hiking up and down the river. Those who are not very sporty choose to sit in a cafe called Kod vidre, which means "At the Otter's".

Chapter 6 Revival of Life

by Branko Nestorović, spring 2004

This egg is called the Home Protector. It was coloured last year and kept in my house. These eggs are usually red because the red colour is the symbol of Christ's blood.

Today is Good Friday and the people in Serbia decorate eggs. We like to decorate eggs with grass and different kinds of leaves, so my job is to collect strange and interesting leaves, and when I finish that, I give them to my grandmother.

This is my mother and she will help us.

She puts the leaf on the egg and ties a piece of stocking around it, so that the leaf would not fall off. When she finishes this, she puts the egg into the boiling water and dye. We usually put a spoonful of vinegar and some salt into the water so that the eggs wouldn't crack. After 10 minutes of boiling, we take the eggs out of the water and rub them with some oil so that they would be shiny.

We do not eat them until Easter, which is on next Sunday.

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Easter is the main holiday in the year, the first and the oldest one. This holiday is a movable feast that is celebrated every year on a Sunday, which can occur as early as 4 April and as late as 8 May. It begins today and continues for the next two days. The three day celebration is symbolic because Christ, our God, resurrected after three days. He was the man who preached a real, orthodox religion. Because of that the Romas condemned him and he had to die. They crucified him on the cross. He was dead, but after three days he came back to life and ascended into heaven. That means that he was a real God. In Serbian language, Easter is called "Uskrs" or "Vaskrs", which means resurrection.

Today my family and me celebrate the highest of all feasts. On this day, we do not greet each other with "Good morning", "Good afternoon" or "Good evening", we say this greeting:

- Hristos Voskrese!

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- Vaistinu Voskrese!

This means "Christ is risen!" and "Indeed He is Risen".

In Serbia there is a tradition of egg tapping on this holiday. This custom includes a small competition in which all cracked eggs go to the person whose egg remains the strongest.

Experts say that in the large collection of Easter eggs from all parts of Serbia, which is kept at the Ethnographic Museum of Belgrade, a prominent place is taken by the eggs from Valjevo and its surroundings, especially those whose vegetal ornaments symbolise spring and revival of life. I am proud that my family is part of that tradition.

Easter Sunday is the first day after a long period of fasting, and our family will have lavish meals, especially lunch, and all of us must be here.

Chapter 7 Pećina Park

by Milica and Nevena Živojinović and Marija Marković, spring 2004

Pećina Park is the most beautiful place on the outskirts of Valjevo besides Gradac. It is the oldest promenade of Valjevo citizens, both old and young. It was a popular place for walking even in the period between the two world wars. This is what it looked like in the old postcards.

People like to come here because of the clean fresh air and the greenery provided by the old trees from different parts of the world. On the most interesting trees there are plates with their names in Latin and their geographic origin. We can see here a plane tree, chestnut street, and over there we can see a maple tree. In this way we can learn about plants from other countries and be proud that we look after them in our town.

This huge green park is a beautiful and healthy background for recreation and tourist attractions, such as sports facilities, cafes, restaurants and a playground for children. I remember when I first came to Pećina Park. I was with my parents and I was about 2 years old. My mum put me on a swing and she started to swing me as fast as she could. It was great and I was thrilled.

I like coming here because Pećina Park has many courts like basketball court, tennis court and, of course, a big football stadium. Me and my friends always come here because we like playing tennis or basketball. When we get tired we sit and have a drink in the Rendezvous Cafe, which is the start and the end point for visitors.



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Right above the Rendezvous there is Zdravljak or Health Bar. Many people have owned it and it has offered different services. It even used to be a Chinese restaurant. For some time it was a popular place for 18th birthday parties. The problem is that there are not many guests in autumn and winter, so very often it is closed.

Further up the road and across of the park there is the Lovci or the Hunters' Restaurant. You can eat delicious game stew and game sausages here.

The visitors can see here many animals like ducks, geese, rabbits, swans and peacocks.

In the old days, citizens of Valjevo would hire a small boat and row down the river of Obnica, which flows into the river Kolubara. These two rivers enhance the feeling of freshness during hot summer days.

Right across the river Kolubara is the place called Platani or Plane Trees, with an old restaurant serving traditional Serbian dishes. Behind them there is a cave after which Pećina Park got its name. I have never been in it because I'm afraid to go inside. It's very dark and scary in it!

I like going to Pećina Park because it's my favorite place to walk, run or play sports.