

# The LOMA Weekly Herald



## The League of Macedonian-Americans

Volume 1, Issue 4

5/17/2015



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### Recap of the Week

We had a very productive week as a result of the significant and recent developments in Macedonia. Some of our highlights include:

- Sent out nearly a dozen letters
- Started a Call to Action for Macedonians to write to news agencies using discriminatory language to describe Macedonians
- Started a Call to Action for Macedonians to not let Bulgarians on Youtube claim Macedonian folklore as their own
- Added two links to our Links page

### Next Week's Goals and Projects

We hope to continually build our group's activities and efforts. Here's some of what we have planned for next week:

- Increase membership
- Continue the letter writing campaign
- Start implementing new initiatives and plans

### Test Your Knowledge about Macedonia!

#### Last week's answers:

1. Name the two Macedonian-Canadians who have gone first in the NHL draft. **Eddie Jovanovski and Steven Stamkos**
2. In what municipality can you find the Macedonian village Drugovo? **Kichevo**
3. Name the three national parks in Macedonia. **Mavrovo, Galichica, and Pelister**
4. At the Battle of Issus, how many Greeks joined the Persians to fight against Alexander the Great's Macedonian troops? **30,000**
5. In the year 2000, which political party did the Bulgarian Constitutional Court expel from the political system? **United Macedonian Organization: Illinden-Pirin**
6. The city of Prilep is built on the ruins of which Ancient Macedonian city? **Styberra**
7. What four Axis forces occupied the Vardar portion of Macedonia during World War II? **Albania, Bulgaria, Germany, and Italy**
8. What did Greece rename the Macedonian city 'Voden' to after they occupied Aegean Macedonia? **Edessa**
9. The Macedonian Byzantine Catholic Church is headquartered in which Macedonian city? **Strumica**
10. What was the name of the song Ajri Demirovski wrote that was voted by residents of Bitola as Bitola's song of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? **Bitola Moj Roden Kraj**

#### This week's questions:

1. Who was elected president of the Krushevo Republic in 1903?
2. On which Macedonian lake can you find the "Muzej Na Voda"?
3. The "Battle of Tetovo" took place in what year?
4. "Zlaten Dab" and "Skopsko" are types of what?
5. Who made famous the song "Ako Umram, Il Zaginam"?

Submit answers to: [leagueofmacedonians@yahoo.com](mailto:leagueofmacedonians@yahoo.com)

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## Learn Macedonian!

I am = Јас сум / jas sum  
 you are (formal) = вие сте / vie ste  
 he is = тој е / toj e  
 she is = таа е / taa e  
 we are = ние сме / nie sme  
 they are = тие се / tie se

I eat = јадам / jadam  
 you eat (formal) = јадете / jadete  
 he eats = тој јаде / toj jade  
 she eats = таа јаде / taa jade  
 we eat = јадеме / jademe  
 they eat = тие јадат / tie jadat

Here are the letters of the Cyrillic alphabet and their approximate Latin equivalents:

А = a    Б = b    В = v    Г = g    Д = d    Ѓ = gj  
 Е = e    Ж = zh    З = z    С = dz    И = i    Ј = j  
 К = k    Л = l    Љ = lj    М = m    Н = n    Њ = nj  
 О = o    П = p    Р = r    С = s    Т = t    Ќ = kj  
 У = u    Ф = f    Х = h    Џ = ts    Ї = ch    Ь = dzh  
 Ш = sh

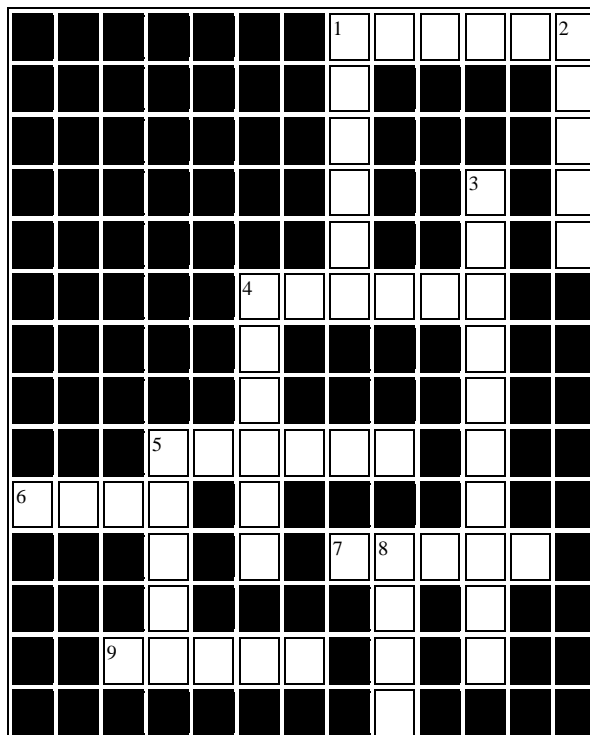
### Some precautions:

1. The Ј sounds like the English y.
2. The Ї is pronounced like the "ch" in cherry.
3. Be aware of the false friends: letters that look like familiar English letters but sound different.
4. The Џ sounds like the "j" in jam.

Below are the numbers in Macedonian, from 1 - 10:

|      |       |      |        |       |
|------|-------|------|--------|-------|
| еден | два   | три  | четири | пет   |
| шест | седум | осум | девет  | десет |

## Macedonian Crossword



### Across

1. компир/kompir
4. морков/morkov
5. лук/luk
6. круша/krusha
7. јаболко/jabolko
9. диња/dinja

### Down

1. пипер/piper
2. кромид/kromid
3. лубеница/lubenica
4. цреша/cresha
5. грозје/grozje
8. слива/sliva

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## Mariche Le Lichno Devojche

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Sheet music for the song "Mariche Le Lichno Devojche". The music is written in 8/8 time, key of E-flat major (three flats), and consists of 48 measures. The lyrics are in Macedonian and English. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a strong emphasis on the first and third beats of each measure. The lyrics are as follows:

Mari-che le lich-no de - voj - che u-miram za - gin-vam za te - be  
of a - man a - man zhivotot go da-vam za te - be of a - man a -  
man Poj-di pra-shaj ja le maj - ka - ti da-li kje te  
da-de za me - ne of a - man a - man zamene le si - rak si - ro - mav  
of a - man a - man A-bre lu - do a - bre bu - da - lo  
jas si ne-mam ni-koj od ro - da of a - man a - man si-roche sum bez  
maj-ko i tat - ko of a - man a - man A-ko sa-kash ti da me ze -  
mish jaskajte - be sa - ma kje doj - dam of a - man a - man  
i so te - be vek kje ve - ku - vam of a - man a - man.

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## Narodna Song of the Week

This week's song is *Mariche Le Lichno Devojche*. A rough translation of the lyrics is below:

Mariche, beautiful girl, I am dying and  
perishing for you - I would give my life for  
you;

Go ask your mother if she will give you over to  
me - for me, a poor boy.

You crazy, stupid boy, I don't have any family  
- I am a poor girl without a mother or father;

If you want to take me to be yours, I will come  
to you by myself - and I will spend forever  
with you.

## LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

*Letter to several websites regarding their use of  
the term 'Slav'.*

To Whom It May Concern:

I hope this message finds you well. In the article "EU Alarmed as Deadly Battle Deepens Macedonian Crisis", the author referred to ethnic Macedonians as Slavs. The League of Macedonian-Americans (LOMA) respectfully requests that your news agency no longer refers to ethnic Macedonians as ethnic Slavs. The majority of Macedonian citizens, as well as hundreds of thousands of Macedonians worldwide, identify as ethnic Macedonians. We ask that you refer to the Macedonian people as they refer to themselves: Macedonians. It is unfair and biased to refer to one group as they refer to themselves and not refer to another group as they refer to themselves. You referred to Albanians as ethnic Albanians, but to Macedonians as Slavs. This is not unbiased reporting.

Further, the name "Slav" is inaccurate for the Macedonian people. As historians have demonstrated, the term "Slav" is neither a racial nor an ethnic identifier. Moreover, the Macedonians are identified as being their own ethnic group and as speaking the Macedonian language, as much of the world calls them Macedonians and refers to their language as Macedonian. We ask that you use these truths and apply equitable treatment to Macedonians in your reporting on Macedonians.

Moreover, the term "Slav" is used as a discriminatory tool by some of Macedonia's neighbors. Particularly, Greece refers to Macedonians as "Slavs" (among many other names) to deny that an ethnic Macedonian minority exists within its borders, even though several international human rights organizations have found that a substantial Macedonian minority lives in Greece, and even when Greece has recognized the ethnic Macedonian minority within their borders in the early 20th century. By continuing to use the term "Slav" to refer to the Macedonians' ethnic identity, your news agency is adopting Greece's discriminatory, disrespectful and chauvinistic policy. In addition, it promotes the idea that people do not have the right to determine their own identity. We again call on you to desist from using the term "Slav" to describe the ethnic Macedonians and instead refer to Macedonians simply as Macedonians. If you need to make a clear ethnic distinction between the citizens of Macedonia, it would be appropriate to refer to Macedonians as ethnic Macedonians and Albanians as ethnic Albanians.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the comments in this letter.

*Letter to US Ambassador to Macedonia Jess  
Bailey regarding his joint statement on recent  
Macedonian developments:*

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Dear Ambassador Baily:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you on behalf of the League of Macedonian-Americans (LOMA) regarding the recent Joint Statement by the Ambassadors of the United States, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the European Union. We appreciate your continued support for the Macedonian people, especially with regards to the recent violence perpetrated by a violent and extremist Albanian organization that aims to destabilize Macedonia. However, we believe your assessment concerning the reasons why Macedonia may be shifting away from democratic principles and values of the Euro-Atlantic community is not accurate or complete. The statement does not address two of the root causes preventing Macedonia from progressing toward EU and NATO membership.

First, Macedonia has been prevented from joining NATO and quickly progressing to an EU membership because Greece has blocked Macedonia from those organizations over the name of Macedonia. Greece's chauvinism regarding Macedonia's name throughout the past few decades has been the driving force of Macedonia's inability to fully access the Western world. In the 1990s, Greece put sanctions on Macedonia and prevented Macedonia from joining the United Nations as an equal member by forcing them to agree to the provisional and insulting name of "fYRoM". Furthermore, Greece denies the existence of Macedonians as an ethnic group and refers to Macedonians using degrading terminology. Despite this intolerance and obstructionism, the EU and NATO continue to allow Greece to block Macedonia's membership into NATO and the EU.

The second root cause of Macedonia's alleged lack of progress has been the separatist and extremist Albanian groups inside and outside of Macedonia aiming to destabilize Macedonia in

order to carve up Macedonia according to their ideology of Greater Albania. These violent actors use terrorism to accomplish their goal and they justify their actions to the world as a fight for freedom and rights. However, the majority of Macedonian citizens that are ethnic Albanian do not want violence and do not perceive themselves as lacking any other rights that citizens of other ethnicities possess. Furthermore, after the 2001 conflict in Macedonia, the Ohrid Framework Agreement required Macedonia to pardon the terrorists who began the conflict, and some of them now serve in government positions. The NATO and EU countries helped make this deal possible, which means they indirectly allowed Albanian separatist ideologies and groups to flourish.

LOMA is disappointed that the ambassadors did not address these issues when criticizing Macedonia for failing to live up to European values and principles. If the U.S. would truly like to see Macedonia progress toward NATO and the EU, we believe the U.S. should take a more proactive role in neutralizing Greek chauvinism and obstructionism aimed at Macedonia and in eradicating the Albanian terrorist and separatist threat Macedonia is facing within its borders and from neighboring countries. NATO and EU unwillingness to aggressively and resolutely deal with these matters will continue to push Macedonia away from integration into NATO and the EU.

The Macedonian people cannot accept that their country compromise on its name and territorial integrity in exchange for membership into organizations and unions that refuse to treat the Macedonian people as equals. Nor should the U.S., as the U.S. is a country that supports self-determination and believes in the equality of all peoples.

We thank you for your time and hope that you consider the points we addressed in this letter.

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***Letter to the Bulgarian Prime Minister regarding his recent claims that Bulgaria is a country of ethnic tolerance:***

Dear Prime Minister Borissov:

The League of Macedonian-Americans (LOMA) objects to your statement, as reported by several news agencies, claiming that Bulgaria is a country of ethnic tolerance. It is not. Particularly, Bulgaria does not tolerate, nor does it admit, the existence of ethnic Macedonians. Further, it does not recognize the Macedonian language; it denies ethnic Macedonians the right to politically assemble; and according to several international human rights organizations, Macedonians constantly suffer discrimination at the hands of Bulgarian authorities for expressing their ethnic Macedonian identity.

Thus, under Bulgaria's current policies regarding Macedonians, Bulgaria operates in a manner contrary to that of a state that is tolerant of ethnic minorities. Once Bulgaria addresses these issues by recognizing the ethnic Macedonian minority and by preventing discrimination against the Macedonians, Bulgaria might then be able to consider itself a country of ethnic tolerance.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

***Letter to Gjovalin Shkurtaj regarding his recent opinion piece on Fox News:***

Dear Gjovalin Shkurtaj:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you on behalf of the League of Macedonian-Americans (LOMA) regarding your recent troubling comments that were published in the opinion section of [FoxNews.com](http://FoxNews.com) regarding the current situation in Macedonia.

It is troubling that you open with a quote about the hate that runs strong through the Balkans and link that hate to the country of Macedonia. We believe that it is important to move forward through cooperation and positive attitude, and not dwell on past tensions as a template for future situations. It is wise to remember that Macedonia was the only country to gain its independence peacefully from the former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, Macedonia has housed hundreds of thousands of refugees from multiple countries throughout the Balkans and provided them with food, clothing and shelter during the most difficult of times.

You then continue by linking the current "political crisis" to a potential renewed ethnic conflict in the region, with a possible adverse effect for neighboring countries. The fact that you would link the currently political instability to ethnic conflict is irresponsible and troublesome. In doing so, you are only fueling current tensions and not providing accurate information for your readers. The only hint of any sort of ethnic conflict would be the recent violence perpetrated by a violent and extremist Albanian organization that aims to destabilize Macedonia.

Furthermore, you comment that many promises from the Ohrid Framework Agreement have not been met. Respectfully, sir, since this agreement in 2001, Macedonia has essentially been transformed into a bi-national government. The Albanian party is a permanent member of the ruling coalition and ethnic minorities are allowed to veto certain legislation. The ratio of Albanians in the armed forces has increased and the Albanian language has been made an official language in the country. This leaves the question as to what else can the country do? I would like you to respond with your ideas and thoughts on this question. The Macedonian government and people have gone above and beyond what any other nation in the Balkans has done for any ethnic minority.

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Moreover, you make an argument that the unemployment rate in Macedonia is too high, especially among the minority Albanian population. The fact that you state that "many Albanians feel forced to leave their ancestral homeland and emigrate in the hope finding a brighter future." is, again, troublesome. First, the ancestral homeland of the minority Albanian population is Albania; many of these individuals left Albania and Kosovo for Macedonia in order to attain a brighter future that the Macedonian people and government have worked to create for everyone regardless of ethnicity. Second, many ethnic Macedonians are also leaving Macedonia for jobs elsewhere - the unemployment issue in Macedonia is not an ethnic issue.

Additionally, it is troubling and irresponsible to discuss that violence can spread further due to a claim made by the opposition leader of the Social Democratic Party, Zoran Zaev. Using the speculation of a political leader trying to become the next prime minister of Macedonia is again providing a disservice to your readers, and it is an attempt to cause tension between the Macedonian and Albanian people. This is irresponsible.

You close with a statement that would lead a reader to believe that the Macedonian government is not willing to deescalate the situation, which also is irresponsible. The Macedonian government acted quickly to arrest and stop the terrorist attack perpetrated by the violent and extremist Albanian organization. Furthermore, the Macedonian government has been and has always been willing to assist and work with EU and NATO powers in any and all ways possible. Macedonia has provided more troops per capita than any other Balkan country to support numerous NATO operations, even though Macedonia is improperly being denied membership to both. I would specifically like to inform you that during the NATO-led mission

in Afghanistan, Macedonia provided over 240 soldiers, which ranked fourth by percentage of active service personnel serving. Also, historically Macedonia, has had troops in Iraq, Bosnia and most importantly, during the 1999 Kosovo conflict, Macedonia was used a staging ground for NATO and accepted hundreds of thousands Albanian refugees from Kosovo. Additionally, the Macedonian military has developed a strong working and training relationship with the Vermont National Guard. These examples make your comments about Macedonia's unwillingness to cooperate even more negligent and utterly disrespectful towards Macedonia.

The Macedonian people worldwide cannot continue to accept misleading and irresponsible comments to be made about ethnic tensions in their homeland and about the people of Macedonia. One of the root causes of Macedonia's alleged lack of progress has been the separatist and extremist Albanian groups inside and outside of Macedonia aiming to destabilize Macedonia in order to achieve their ideology of a Greater Albania. These violent actors use terrorism to accomplish their goal and they justify their actions to the world as a fight for freedom and rights. Most recently this terrorist organization was quoted by InSerbia stating "We will continue to attack the police and the army without mercy. We will fight to the end to unite territories with Albanian population. Today we are stronger, and tomorrow we will be even stronger. We are everywhere" However, the majority of Macedonian citizens that are ethnic Albanian do not want violence and do not perceive themselves as lacking any other rights that citizens of other ethnicities possess. We thank you for your time and hope to continue this discussion and that you consider the points we addressed in this letter.

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**Letter to [www.euobserver.com](http://www.euobserver.com) about factual errors in their article:**

To Whom It May Concern,

The League of Macedonian-Americans (LOMA) would like to point out a factual error in the article "Bulgaria Sends Army to Border With Macedonia." The author used the term "Slavic-speaking" to describe ethnic Macedonians instead of referring to them as ethnic Macedonians. The author compared these "Slavic-speakers" to ethnic Albanians. Fair and unbiased reporting dictates that an author compares apples to apples -- one ethnic group to another; or one linguistic group to another.

This article is written from a Bulgarian perspective and not with objectivity. Bulgaria does not recognize the Macedonian language or ethnicity, and thus the author refuses to call the Macedonian people "Macedonians" or their language as Macedonian. Yet, international organizations, the vast majority of the world's countries, and an overwhelming number of respected academics, linguists, political scientists and historians refer to the Macedonian people as ethnic Macedonians and their language as Macedonian. Most importantly, the Macedonian people identify themselves as ethnic Macedonians and their language as Macedonian.

Moreover, the author clearly states that Bulgaria views Macedonians as ethnic Bulgarians and the Macedonian language as a strain of the Bulgarian language. However, an objective and accurate article would additionally include the Macedonian perspective, which is that Macedonians form a distinct ethnic group from the Bulgarians and that the Macedonian language is a separate and distinct language on equal footing with the Bulgarian language.

We appreciate the time you have taken to consider our comments.

***A response from the author, Tony Barber, who called Macedonians "Slavs" in a Financial Times article:***

Thank you for your remarkably swift comment on my article!

I can assure you that I mean no disrespect to the majority population of Macedonia, and that I am certainly not aligning myself, consciously or not, with what you term Greece's chauvinistic policy.

It is, though, essential, in my view, to make clear distinctions between the different peoples of the area - indeed, not just within the state borders of Macedonia - without taking sides in the long-running identity disputes of the region. In so doing, I am following the practice, as I am sure you are aware, of many historians and other respected area specialists.

Tony Barber

*LOMA strongly disagrees with Mr. Barber's reasoning. Please e-mail him at [tony.barber@ft.com](mailto:tony.barber@ft.com) letting him know how you feel.*

## Links to Other Sites

In an effort to build relations with other organizations who have been advancing the Macedonian Cause for several years, and to offer our members and website visitors important information on Macedonian issues, we have reached out to Macedonian organizations around the globe to post links to their websites on our site. (You can find them on the "Links" tabs of our website). In addition to the three from last week, here are two new organizations we have posted links to, with a little information about them:

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## **The Macedonian Truth Forum**

This online community offers a plethora of information relating to Macedonian history and the Macedonian Cause. In addition to the hundreds of documents and links you can find regarding Macedonian history, culture, and identity, this site offers a place for Macedonians to discuss relevant Macedonian issues. Join the conversation!

## **The Canadian Macedonian Historical Society**

Founded in 1991, this non-profit works to provide people with "a true perspective of Macedonian history and culture." Their website offers several resources that Macedonians will find useful in their quest to understand more about their identity.

## **Quotes about Macedonia**

*"The King is working systematically toward ... the change of the of official title of the State to 'Kingdom of Yugoslavia' and the deliberate, almost brutal, disregard in the new law of all historic boundaries between the different provinces of the country...he hopes to wipe out all distinctions between the different branches of the nation, and on the other hand he has no idea of granting local autonomy to provinces with a special character of their own. The nation is to be fused into one; there are to be no Serbs or Croats or Slovenes or Bosniaks or Dalmatians or Macedonians; only Yugoslavs."* **The Times, October 9, 1929**

*"Belgrade newspapers publish a story of an outrage committed by Albanians upon a party of Christians at Tetovo. A young Christian couple had just been married and a party of their friends had gathered to celebrate the event. While the gayeties were in progress, a number of Albanians appeared and demanded that the bridegroom pay a so-called wedding tax. This he refused to do, and his refusal so exasperated the Albanians that they attacked the Christians and killed or wounded twenty of them."* - **Unknown Date, The Times.**

*"The Macedonian question resolves itself into the ownership of Macedonia, which means control of the Balkans to any concrete power. Neither the Macedonians, Albanians, Servians nor Greeks are strong enough to hold it. Servians, Greeks, Albanians and Macedonians may struggle for possession. Each may be the foe to Turkey, but none will be content that the other shall possess the land."* - **Tacoma Times, 1904**

## **News from Macedonia**

Four high ranking government ministers resigned from their posts after the Kumanovo terrorist attack, likely due to pressure from the international community and increasing Macedonian protests.

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Macedonia's ruling government held talks with leaders from other political parties. The parties did not reach any agreement. Zoran Zaev, the main opposition leader, insists that the only solution is for Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski to step down and to hold new elections. The Prime Minister refuses to step down.

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The Macedonian police went on a hunt in Kumanovo for a terrorist who managed to escape Macedonian custody. The person, called Osmani, claimed that he was a part of a group of 2,000 fighters and that they wanted to create an Albanian state out of parts of Macedonia.

*\*News generated from a Google news search*

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