OSNOVNA ŠKOLA KSAVE ŠANDOR ĐALSKI

DONJA ZELINA

FOREIGN CROATS

BY SEVER IVAN 7 N

Independence Day in the Republic of Croatia is a commemoration that is celebrated on June 25, in memory of the day when the Croatian Parliament passed the Decision on the establishment of a sovereign and independent Republic of Croatia.

Apart from being celebrated in Croatia, it is also celebrated all over the world, in countries where Croats live. One of these countries is Canada, where Croats who emigrated from Croatia live, both after the Second World War and later.

According to 2001 data, about 97,000 Croats live in Canada today, while according to some newspaper research, about 300,000 Croats live in Canada today.

Canadian Croats mostly live in major Canadian cities. The largest number of Croats is located in the following cities: Toronto, Ontario: 12,230, Mississauga, Ontario: 9,140, Hamilton, Ontario: 8,170, Calgary, Alberta: 3,690, Vancouver, British Columbia: 2,945, Oakville, Ontario: 2,830, Burnaby, British Columbia: 2,770, Edmonton, Alberta: 2,575, Windsor, Ontario: 2,520, Ottawa, Ontario: 2,505.

According to the Canadian Embassy in Zagreb, in 2014, 294 Croatian citizens moved to Canada permanently. The year before, the number was 125. In 2014, 72 students left, while 667 Croats received work permits through the International Mobility Program.

According to personal information, Croats in Canada are mostly engaged in catering and construction. However, the younger generations are increasingly turning to schooling and looking for better jobs. Most Croats live in their family houses, and if a husband and wife work in the family, they can live comfortably.

A friend of mine in Canada says that Croats in Canada are very much connected to each other and help each other. It especially helps people who have just come to Canada to find accommodation to live in as soon as possible.

Due to the large number of Croats in Canada, Croatian parishes have been established, and going to Mass on Sundays is an obligation. After Mass, people often stay to socialize, especially the older generation.

There are about 60 Croatian folklore societies in Canada, which are organized independently or are related to organizations, societies and Croatian parishes. In Canada, of all emigrant countries, Croatian folklore is most cherished, which can be seen from the results that Croatian groups achieve in various competitions of ethnic folklore groups (TV shows, humanitarian events), etc.

My friend also participates in various social events where Croats gather in order to preserve the language and Croatian culture. However, in a conversation with him, I noticed that since he went to Canada 5 years ago, he speaks less and less Croatian, and he has almost forgotten it.

I asked him how he had forgotten a lot of Croatian words, to which he told me that although he went to various gatherings with Croats, the younger generations almost did not speak Croatian, but English or French.

Often while talking to him I ask him if he intends to return to Croatia, to which he told me that he does not intend to return because his parents together with him and his sister are very happy in Canada. He also says that it will be much easier for him to find a job that satisfies him in Canada than in Croatia, and that he now has more friends in Canada than he had in Croatia.

As can be seen from the article, most older Croats long for their homeland, while the younger generations are not so attached to Croatia, and have never even visited it. Although I miss my friend very much, I wish him all the best in his life in Canada. I hope that one day we will sit together and remember our school days.