



Czech Slovak Sokol Minnesota



Providing fitness and community for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural, and social programs.

SLOVO

January 2011
vol. 34 no. 1

Sokol Minnesota's new Board of Directors



Seated: Ken Wyberg, Megan Cahill, Ed Hamernik, Mary Cahill, Joyce Tesarek. Back Row: Judy Aubrecht, Chuck Draheim, Jean Draheim, Steve Shimer, Norm Petrik, Leah Sticha, Jay Fonkert, Denis Novak

Upcoming Events

February Slovo Deadline
January 1

Family Sunday
January 9
4:30 p.m.

Board of Trustees
January 12

Board of Directors
January 13

BOT Workday
January 22
8 a.m.

Duck Dinner
January 22
5 p.m.

Membership Meeting
January 28
7 p.m.

Šibřinky
March 5
6-11 p.m.

Senior Singers
Tuesdays
10 a.m.

Prostna
1st & 3rd
Mondays
6 p.m.

Bake Sale and Breakfast a Success Despite Ice Storm

Contributed by Louise Wessinger

Sokol families and friends didn't let a major ice storm stop them from supporting our Holiday Breakfast, Craft and Bake Sale on Sunday, November 21. Breakfast chair Ed Hamernik reported that 97 hungry guests (compared to the usual 150) enjoyed "all you can eat" French toast and pancakes for a profit of \$430. Thank you to all the Sokol members who helped with setup, cooking, and clean up.

Of the 12 scheduled vendors, nine were able to make it to the Hall. All reported good sales and were happy they ventured out to the sale with their wares. A "one hour" silent auction and matching sale of an antique plate from member Ted Schieffer resulted in a vendor and auction total of \$348 according to Louise Wessinger.

Sokol bakers, led by Doreen McKenney, included Doris McKenney, Hana Matousek, Jean Draheim, Joan Sedlacek, Katie Haselbauer, Louise Wessinger, Mary Jo Chlebecek, Joyce Tesarek, and Norm Petrik, all of whom spent all day Friday, November 19, making 80 dozen kolache for the sale. At-home cooks made caramel corn, poppy seed horns, fudge, jam, gingerbread cakes, and many more items to fill our bake table with lots of goodies to entice shoppers. Thank you for your donations: Mary Jo Chlebecek, Sharon Liska, Bob Kostichka, Pam Kotval, Arlene Hamernik, Libby Imbrone, Peg Anderson, Jeanette Pafko, Georgiana Dolejsi, and Hana Matousek. Doreen reported a profit of \$775.

Despite horrible driving conditions, Sokol was able to make a profit of about \$1,600. Thank you to all who helped to make this day a success!

8th Annual Candlelight Sokol Minnesota

ROAST DUCK DINNER

January 22, 2011 • Saturday • 5 p.m.

\$22 per person

pre-paid reservations by January 18
call Doreen 952-941-0426



Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota 2011 Board of Directors

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Past issues of *Slovo* and Sokol Minnesota's calendar of events are available online at <www.sokolmn.org>

President Komentář/President's Note

By Ed Hamernik

Pozdroy a Stastny Novy Rok (Greetings and Happy New Year)

We are ending the year on a snowy note and predictions are that it will continue into next year. But Sokol Minnesota has a calendar packed with events to warm the hearts and bodies of members and friends, no matter what the weather. So watch the Events Calendar on our web site <www.sokolmn.org> or in the *Slovo* for these events.

Members of the 2011 Board of Directors were elected in November and installed in December. (Read the list in the box to the left of my column.)

A heartfelt congratulations and thank you to the BOD members for your devoted efforts and support to Sokol Minnesota. We have several others who chair committees or events, as well as those who serve on committees, that deserve recognition also, but that list is too long for this article. I'm asking committee chairs to recognize all committee members in future articles in the *Slovo* to honor them throughout the year.

We especially want to welcome Leah Sticha to the BOD and Scott Muyres to the Board of Budget and Finance Committee. We look forward to working with you and sharing your fresh ideas and input.

Also, a special thanks to those leaving the BOD. Joe Landsberger leaves after serving four years as President, during which time he worked tirelessly on many fronts, ranging from major fundraising to organizing/cleaning areas in the building. We appreciate that Joe will continue to work with the BOD so we can continue having his support. Jeanette Pafko has devoted over 15 years to BOD positions and on Board of Budget and Finance since its inception. Jeanette is leaving the board to have more time to travel with her husband Don, past Sokol president and currently acting Honorary Slovak Consul, as he travels for this position. Jeanette will be available for consultation, if needed. Last but not least, Marit Lee Kucera leaves the BOD as Publicity Chair, but she will continue as Co-Managing Editor of *Slovo*. Again, thank you all for your outstanding service.

Since this is my first letter as President, I'd like to briefly introduce myself. I was raised on a farm near Flom in northwestern Minnesota, the youngest of nine children born to Czech immigrants. Our parents were very active in a ZCBJ lodge, which owned a hall in Voss, Minnesota (neither survives). Much of my early social activities centered around the lodge. That was where I gained my love of Old Tyme Music and learned to dance. I attended a one-room country school my first eight grades (just ask me how deep the snow was when I had to walk the two miles to school). After High School I attended NDSU in Mechanical Engineering. After college Arlene and I were married, and we have a son Craig and daughter Marcia, both married with two children each. My most notable early job was on the Design Team that designed and built the Alvin deep-diving research submarine. (Yes, a group of Midwest farm boys built an ocean deep-diving vessel in Minneapolis that worked.) Currently, I am a principal in a manufacturing company and continue to work.

I became a member of Sokol four years ago after enjoying the Czech language classes. I have enjoyed working on a number of events these years. I am humbled and honored to serve as your President. I look forward to working with all of you and would appreciate comments and feedback. *Nazdar*

Publications Committee

The *Slovo* is published by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, a non-profit organization, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102. Sokol Minnesota members receive the *Slovo* with their membership. **The deadline for the February 2011 issue is January 1.** *Slovo* staff: Christy Banks, copy editor; Julie Tomáška, layout editor; J. H. Fonkert and Marit Lee Kucera, co-managing editors; Joyce Tesarek, photographer; Norm Petrik, Mary Cahill, Jeanette Pafko, Jean Draheim, Cinnamon Whaley, Arlene Hamernik, Doreen McKenney, advisors. Photographs for this issue were provided by Jean Draheim, Marit Kucera, and Joyce Tesarek. This January 2011 issue of *Slovo* will be archived on the Sokol Minnesota website after January 30. The *Slovo* Advisory Committee welcomes submissions. Send suggestions, articles, and pictures digitally to: slovo@sokolmn.org.

Slovo now accepts business card size ads (3.5"x2"), paid in advance: one-time insertion \$25; consecutive issues: 3 issues: \$65; 10 issues \$175. Ad reservation deadline is six weeks before publication (January 15 for March issue), with ad and payment due by copy deadline (February 1 for March issue).

For problems with subscriptions, please contact us via e-mail: slovo@sokolmn.org; phone: 651-290-0542; or write to *Slovo* (address below). *Slovo* gift subscriptions and non-membership renewals are \$15/year (10-issues); Make your check to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota please send to: Sokol Minnesota *Slovo* Subscriptions/Renewals, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102

Membership Report

Contributed by Norm Petrik, Membership Director

At the October 22 membership meeting, one couple, *Vladimira and Michael Gregorski*, was accepted into Sokol membership. They live in Minneapolis, and expressed interest in cooking, genealogy classes, and a variety of events.

At the November 19 membership meeting, two couples were accepted into membership. *Janet Stahel and Larry Jackson* live in New Brighton, and expressed interest in language, genealogy, and history classes. *Arnie and Deb Ziskovsky* are from Webster, which is near New Prague, and were present at the meeting, installed as members, and received the welcome hug from Georgiana Dolejsi. Welcome to Sokol Minnesota! Membership meetings are usually the fourth Friday of the month, with the next one scheduled for January 28.

Since the November meeting was also our annual meeting, I reported that we accepted 29 new members to Sokol Minnesota during 2010. Again, welcome to Sokol Minnesota!

Education Updates

Contributed by Jean Draheim, Education Chair

Language classes will resume in January. The Slovak classes will start on Thursday, January 6, and the Czech classes will start the week of January 10. If you have taken either Czech or Slovak in the past, know a smattering of the languages, or are a new student, we welcome you! Please, remember that you have to register for these classes. The class limit is ten students, so mail your registration today.

The January 28 membership meeting marks the return of our singing sessions. Led by Sister Georgiana Dolejsi, we will be learning Sokol songs and songs in both Czech and Slovak. No experience needed. All ages are welcome. Come and join in the fun!

The Education Committee will offer several fun classes in the next few months. Watch the Slovo and our website <www.sokolmn.org> for information on cooking classes (Easter baking, *kuba*, fruit dumplings), feather brush, *kroje* embroidery, and leather-belt crafting classes, and our continuing Family History Project.

If you would like more information about any of these events or want to have your contact information included on the interest lists, please contact Education Director Jean Draheim at 651-426-2826, or by email at education@sokolmn.org.

News from the Board of Trustees

Contributed by Chuck Draheim

Greetings from the Board of Trustees. We hope you had a pleasant holiday season and look forward to the new year.

The October BOT workday went very well. The parking lot was blown clear of debris and all of the leaves were raked and hauled away to the local compost site. We also cleaned up the second floor storage area and installed a locked cabinet for all of the cleaning supplies and light bulbs. The BOT will prepare a list of standard light bulbs and fluorescent tubes that are used in the Hall; we will be keeping a supply of those in the storage cabinet. Members are requested not to purchase any light bulbs for the Hall; these will all be purchased by the BOT and installed by either the BOT or our custodian when necessary. Purchases of non-standard light bulbs and fluorescent tubes by anyone other than the BOT will not be reimbursed by Sokol. If you observe a defective or missing light bulb or fluorescent tube, please leave a note attached to the new storage cabinet so our custodian can correct the situation.

Another workday is scheduled for January 22, 2011. We plan to clean up the ramp area and then tackle any other projects we identify before that date. All Sokol members are urged to join in on these workdays.

At the recommendation of the BOT, the BOD has decided that items for the garage sale are not to be brought to or stored in the Hall until March 25, 2011. This policy is necessary to keep the first floor conference room available for other uses and to prevent the Hall from becoming a storage space. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Members with questions or concerns about Hall cleaning, maintenance, or repair issues are urged to contact the BOT at our E-mail address: Trustees@sokolmn.org.

Sokol Minnesota Annual Memberships

Renewals: Individual \$45

Couple \$80

Senior \$35 (over 65 and member of Sokol for 5 years)

Senior couple \$70

New membership dues are Individual \$50; Couple \$85. This includes a one-time \$5 registration fee with our national organization, American Sokol. Year 2011 dues for members joining after June 30 are \$25, individual, and \$42.50, couples. Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's annual membership runs from January 1 to December 31. To continue receiving your *Slovo* newsletter, please pay your 2011 dues by January 31. Please make your check payable to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, Attn: Membership, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102.

Kolache Class

Contributed by Shirley Verner



It was a dark and stormy night...oops, not so! It was a bright and cheerful day as sunlight filtered through the lace curtains in the meeting room on the second floor of the CSPS Hall, where eight women and three men gathered to learn about *kolache* baking from bakers-extraordinaire, Hana Matousek and Doreen McKenney. In her delightful Moravian accent, Hana gave a quick history of various kinds of *kolache* and how they're made in the Czech Republic.

As delicious aromas of yeast dough in the kitchen, coffee perking on the cupboard sideboard, and occasional wisps of pork and sauerkraut from The Glockenspiel restaurant filled the Hall, students learned the best ways to knead dough, use feather pastry brushes, and form round and square, open and closed *kolache*.

Soon the students' aprons were getting flour dusted as people chatted and worked on making their *kolache* for baking. Some of the aprons had sayings that would have made Miroslav Trys's portrait smile approvingly. One proclaimed, "Kiss the Cook" and another "The Prancing Pony." Then there was "Norwegian Chef" and finally, "Pray for me, I married a Norwegian." Soon, delicious treats were going home with all the students to share with families and friends.

Svaty Mikulas Visits Sokol Children

Contributed by Louise Wessinger



Braving the snowy night, Sokol children gymnasts and dancers performed a holiday *prostna* routine, led by Louise Wessinger.

On Friday, December 3, the snow began falling shortly after noon. By the time families were preparing to leave for the Sv. Mikulas Party at the Sokol Hall, the Twin Cities had a half foot of snow and traffic had slowed to a crawl. Many of our Sokol families of dancers and gymnasts were able to make the snowy trip to the hall, but some arrived after their group had performed.

The dancers were so beautiful in their Czech and Slovak *Kroje* and the gymnasts entertained with many tumbling passes and several pyramids. Even the tumbling tots braved walking a balance beam. Sv. Mikulas, his good angel, and the annoying devil greeted the children and brought each a colorful bag of goodies and a piece of fruit. Despite the cold and snowy weather there were warm feelings of holiday joy and good will throughout the evening. Thank you to all who made it a special event for our families and friends

2011 Membership Dues Information

Contributed by Jeanette Pafko, Financial Secretary, and Norm Petrik, Membership Chair

At the American Sokol annual convention on April 22-25 in Omaha, Nebraska, delegates voted to increase the membership dues we pay to the American Sokol Organization. The American Sokol Organization located in Chicago is our parent organization; and we receive our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and assistance for our gymnastics program through ASO.

The dues we pay to ASO were increased as of September 2010. However, we did not raise our own unit dues until our January 1 renewal date in 2011. Our Sokol Minnesota dues are based on the calendar year January through December 31. The 2011 dues for renewing members are: Individual \$45; Couple \$80; Senior \$35 (over 65 and member of Sokol for 5 years); and Senior couple \$70. Renewal notices were sent out in December.

A Well-Kept Secret

Contributed by Louise Wessinger

Last year we began a monthly Sunday evening program called Family Night. Most of the families that come are young, bilingual Czech and Slovak families. There is always a craft as families gather about 4:30 followed by a potluck supper where everyone contributes some of their favorite homemade specialties. After supper there are fun activities for the children such as games, puppet shows, or videos. The evening usually ends by 6:30. Registration is required. About 10-15 families attend every month. These evenings are lots of fun for all involved. Even a grandma want-to-be, like me, has a great time! Our next event is Sunday, January 9. For further information please call Lenka at 612-724-5464 or Olga 612-384-1604.

Hockey Championship in Slovakia

Contributed by Don Pafko

The 2011 International Ice Hockey Federation World Championship will take place April 29 to May 15, 2011, in the Slovak Republic. Bratislava and Kosice will be the host cities. Slovakia will be hosting this prestigious event for the first time. The event includes 17 days of championship games with 16 nations competing in four groups for a total of 56 games. It is being hosted by the Slovak Ice Hockey Federation. Fun fact: Slovakia is ranked second in terms of the number of players playing in the NHL per the number of inhabitants, second only to Canada. Almost every puck currently used in the NHL is stamped "Made in Slovakia." Email: info@2011.iihfworlds.com for more information.

Town Searching

Contributed by Ginger Simek, President ,Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International - <www.cgsi.org>

Do you have the name of your ancestral town but you are without a map? Or in the case of multiple towns of the same name, do you need help to determine which might be the correct one? Helpful websites are <www.seznam.cz> for the Czech Republic; for the Slovak Republic try <www.supernavigator.sk>. If searching in the Czech Republic, go to <www.seznam.cz> and click on *Mapy*. Type the town name in the box and click on *Hledej* (search). If there are multiple towns with the same or a similar name, you select possible towns from the list on the right side of the screen. The location area in the country and surrounding towns are shown. This information will help you narrow your search. Click on *Fotomapa* to see the terrain, houses, etc. Zoom in and out and pan using the icons on the right.

The Slovak website is similar. It includes a possible selection for the Czech Republic, but I was not able to get it to

Slovak Embassy Hosts Reception

Contributed by Honorary Slovak Consul Don Pafko

On Thursday, November 4, 2010, The Embassy of the Slovak Republic hosted a reception to announce the publication of a new book entitled *Slovakia! Traditions Old and New*.

The editor of this book is Helene Cincebeaux, director of the Slovak Heritage and Folklore Society, leader of countless tours to the Slovak Republic and author of several other books on Slovakia, as well as editor and publisher of a periodical entitled *Slovakia*. Helene has divided her newest book into four sections according to the four seasons of the year: Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring. She highlights all of the traditions and customs relative to each of the seasons and does so with countless numbers of photographs and illustrations.

work. Select the British flag on the page to have the copy displayed in English. Type in the name of the location you want to find in the Search box, then go to the second Search box directly to the right and from the dropdown menu select streets/cities/villages. Multiple locations will show as blinking dots on the country map to the right. As you point your mouse to each one, an arrow on the map will point to its location. Below the city/village names are listed street names with the corresponding town names. Also available on this site are 152 detailed maps.

Have fun and explore these sites. Some information included here is from data developed by Kathy Jorgenson, a CGSI and Sokol member. Next month, I will write about websites to discover more about your ancestral home town.

I was honored to be Master of Ceremonies at this gala event and was privileged to introduce Helene and her book to the gathered audience and the Embassy staff. A fantastic Slovak buffet prepared by the Embassy staff added to the festivities of the evening. Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States, Peter Burian, and other diplomatic staff were in attendance at this event. Helene also exhibited a portion of her collection of Slovak folk dress, which added color to the evening.

For further information about obtaining a copy of this fantastic book about Slovakia, you may contact me at 952-831-1440 or email: dpafkoskconsul@aol.com

Sokol Says "Thank You" to Generous Donors

Unless otherwise noted, cash donations are to the general fund; The Slovo lists only amounts of \$100 or more. A donor may request that the dollar amount of a larger gift be held private; in such a case, the *Slovo* prints only the donor's name.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota thanks donors who support Sokol programs and the CSPS Hall. Cash donations since September include contributions from:

Czech and Slovak Cultural Center, \$1,500

Patricia Wolesky

Several donors made in-kind donations:

Christopher Gotziaman, Miller Coors Co., beer for Czech and Slovak Festival

Joe Landsberger, oriental carpet for C.S.P.S. stage

Doreen McKenney, supplies for pork dinner

Vine Park Brewing Co., root beer for Czech and Slovak Festival

Sokol Minnesota also gratefully acknowledges donations to the five-year CSPS Hall Legacy Campaign. Some donors have requested that the amount of their donation be kept private.

Anonymous donor, \$200

Bessie O'Neill

Dennis and Mary Cahill, \$250

Tillie A. Dolejsi, \$1,000

Robert Drabek

Kenneth D. Houdek

Marit Lee Kucera

Dave and Sue Martin, \$3,000, expressing gratitude for years in Czech and Slovak Folk Dance Group

Jeff Martinka

Cheryl Nelson and Mike Theuninck, in memory of Paul and Anna Michalko

Clarice (Vitous) Nyberg

Tom Pallo, \$100

Marlene Pechmann

George Pokorny, Sr.,

in memory of Betty Pokorny

Tom and Penny Tesarek,

in memory of John and Clara Roushar, and Emanuel Tesarek

Charles Rusnacko, Jr.,

in memory of Chuck and Leona Rusnacko

Walter Schovanec,

in memory of Rudolph Antoine Schovanec

Georgiana Sobola

Dottie Kokes Speidel, \$100

Robert Tuma

Amounts listed here reflect donations received; some donations are installments on 5-year pledges. Sokol Minnesota is especially grateful for multi-year pledges to the CSPS Hall Legacy Fund. For information on how to make a multi-year pledge, contact Joyce Tesarek, 612-822-6147.

Longevity Awards Given to Members

Contributed by Jeanette Pafko, Financial Secretary



Lorene Sedlacek, 55 years; Megan Cahill, 10 years; Marit Lee Kucera, 10 years; Don Andrlle, 45 years. Back row, l-r: Phyllis Vosejпка, 5 years; J. H. Fonkert, 10 years; Georgiana Dolejsi, 75 years; Jean Draheim, 35 years.

Every year during the membership Christmas party, our unit distributes longevity awards to members in five-year increments. These certificates are given to acknowledge participation in the ongoing pursuit of our goals throughout their years of membership. The following members were given certificates:

5 years: Bea Flaming, Kevin Hurbanis, Sharon Liska, Richard Pavlicek, Frank Petruska, Kari Swartz, Phyllis Vosejпка. 10 years: Colleen Cahill, Megan Cahill, Jay Fonkert, Donovan Johnson, Robert Kruta, Marit Lee Kucera, Nora Mersch. 15 years: Charlotte Januschka, Charles Kalvoda, Martin Kubik. 20 years: Arlene Courneya, Eugene Courneya, Mary Hanlon, Libuše Imbrone, Donn Linscheid, Therese Linscheid, Terry Shima, Raymond Vanyo, Cecilia Yingling. 25 years: Patricia Carlson-Rukavina. 30 years: Bessie O'Neill, Allen Sladek, Dorothy Sladek. 35 years: Jean Draheim, Louise Gilson. 45 years: Don Andrlle. 55 years: Lorene Sedlacek. 60 years: Jaroslav Verner. 65 years: Lucille Pavlicek. 75 years: Georgiana Dolejsi, Helen Lander.

Announcing Spring Lecture Series with an innovative twist

Save these dates if you want to know what happened in the "fateful eight" years, 1948, 1968, 1989, 2008 and beyond to the present. Two of these sessions will feature speakers from the Czech and Slovak Republics on full screen SKYPE system.

- January 29:** "Personal reflection on the year 1948 and the consequences." Speaker: Josef A. Mestenhauser. Video – full screen of *Fighter*, documentary featuring dialogue of two prominent persons, Arnost Lustig and Jan Wiener. 86 minutes.
- February 26:** "Slovakia after twenty years." Invited speakers from Bratislava: Dr. Martin Butora, former Slovak Ambassador to the US and Dr. Zora Butorova, on full screen SKYPE. Video: To be announced.
- March 26:** "Czech and Slovak Republics within Central Europe." Invited panel of Honorary Consuls of Slovak and Czech Republics, Austria, and Germany and representatives from the Polish and Hungarian community. Video feature film: *Ostre sledovane vlaky (Closely Watched Train)* with English sub-titles, based on a novel by Bohuslav Hrabal, who won several prizes. 89 minutes.
- April 23:** "The Czech Republic after twenty years." Invited speakers via SKYPE from Prague: Dr. Eva Janebova and Tomas Janeba. Video: *Citizen Havel*, English sub-titled. 60 minutes.

Program and format: 9-10 a.m. presentation(s) by speaker(s); 10-11 a.m. seminar discussion; 11 a.m.-noon video. For further information: Consult the web page of the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center <www.cs-center.org> or call John Moravec (612) 325-5992 or Allyn Johnson (763) 427-9307 or (763) 670-3016

Available Now! Great Volunteer Opportunities with the Publications Committee!

Sokol Minnesota offers three exciting volunteer opportunities. We need a hands-on **Webmaster** who has experience with Website development and design software (FrontPage, Dreamweaver, CSS, etc.) as well as some Photoshop or imaging applications. Any additional recreational online experience is a plus (Facebook, LinkedIn, Flash, digitized music, video, etc.). Duties include monthly updates to the Website, plus development of features yet unrealized and unknown! Some training available in Sokol Minnesota's office (PC-based).

We also need a **Publicity Director** to write and send press releases about Sokol events, as well as produce an events postcard twice a year. If you like to write and you have a knack for promotion, this is the perfect volunteer job for you. An extensive list of contacts is already established to make it easy for you to promote the many fine events and activities that Sokol Minnesota produces and hosts.

We also need a **Layout Editor**. If you have experience with newsletter design and page layout using a program such as InDesign or PageMaker. As a Sokol volunteer, you will work with our energetic Publications Committee. Some training and technical assistance available.

Jay Fonkert is waiting to hear from you!
He can be reached at 651-735-8630 or jfonkert@aol.com

With Sympathy

Condolences are sent to long-time Sokol member Mark Bigaouette and his brothers Dan and Dean on the passing of their father Jack Bigaouette on Sunday, November 28.

Mr. Bigaouette wintered in Arizona. Mark's mother Marcie passed away in the spring of this year.

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Did he commit suicide or Did they murder him?

Contributed by Josef A. Mestenhauser



Josef Mestenhauser

Editor's note: This is an abbreviated version of an article appearing on the CSCC website <cs-center.org>.

After seventy years, four major inquiries, and several books about the death of Jan Masaryk, its circumstances remain uncertain. If he committed suicide, why? If he was murdered, by whom and how? All we have are four theories, which I will describe in this follow-up article about the troubled man living in troubled times that exceeded his capabilities. Next month, a third article will place Jan Masaryk's death in the context of events following World War II. This article is based almost entirely on the work of two distinguished historians, on a story in the Canadian paper *Narodni Hospodar*, and on Czech Radio coverage. Only the fact of Masaryk's death is certain. Even though the four theories disagree about the circumstances, they all have some credibility.

I want to first describe the shortcomings of the four inquiries. The first was ordered by the communist government soon after their coup d'etat and was managed not by expert criminologists, but by the fearsome state police controlled by the Ministry of Interior and the hard-core communist Minister Nosek, known to work closely with the Soviets and their NKVD agents in the government and the military.

The first inquiry, limited and therefore inconclusive, declared that Masaryk committed suicide. Several potential witnesses had disappeared permanently. An autopsy produced two reports, one official and the other anonymous, a point to which we will return.

The second inquiry was conducted during the Prague Spring, but was unfortunately interrupted when Czechoslovakia was occupied by the Warsaw Pact countries. Lacking evidence and under renewed Soviet pressure, the Prague Public Prosecutor's Office absurdly concluded Masaryk's death was an accident caused when he slipped out of the window as he was cooling his feet at night.

The best hope for finding the truth came only after the Velvet Revolution, when the third inquiry, led by the Office of Documentation of the Communist Crimes, requested files on Masaryk's death from the Russian government. Although that request was denied, the investigation focused on Vavra-Starik, a Soviet-trained NKVD agent. The principal investigator concluded that Masaryk was murdered but that there was no evidence to indict any one culprit. This finding is highly questionable because Hasek left the commission and published his "findings" as a separate book with his own single person authorship.

Writer Lubomis Bohac suggested two alternate murder theories in his 2006 book. One pointed to another NKVD agent, Col. Vojtech Kohout, working with Nosek and with the head of the Intelligence Division of the Czechoslovak Army. Kohout allegedly bragged that Masaryk was "finished" and possessed Masaryk's metal signature stamp. The second of Bohac's theories identified another Soviet NKVD agent, August Schramm, who also claimed to have murdered Masaryk and was soon himself murdered suspiciously. This claim was muddled when the director of a sanitarium first testified that, as his patient, Schramm never left his care during that period, but then later withdrew his testimony. Disappointingly, neither of these theories has been fully investigated.

The fourth, perhaps most credible, theory held that Masaryk was murdered by NKVD General Michael Belkin and another agent. This theory originated with the son of a former Soviet agent in Prague. Jelizabeta Parsinova told her son that Belkin personally confided to her that he had killed Masaryk, who had refused to accept unspecified Soviet demands. Although his claim is uncorroborated, Parsinova's son is a respected Russian historian.

The fourth inquiry ended in 2004 when the Soviet refusal to provide archives became public. The inquiry's report concluded that Masaryk was murdered but that no evidence survives to identify those responsible.

Although inconclusive, this inquiry was the most thorough because it re-evaluated all previous records, including the original autopsy. A well-known forensic expert concluded the body's position could not have been the result of a simple fall but rather must have been caused by external force. However, the discoverers of Masaryk's body may have moved it in efforts to revive him. More persuasively, another forensic expert identified white foam found in Masaryk's mouth during the original autopsy as being consistent with material produced by someone being choked to death. This evidence was ignored during Dr. Hajek's 1948 autopsy. Hajek's credibility was highly questionable, as he had been the Nazi's chosen examiner concluding that the mass graves of Polish officers in Katyn during World War II was the work of the Soviets, and who reversed his testimony after 1945. Evidence revealed that Hajek was "corrected" during Masaryk's autopsy by the Soviets.

This leaves the remaining possibility of Masaryk's suicide. Kosatik and Kolar found substantial evidence that Masaryk was occasionally unstable; that he was publicly pro-Soviet and privately opposed the Communists; that he had an inferiority complex as a "small son of a great father"; that he wanted to be loved and respected and did everything necessary to maintain his image; and that he considered suicide often during the last few weeks of his life.

Discussing this last possibility requires going beyond the few facts and the forensic evidence. Masaryk's complexity demands an additional look at his family relationships, his subpar school performance, his double exile, and of course, politics both in Czechoslovakia and in the world at large.

I will return to these themes next month in an effort to bring a more complete understanding of this tragic man whom we have known not by what he was, but by the myths about him.

**WINTER 2011
EVENTS AT CSPS HALL**

Duck Dinner

Saturday, January 22, 5 p.m. \$22
Reservations by January 18: 952-941-0426

Šibřinky

Traditional Sokol Costume Ball
Saturday, March 5, 6-11 p.m.
Food, dancing, folk dance performances
\$10; \$8 in advance
(Note: March 5 is Saturday, not Friday, as stated on
2011 Spring Events Postcard)

Flavors of Slovakia

Sunday, March 20, 12:30 p.m. \$15
Reservations by March 14: 651-290-0542

www.sokolmn.org for updates



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Sokol Minnesota Members' Christmas Party

Contributed by Marit Lee Kucera

Sixty members, many dressed in red or festive holiday attire, enjoyed the Sokol Minnesota Christmas Party on Sunday afternoon, December 5. Outside was a real Minnesota white winter with newly-fallen eight inches of snow, but inside CSPS Hall was warm and cheery. Megan Cahill chaired the event, overseeing all aspects of the gala with skill and youthful energy. The tables were decorated with poinsettias and tea lights by Jeanette Pafko and Marit Lee Kucera. The twenty-foot long food table was laden with appetizers, before dinner, and then desserts, all brought by members to share. While noshing on appetizers and visiting with old friends, members enjoyed listening to Don Haselbauer play holiday favorites on his accordion.

Megan, as hostess, welcomed everyone before introducing Joe Landsberger. Joe, who has led Sokol Minnesota for four years, gave his final greeting as outgoing president. Joe also touted the newest Sokol program, Tumbling for Tots (ages 2-4). The Sokol Senior Singers, with Georgiana Dolejsi at the piano, led members in singing traditional Czech and Slovak carols, including *Narodil se nám Spasitel, Nesem vám noviny, Spěchejte dětičky, Tichá noc* and several favorite English carols.

The long-awaited dinner was served, buffet style from the dining room. Bobbi Jo Chandler and Sue Marabella created a splendid dinner of meatloaf, scalloped potatoes, corn, green beans, lettuce salad, and rolls. These two wonderful members spent hours in the kitchen to prepare this feast, with wonderful aromas wafting from the kitchen all afternoon. It was worth the wait! Mary Cahill took tickets; Dennis Cahill ran the bar with help from Lloyd Krocak; Hana Matousek, J. H. Fonkert, Chuck Draheim, Jason Brozovich, Joyce Tesarek, and others doing double duty helped to serve, put out the desserts, and clean up afterwards.

Membership Director Norm Petrik and outgoing Financial Secretary Jeanette Pafko presented awards to members completing from 5 to 75 years. The 2011 Board of Directors was sworn into office by Georgiana Delojsi, just after she was awarded her certificate for 75 years of membership. Louise Wessinger put together a large gift basket of goodies which went to our favorite Senior Sokol, Georgiana!

Red Pens Transferred



Christy Banks, left, accepts symbolic red pens for marking copy from outgoing Slovo copy editor Cinnamon Whaley at the October Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors meeting. All BOD members also received a red pen. Thank you, Cinnamon, for a job well done. Welcome, Christy, as Slovo's new copy editor.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Correction to the annual membership renewal letter: Individual membership for 2011 is \$45, not \$35, as stated on the return portion of the membership renewal form which you received in the mail in December. We apologize for this error.