

## American Sokol Convention Met in Cleveland: April 25-29

Delegates from 27 of the 30 Sokol Units in the United States met April 25-29, at Embassy Suites Cleveland-Rockside in Cleveland, Ohio, hosted by Sokol Greater Cleveland. Sokol Minnesota had 27 votes; only two districts had more, Detroit with 28 and Cleveland with 36. Joan Sedlacek represented Western District and Marit Lee Kucera represented Sokol Minnesota. Brad Hess from Sokol Cedar Rapids helped Minnesota vote its share of votes, each time consulting with Joan and Marit; at least once, Brad voted his Minnesota and his Cedar Rapids votes differently. Joan went a day early to attend pre-convention meetings as a Western District Officer.



Representing Western District of American Sokol (L-R): Joan Sedlacek (Western Education and Women's Director), Marit Lee Kucera (Minnesota), Brad Hess (Cedar Rapids and Minnesota), Dan Rannells (Omaha and Western Membership), Shelley Cairnes (Crete and Wilber), Allison Gerber (Western District President), Mickey Dalton (South Omaha and Western Men's Director), Jolene Dalton (Western Bylaws). Allison was elected Financial Secretary of the 2018-2021 National Executive Board.

Jean Hruby, Chicago, was re-elected president of American Sokol. One of the major topics of discussion was membership, especially concerning youth memberships. After many alternatives, the vote was to keep the memberships basically the same, but defining youth membership more specifically. The next convention will be in Texas, in Southern District, 2022. The next American Sokol *Slet* will be in Central District, Chicago area, 2021.

The Executive Committee stressed repeatedly that American Sokol and a potential Sokol Museum are two separate entities, each with its own 501C-3 status. The Executive Committee again promoted Member-At-Large for those who are interested in Sokol principles, but do not live close to a Unit. More information: <aso@american-sokol.org>

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**21st Annual Children's Cultural Day Camp**  
June 18 - June 22

**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
June 13 and July 11, 7 p.m.

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
June 21 and July 19, 7 p.m.

**2018 Founders Film Festival**  
July 22, 1-4:30 p.m.

**August Slovo Deadline**  
July 1, 2018

### SAVE THE DATES!

**Czech that Film!**  
MSP Film Society  
August 24-26

**Czech and Slovak Festival**  
September 16, 11-5

**Slavnost, the Sokol Celebration for 1918-2018**  
October 13, 7- 11 p.m.



Marit Lee Kucera and Joan Sedlacek (above) enjoyed the coffee break co-sponsored by Sokol Minnesota during the quadrennial American Sokol Convention. Sokol Minnesota received a special thanks from the podium.

These two ads (right), courtesy of the Czech Honorary Consul, appeared in the program booklet for Sokol Greater Cleveland's *A Night at the Races*, a fundraiser at Historic Bohemian National Hall. Both Joan and Marit purchased racing horses, then bet heavily, but did not win anything.



**Salutes the 2018 American Sokol Convention**

and thanks to  
**Sokol Greater Cleveland**  
for its hospitality

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota proudly supports



**CzechSlovakCentury.org**

- ♥ 100 years: the formation of Czechoslovakia
- ♥ 50 years: the Prague Spring reform movement
- ♥ 25 years: the creation of the two separate nations of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic

**CzechSlovakCentury.org**

- ♥ lists all events pertaining to Czech and/or Slovak culture, heritage, music, dance, art, lectures, cinema, athletics, or business in Minnesota, Iowa, the Dakotas, plus western Wisconsin

## Prezidentův komentář/President's Notes

By Judy Aubrecht

Vážení členové Sokola a přátelé / Dear Sokol members and friends,

Our C.S.P.S. Hall will be a lively spot in June. From June 18 to June 22, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota will sponsor the 21st Children's Cultural Day Camp. This year campers will learn about key events in Czech and Slovak history in the past 100 years. In addition, regular camp activities will take place, including gymnastics, ethnic cooking and crafts, and Czech language. Campers enjoy selecting their own activities in the afternoon, which may include Lego castle, dragon building, or puppetry with Czech and Slovak puppets. Registration materials are available on the Sokol Minnesota website at <sokolmn.org>. Registration closes in early June, so please sign your children or grandchildren up now! This year we are able to include children who are six years old and have finished kindergarten.

Over the past several years, Sokol Minnesota's puppets, Jarda and Jitka, have appeared at many special occasions, parades, and ethnic festivals. These events have caused wear and tear; the puppets are looking a bit shabby. During the last two weeks of June, the puppets will be patched up. The puppets were created during the summer of 2004. At that time, Joseph Landsberger, then-president of Sokol Minnesota, organized the Community Gate Project, which celebrated Saint Paul's West Side's Czech and Slovak immigrants. With a grant from the West 7th Street Federation, Laurie Witzkowski, an artist with the Heart of the Beast Puppet Theater, was commissioned to lead volunteers in making the puppets. Over 300 pounds of clay were used to make molds for the faces and hands. Using paper mâché, ten layers of newspaper and paper bag strips were placed over the clay forms. Each layer took 24 hours to dry, which resulted in sturdy structures. Once completed, the paper mâché forms were removed from the clay and artistically painted. The body structures were built using PVC pipe, and giant folk dress outfits were custom sewn. With new paint, feathers, and  *kroje*  enhancements, Jarda and Jitka will again be ready to appear at events. If you like to sew or would like to help restore the giant puppets, please call Sokol Minnesota at 651-290-0542 if you're interested in helping with this project.

The 2018 Founders Film Festival premieres at the C.S.P.S. Hall on Sunday, July 22, 1 to 4:30 p.m. Sokol Minnesota and the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota are the sponsors for the event. The suggested donation for the films is \$5/person. Otherwise, please bring a Czech, Slovak, Rusyn, Moravian, or Polish dish to share at intermission. The first film is  *Our Vášek: On the Power of the Powerless*  (2012). This Polish film, with English subtitles, is about Václav Havel, and examines the connection between Czech and Polish opposition during the collapse of communism in Europe. You can enjoy ethnic refreshments during the intermission. The second film is  *Czech; Masaryk*  (2016) focuses on the life of Jan Masaryk, the son of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia. Jan Masaryk was a diplomat and politician. He served as Czechoslovakia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1940-1948.

Please continue to support Sokol Minnesota with your attendance at events, volunteering, and financial contributions. Thank you!  *Nazdar!*

## 2018 Minnesota Sokol Camp *Booya Picnic*

By Kari and Scott Muyres, Co-Chairs

The annual 2018 Sokol Minnesota *booya picnic* is  
**Sunday, August 12, Noon - 5 p.m.**  
at the historic Sokol camp!  
19201 Woodland Acres, Pine City, Minnesota 55063

Rain or shine, the picnic will be a fun-filled day complete with live entertainment, Czech and Slovak dancers, homemade cabbage rolls,  *jitrnice, koláče,*  and of course,  *booya!*

Sokol members, friends, and general public come early and stay late! We hope to see you there!

**We are always looking for helpers!**  
**If interested in volunteering, please call or text**  
**Kari or Scott Muyres at 763-226-0313**  
**or 612-387-9274.**

*Check your Czech,*  
Sokol brothers and sisters,  
to discover a hidden message!

*piknik  
dusit  
pivo  
tanec  
hry  
sluneční svit*

If you guessed the words picnic, stew, beer, dancing, games, and sunshine, then you have the necessary ingredients to attend the 88th annual Sokol Camp! *Booya Picnic!*

## Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota

### 2018 BOD (Board of Directors)

#### President

Judy Aubrecht

#### First Vice President

Denis Novak

#### Second Vice President

Ed Hamernik

#### Recording Secretary

Denise Stibal

#### Corresponding Secretary

Glynis Grostephan

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#### Financial Secretary

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Elizabeth Kaliska

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Markéta Resong

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Mary Cahill,

Women's Physical Director

Jason Brozovich,

Men's Physical Director

#### Publicity Directors

Ken and Ann Janda

#### Board of Trustees

Dan Bednar

#### Gaming Manager

Ed Hamernik, Chair

**Telephone: 651-290-0542**

Past issues of *Slovo* and  
Hall Calendar of Events:  
[www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)

## Welcome New Members

By Norm Petrik, Membership Director

At the April 19 Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors meeting, five new members were accepted:

**Heather Vikla**, Lonsdale, with interests in cultural events, films, dances, and language; **Mark Dillon**, Minnetonka, with interests in cooking, genealogy, history, Slovak language, dinners, festivals, films, and music; **Karen Varian**, Blaine, with interests in cultural events, films, history, and festivals; **Ruth Rajacich**, Roseville, with interests in dances, cooking, and crafts; and **Fred Simon**, New Prague, with interests in cultural events, films, literature, theater, language, history, genealogy, and cooking.

On May 17, Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors accepted into membership: **Barbara Tuzinski**, West St Paul; and **Lida Strot**, Maple Grove, with eight grandchildren and interests in culture camp, cooking, dinners/dances, and history. Welcome to Sokol Minnesota!

## Sokol Minnesota to Go Green

By Glynis Grostephan

Sokol Minnesota has applied for a BizRecycling grant to improve our recycling efforts. BizRecycling is a free program to help businesses in Ramsey and Washington counties start, expand, improve, and manage business recycling, including organics collection.

We currently recycle paper, cardboard, cans, and some plastics. In addition to free consultation, the BizRecycling Grant provides up to \$10,000 to expand recycling to include compost and organics. Effective recycling programs can generate significant savings. Ramsey County taxes garbage service for businesses at 70%. Recycling, including organics recycling, is not taxed.

This grant supplies recycling and composting bins, plus up to six months of compostable dishes, flatware, and take-out containers to replace disposable ones. We requested new dishes and flatware to replace disposables (and for event renters), storage carts for the dishes, and a new dishwasher. After 18 months, we can receive money from a reward program to start an on-going organics recycling program.

The color-coordinated bins have signs showing what to put in each bin.

**Blue bins = recycling:** Pop cans, water bottles, paper, cardboard, plastics with a recycling symbol.

**Green bins = compost:** Composts such as food and other organics; compostable items such as paper napkins, paper towels, wooden stir sticks.

**Gray and black bins = trash:** Anything that cannot go into the blue or green bins such as plastic stir sticks and straws, Styrofoam, any non-recyclable or non-compostable item.

Why should we Recycle? Recycling benefits the local economy. We lose money when we don't recycle. Recycling reduces energy use, decreases our demand for fossil fuels, protects our environment, and conserves natural resources.

Why should we Compost? Almost half of all food in the United States goes to waste, generating 43 billion pounds of food waste annually. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 75% of American waste is recyclable.

Look for the new bins and signs at C.S.P.S. Hall, hopefully, in June. Then, our first task is to inform members and visitors to use the proper bins. We can all work together to keep Sokol Minnesota green.

## Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors

By Glynis Grostephan, Corresponding Secretary

Sokol Minnesota greatly appreciates your donations supporting Sokol programs and the refurbishing of our historic C.S.P.S. Hall.

**LEGACY FUND** (includes matching Saint Paul STAR Grant donations): **Under \$99:** In memory of **Doris McKenney: Glynis Grostephan**. In memory of **Lilyan Tanis** (Pam Langworthy's mother): **Judy and Tom Aubrecht**. In memory of **Shirley Verner: Mary Cahill, Rand and Elliott Foster**.

**\$100 - \$499:** In memory of **Marcy Vasko Bigaouette: Mark Bigaouette**.

**GENERAL FUND: Under \$99:** In memory of **Doris McKenney: Mary Jo and Jim Chlebeczek, Darla Kolb, Elsie Roepke, Sharon and Ken Wyberg**.

**\$1000 - \$4999: Medtronic Foundation** (matching donation).

**SLOVO: Under \$99:** In memory of **Marcy Vasko Bigaouette: Mark Bigaouette**.

**GYMNASTICS: Under \$99: Mary Cahill** (for year end awards).

**Legacy Fund: \$225    General Fund: \$3,245**

**Gymnastics: \$43.50    Slovo: \$5**

**TOTAL: \$3,518.50**

**In-Kind Donations to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota:**

**Doreen McKenney** (foam boards, printing, paper, and markers for Festival of Nations booth).

**Joan Sedlacek** (four rolls of packing tape for Festival of Nations booth).

**Dorothy Sladek** (Bohemian *kroj*).

**Letty Lie** (two Slovak *kroje*).

### C.S.P.S. LEGACY FUND



In order to complete repairs to our roof and brickwork, we need your help! All donations are 100% tax deductible and will help match the \$85,000 City of Saint Paul STAR grant.

Let's get the Hall in shape to commemorate 2018: our 131st anniversary and the centenary of the birth of Czechoslovakia.

Contact Joyce Tesarek to discuss your tax-deductible donation: 612-822-6147 or <finance@sokolmn.org> *Thank you!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

To help Restore, Renovate, and Refurbish the C.S.P.S. Hall, I make a tax-deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like my gift designated:  in memory or  in honor of:

Make checks payable to **Sokol Minnesota**

Write **Legacy Fund** in the memo line

Mail to **C.S.P.S. Hall Legacy Fund**

Attn: **Treasurer**

**383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102**

Or donate online: [www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)

## Gymnastics End-of-Year Celebration By Carissa Skrivanek

After three ten-week sessions, gymnasts in the Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota gymnastics program exhibited their skills during the end-of-the-year celebration, held on April 24. Family and friends filled the Hall, as gymnasts performed routines and showcased skills learned throughout the year. Women's Head Coach Courtney Benson began the celebration with an introduction of coaches and recognition of C.S.P.S. Hall as the oldest fitness center in Minnesota, promoting a continuous program since Sokol Minnesota was founded in 1882. She highlighted the age-old Sokol philosophy of sound mind and body. Courtney also thanked all of those involved in the Sokol Minnesota gymnastics program. The legacy has been able to live on through the support shown each and every week by gymnasts, coaches, family, and friends alike.

The young beginners class, boys and girls ages 4-6, started the performance with heartwarming routines on floor, bars, and beam, followed by the girls ages 7-8. Various new somersaults, handstands, cartwheels, backbends, kick overs, as well as front and back handsprings were highlighted. Next, the boys gymnastics program wowed the audience with performances on floor, vault, and rings. The boys showcased their overall power and strength, as well as their ability to stick the landing. Building on the momentum, the girls advanced class and the girls competition class stepped up the difficulty level by performing round off back handsprings, front flips, back flips, aerials, and various choreographed routines. Lastly, the competition class performed a special number, choreographed by Ella Pratt, to the song "Walking on Sunshine." Gymnasts were recognized with ribbons and trophies, a testament to hard work gifted by the coaches. The coaches were presented with flowers and thanks, a sign of gratitude received from the gymnasts, family, and friends. Coaches expressed appreciation to Mary Cahill and all of her work behind-the-scenes to keep the gymnastics program running for over 20 years. Cahill also serves as the Director of Men's Gymnastics in the Western District. Snacks and lemonade were provided for all, and conversation was plenty, mostly about accomplishments over the past three ten-week sessions.

The celebration was a great way to end another successful year. Gymnasts



and coaches are already looking forward to the year ahead. Classes resume in September; an updated brochure will be sent once available in late summer to all third session gymnasts.

Sokol Minnesota

gymnastics provides classes for gymnasts ages 4-17, ranging from beginning to advanced; practices are held either once or twice a week, depending on the class. Our program is led by experienced and qualified instructors. We take pride in sending our coaches to National Instructor Schools hosted by Sokol units around the country. Jason Brozovich and Matt Schussler coach the growing boys program. Carissa, Charlotte, Ella, Isabelle, Teresa, and Zoe instruct the girls program. Please send enrollment inquiries, general questions, and overall feedback to <Fitness@SokolMN.org>

Above all, we appreciate your support and welcome your thoughts, as we continue to mold our program.

## Highlights from the Western District Gymnastics Competition

**By Courtney Benson, Jason Brozovich, and Carissa Skrivanek**

On Friday, April 13, seventeen Sokol Minnesota gymnasts, their families, and coaches Courtney Benson, Jason Brozovich, Carissa Skrivanek, Matt Schussler, and Mary Cahill headed to Omaha, Nebraska. Sokol South Omaha and Sokol Omaha hosted the Western District gymnastics competition on Saturday, April 14. New to competition this year were Amari, Norah, Story, Theresa, Etienne, and Jas, along with 11 returning competitors: Anna, Charlotte, Claire, Ella, Isabelle, Lily, Lydia, Zoe, Emery, Julian, and Mitchell.

It was a memorable weekend to say the least! Starting with the thunderstorms en route to Omaha and ending with the blizzard upon return to Minnesota, not to mention the excitement of the competition! Our Sokol Minnesota competitors did very well, earning solid scores, several individual all-around medals, and even a first-place team trophy in the Xcel Gold Juniors division. Cheryl Benson, head coach Courtney Benson's mother, made the trek solo all the way from Winona, Minnesota. Cheryl has become the unofficial competition

photographer. Her artistic eye has captured many great photos of our gymnasts in action. She is a huge fan of the Sokol Minnesota gymnastics program; she likes to travel to the meets each year to watch the competition group take the floor. We are very grateful for her support and appreciative of her photography skills, seen in the photo collage on page 5.

Perhaps the best part about the Western District gymnastics competition each year is meeting new people and catching up with friends who share a similar passion in gymnastics and Sokol.

Our Sokol Minnesota boys rotated from event to event with other teams and coaches, and met many new friends in the process, including Sokol Crete coach Zach Muff. Sokol Minnesota and the Western District would like to give a shout out to Zach for his long-term dedication to and participation with Sokol Crete. He is a graduating high school senior from Crete High School. He started gymnastics classes at age three, progressed through the age groups, and achieved competition Level 5 as a junior, while winning that same level at the national competition. He is a familiar face at district and



national *slety*, having attended many during his years with Sokol Crete. Furthermore, gymnastics is not his only sport. He was selected all-state in Class B football, has broken the Crete High School record in pole vault, and is a member of the 4x100 low hurdles team. He plans to attend Doane University and major in secondary education and/or math, as well as continue to participate in track. Zach has been an exceptional leader in the gym and is well liked. His friendliness was apparent to our Sokol Minnesota boys and coaches.

Sokol Minnesota greatly missed the friendly smile of Bud Benak, the longtime South Omaha gymnastics instructor who embodied the spirit of Sokol. He was a dear friend who passed away just weeks before the competition. There was a moment of silence before each meet to honor his contributions and his life.

After the competition, our 17 Sokol Minnesota gymnasts, their families, and coaches mingled with other Sokol units at a pizza party, hosted by Sokol South Omaha and Sokol Omaha. Many of us returned to the hotel where the gymnasts spent hours in the pool, while the parents got to know each other better over food and refreshments. Of course, we all monitored the weather on our phones, anticipating the drive home. Thankfully, most of the roads were clear until the Twin Cities area, where our wonderland of a weekend turned into the harsh reality of winter.

Sokol Minnesota is proud of our talented gymnasts, appreciative of our supportive families, and grateful for our excellent coaches. What a weekend to remember!

## Three Teen Dancers Graduate By Louise Wessinger

This year the *Taneční* Teens saw three of their long time dancers graduate from high school after many years of dancing.

Andrea Atcheson has been part of the *Taneční Mládež* since she was 6 years old. Her mother is Blythe Ikeda. Andrea's grandmother is Jyni Koschak, who dances with the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers. Andrea's sister Faith, who died last year, was also in the *Taneční Mládež*. Her youngest sister, Lydia, has started dancing with the preschool group. Czech and Slovak dancing is part of family life and her Slovak ancestry.

Andrea's favorite dance is the *Horehronske*. Her favorite memory of being in the group is making friends, especially her good friend Elisa. Andrea believes that commitment and hard work pay off; it is worth all the time to learn the dances well, so that they become fun to do.



The three Teen Dancers graduates: Mary, Ellen, and Andrea in kroje.

In high school, Andrea was active in Quizbowl and was an Honor Student every year. This year she made the Dean's List at Anoka Ramsey Community College. She plans to go to the University of Minnesota and pursue a degree in Health Service Management.

Ellen Ferry graduates from Saint Paul Central High School in June. Her parents are Tom and Kathy Ferry. Ellen began dancing when she was in kindergarten. Her favorite dances are *Kalamajka* and *Trojka*. Her favorite memories are of friends she has made and fun times, for example when Stefan tried to do the girls "rake dance." This year Ellen wanted to be challenged by doing the boys' dances. She did an outstanding job and it was great to have her help with the boys' routines.

In high school, she lettered seven years in Nordic Ski Team, plus she was accepted into the Ordway Honors Orchestra. You heard her play her violin at the Holiday Program. She plans to attend Michigan Tech and study computer science.

Ellen's advice to younger dancers is to stick with it. "Come to practice, listen to the music, and be a good team member. If you see a kid without a friend, talk to her; pick a different partner once in a while, and you may make a new friend."

Mary Yanta has been homeschooled by her mom. She graduated in early May. She is the daughter of James and Becky Yanta and has five siblings who also have been in the dance group. Her younger sisters, Bridget and Greta, will continue to be group members. Mary may even come to help teach the younger kids.

Mary says she enjoyed history time especially when her mom would read ancient history to her. One of her achievements was having her story *Lasciare Adesso* win a student showcase; it was published twice. Mary plans to finish her AA degree at Inver Hills Community College and continue at the University of Minnesota to get a Bachelor's Degree in Interior Design.

Mary loves dance. She has taken five years of ballet and been in Czech and Slovak dancing for at least ten years. Mary says she has loved seeing the group change throughout the years. The teen practices are especially fun and she loves the "encaustic vibe" that is ever present. The group has given her great friends and instilled the idea of teamwork. Her advice to younger dancers is to bond with the group. Her favorite dance is *Milaveska Polka*.

Andrea, Ellen, and Mary have been wonderful role models for the younger dancers. We will miss them next year and wish them the very best in life.

## Highlights from the April Board of Directors Meeting By Denise Stibal, Recording Secretary

The Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on April 19 at 7 p.m. We received a grant from the government of the Czech Republic for \$4,484 to be used for office and sound equipment. The board approved a new logo for Sokol Minnesota.

The 2018-2019 calendar is being worked on, with the next postcard to be ready in early September. Mark your calendar for July 22 to attend the 2018 Founders Film Festival.

Glynis Grostephan reported on recent donations, totaling \$5,710. She continues to work on a recycling grant. At the Czech-Slovak Fall Festival on September 16, the *Taneční Mládež* will participate as a group to plant a Tree of Freedom on the C.S.P.S. Hall grounds. ([www.stromysvobody.cz/?lang=en-US](http://www.stromysvobody.cz/?lang=en-US) is the official site, written also in English, regarding Tree of Freedom.)

The *Slavnost* (party) celebration on October 13 to commemorate **6 June/July 2018 Slovo**

the centennial of Czechoslovakia will feature recognitions, awards, music, dancing, fund raising games, appetizers and a dessert buffet, plus Czech wine and beer. Motion approved to host the annual Czech Roast Pork Dinner on October 21.

We continue to gather bids for the north wall window construction; we are considering an alternative to glass, such as wood or stucco. A new freezer is needed in the kitchen; the board approved purchase of a new unit, not to exceed \$3,000.

Don Haselbauer reported on the Board of Trustees, as well as the finance and gaming committees. Joyce Tesarek distributed a volunteer sheet for the Festival of Nations.

Mary Cahill, the Women's Physical Director, reported that the gymnasts competed in Omaha in April and did very well. All of the high school instructors expressed interest in helping with the Children's Culture Camp.

## Member News

### *In Memoriam*

#### **Condolences to Sokol members Ann Janda and Ken Janda.**

Ann's brother John Mozolak, age 90, Eatontown, New Jersey, died April 20. He very much enjoyed reading *Slovo* and attending Czech and Slovak festivals in Saint Paul and in New Prague when he visited from New Jersey.

#### **Condolences to Sokol members Pam Langworthy and Richard Sargent.** Pam's mother Lilyan Tanis passed away April 25, age 94.

**Condolences to the family of member Marie Krikava**, Glenville, who died on May 10, after a long battle with cancer, age 87. As a young bride, Marie (with German heritage) was taught the art of baking *koláčě* by a neighbor who believed a good Czech wife had to know how to make *koláčě*. She learned the lesson well; so began her reputation as the "kolache lady" in southern Minnesota. In 2013, Western Fraternal Life honored her with its national Fraternalist of the Year Award. When Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka visited Sokol Minnesota in 2016, he was introduced to four generations of the Krikava family.

Her memory was honored on May 20 at the Záře Západu Lodge No. 44 WFLA lodge in Hayward, Minnesota. The *Taneční Mládež* children and teens and Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers performed. Two of her great-grandchildren, Juna and Leo, are *Taneční Mládež* dancers.

Marie is survived by Alton, her husband of 67 years; her brother Alfred Pieper (Virginia), Mendota Heights; children: Steven Krikava (Linda Singer), Edina; Dr. Joan Krikava (James Bodine), New Ulm; Rev. James Krikava (Peggy), Prague, Czech Republic; Michael Krikava (Martha), Stillwater; and Richard Krikava (Shannon), Cloquet; plus 13 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.



**2017 Josef Mestenhauer scholar Takehito Kamata**, international student from Japan at the University of Minnesota, defended his doctoral thesis on April 30. "International Research Collaborations: An Analysis of Researchers' Perspectives in Japan and the United States" discusses among other things how cultural attitudes and traits influence research and cross-cultural cooperation.

Attending the public portion of the defense: Mirja Hanson, Japanese Honorary Consul Emeritus; Richard Stahl, Honorary Japanese Consul; Takehito Kamata; M. L. Kucera, Honorary Czech Consul, and Patricia Mestenhauer Bergh, daughter of Josef Mestenhauer who was Czech Honorary Consul, 1999-2008. (Photo by Patrick O'Leary)

## Festival of Nations 2018: May 3-6

Czechs and Slovaks had a café booth, cultural booth, folk dancers, and musicians. Full story in the August *Slovo*.



A student asked to have a photo taken with those in *kroje* in the Cultural Booth: (L-R) Joan Sedlacek, Tom Aubrecht, Judy Aubrecht, student, M. L. Kucera, and Christy Banks.



Chuck Draheim and Dawn Bulera in the Czech Slovak Café.



Since late last year, CzechSlovakCentury planners from several organizations have met on a monthly basis to coordinate activities

commemorating 100 years since the formation of Czechoslovakia, 50 years since the Prague Spring reform movement, and 25 years since the formation of the two sovereign nations of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. (L-R) At the May 10 meeting at C.S.P.S. Hall, Louise Wessinger, Judy Albrecht, John Palka, Jean Draheim, Fred Simon, Hana Matousek, and M. L. Kucera (photographer) examined two World War I commemorative hankies that belonged to Hana's Grandfather Antonin (see March *Slovo*, page 10).

Upcoming events include a *Slavnost* (party) on October 13 and a *Kroje* Style Show on November 10 at C.S.P.S. Hall, plus the Czech Country Minnesota celebration on October 27-28 which has a Mass in Czech, Polka Bands Play-off, Czech food, folk dancers, special exhibits, visits to cemeteries to honor immigrants, and more. <CzechSlovakCentury.org>



**Band Blast 2018:** 1. *The Houdeks*. 2. Storyboard showcased all the sponsors' names and logos. 3. Michaela Giancarlo Kotek and Markéta Resong prepared and served the dinner. 4. Silent Auction table netted over \$1,700 for Sokol Minnesota. 5. *Rocket Appliances*. 6. Sweet treats, many made by Hana Matousek. 7. Emcee Christopher Yeager. 8. *Boiled in Lead*. 9. At the beer tap: Lenka Hester with help from David Cammack (behind her) and Chuck Draheim served a customer. 10. Everyone danced the night away. 11. *Brass Messengers*. 12. Band Blasts' Movers and Shakers were Stáňa Gerlach, Blanka Brichta, and Jitka Sebek.

8 June/July 2018 *Slovo*



The Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities and Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota jointly organized the second annual Band Blast, the music-friendly fundraiser, on April 28 at C.S.P.S. Hall. What was the fundraising goal this year? To raise funds for the roof and exterior repairs! And what a great and fun night it was with lively, local music, homemade refreshments, and as a bonus, no blizzard!

*The Houdeks* welcomed Sokol Minnesota members and visitors with their lively music. They varied instruments, invited David Stenshoel as a guest violinist, and added just for us, *Ach synku, synku (Oh Son, Son!)*. When *Rocket Appliances* came on, the crowd started feeling a familiar dance itch and rushed from the kitchen and the silent auction table with a new jolt of energy. The line dance mini-lesson took us back across the decades and dance styles. Christopher Yeager taught a line dance and then he danced the Hungarian *czardas*. Violin, flute, and excited energy flowed in the air, brought about by *Boiled in Lead*. Almost nobody was sitting during that band's first song and just around their last song, beer sold out in the bar. Then, the blasting and booming sounded as the eleven-member *Brass Messengers* band took over the final part of the night directly on the dance floor. The subsequent conga dance line captured the joy in the hall. Nobody wanted to go home.

Many, many thanks to the participating bands: *The Houdeks*, *Rocket Appliances*, *Boiled in Lead*, and *Brass Messengers* for their time and fundraising support. We greatly appreciated Christopher Yeager who returned as the emcee of the evening and promoted the C.S.P.S. Hall throughout the night.

Thanks also to Jitka Sebek and *Česká a slovenská škola Twin Cities/Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities* and to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota for complete dedication and support of the cause. Doreen McKenney once again designed a new, vibrant promotional poster and created signs for this fundraising event. Stáňa and John Gerlach provided much hard work on the profitable silent auction.

Markéta Resong and Michaela Giancarlo Kotek prepared the excellent dinner; *Szegedinger Gulasch* (German sauerkraut beef goulash) with fresh baked bread was a hit! Hana Matousek provided yummy baked goods, which included apricot and pear *koláče*. Jana Krejčí and Thomas Sebek helped in the kitchen, while Tom Aubrecht sold food tickets. Running the bar full of Czech beer was Chuck Draheim with several volunteer bartenders, David Commack, Lenka Hester, Rick Palina, Dave Stepan, and John Topic. Jitka Sebek, Stáňa Gerlach, Richard Sargent, and Steve Earnest staffed the

entry table throughout the evening. Pam Langworthy, Jean Draheim, Christy Banks, Joyce Tesarek, Lenka Hester and daughter volunteered tirelessly at the silent auction. Our other volunteers were Jason Brozovich, Megan Cahill, Glynis Grostephan, Martina Gurgel, Barborka Karlsonova, Robert Kotek, Sandy Prochazka, and Louise Wessinger. This was truly a team effort! Thank you to all who volunteered their time and support for this event.

This year we created a showcase with all of our sponsors' names and logos displayed at the auction site. We had generous support from many donors.

Individual donations came from Blanka Brichta, Paul Brichta, Patrik Elias, Stáňa and John Gerlach, Michaela Giancarlo Kotek, Glynis Grostephan, David Hartman, Hana Matousek, Cynthia McArthur, Markéta Resong, Jitka Sebek, Ondrej and Eva Vesely, Louise Wessinger, Christopher Yeager.

Organizational Donors were The Commodore Bar <thecommodorebar.com/>; Science Museum of Minnesota <smm.org>; The Cowles Center <thecowlescenter.org>; Minnesota Landscape Arboretum <arboretum.umn.edu>; St. Paul Saints <saintsbaseball.com>; Post Consumer Brands <postconsumerbrands.com>; De Gidio's <degidios.com>; Valleyfair <valleyfair.com>; Ordway Center for the Performing Arts <ordway.org/>; Guthrie Theater <guthrietheater.org/>; Old Log Theater <oldlog.com/>; Chipotle Mexican Grill <chipotle.com/>; Lamps Ala Monkeyboy <lampsalamonkeyboy.com/>; AMC Movie Theaters <amctheatres.com>; Three Rivers Park District <threeriversparks.org>; Minnesota Twins <mlb.com/twins>; Minnesota Vikings <vikings.com/>

Band Blast added \$3,545.50 for roof and exterior repairs to C.S.P.S. Hall, thanks to admission donations, kitchen and bar sales, and a fantastic \$1,721 from the silent auction.

Should we say that the third time is (*even more*) the charm and hope for an even better Band Blast in 2019? The countdown starts now... 3, 2, 1, blast off!

**Who stood behind choosing the excellent bands,  
calling all the hard-working volunteers,  
and decorating the C.S.P.S. Hall for Band Blast?  
Drumroll, please, for BLANKA BRICHTA! Thank you!**



**Traditional Czech May Pole** (53', over 1,200 pounds) was manually hoisted on a warm, sunny May 5 in Montgomery, by a Czech-heritage team using ropes and crossed cradle poles. Wind gusts made the task a bit tricky, but the team prevailed! Afterwards royalty from Miss Czech Slovak Minnesota Pageant and Kolacky Days performed ribbon dances. All day, everyone enjoyed Polka music (including Czech Area Concertina Club with drummer Arnie Ziskovsky), lots of cold imported Czech beer, and Czech food including this Czech flag cake made by Michaela Giancarlo Kotek and her daughter. Other Sokol member volunteers included Julie Bifano, Jean Keogh, M.L. Kucera, Fred Simon.



## The Czech and Slovak Marriage: What the Partners Brought to the Union By John Palka



Condensed from remarks given at the Literary Ventures Annual Lecture on Saturday, May 19, at C.S.P.S. Hall in Saint Paul. Sponsors for Literary Ventures are the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, and the Office of the Honorary Consul for the Czech Republic.

In 1918, two neighboring peoples, the Czechs and the Slovaks, entered into a contractual marriage by forming a joint state, Czecho-Slovakia, soon renamed Czechoslovakia. On January 1, 1993, they divorced. The joint state, by then called the Czech and Slovak Federated Republic, became two independent states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. Today, they are excellent neighbors.

Given that today's relations are so good, it is fitting to ask why the two marriage partners divorced. Important insight into this question is provided by a look at history. Why did the marriage happen at all? In what ways were Czechs and Slovaks similar, and in what ways were they different? Were there alternatives to getting married, and if so, what were they? There are many questions to ask.

Both Czechs and Slovaks are members of the large Slavic family of nations. The Slavs were relative newcomers to Europe. Slavic tribes entered what we now know as Central Europe only in the 5th and 6th centuries C.E., probably from north of the Black Sea. Their language included a range of dialects. The distinct Slavic languages we recognize today only differentiated from each other over time.

The Slavic predecessors of today's Czechs organized into principalities starting around the 9th century C.E. In 1212, the Duchy of Bohemia was elevated to the Kingdom of Bohemia. The first king was Otakar I of the Přemyslid dynasty. The Kingdom of Bohemia established by the Czechs had a continuous existence from its founding until 1918.

Additional, non-Slavic tribes from the east, the Magyars, conquered the Danube River Basin and established the Kingdom of Hungary in the year 1000 C.E. It too lasted until 1918. The forerunners of today's Slovaks were included in this kingdom as a Slavic population occupying a dozen or so counties in the north, under the Tatra Mountains. Never during the thousand years of the Kingdom of Hungary was there a territory that was designated as Slovak. Rather, the Slovak-dominated region was known as *Felvidék*, which means Upper Hungary. Slovaks struggled mightily to avoid being turned into *de facto* Magyars, *magyarized*.

The differentiation of the Czech and Slovak languages became evident at about the time of the establishment of the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary, though a continuum of dialects spoken in small towns and villages from the west of Bohemia all the way to Ukraine was still clear well into the 19th century. Even today the language spoken in the portion of Moravia that abuts the Slovak Republic is, in some respects, intermediate between Czech and Slovak.

Other aspects of culture were similarly graded. Czech music and dance, for example, were influenced by German culture while Slovak music and dance were influenced by the Magyar and Romani cultures, but it is hard to draw a sharp geographical dividing line between the two. The same holds for traditional folk dress, the *kroje*, that we all love.

Thus, when it came to the bi-national marriage, the Czechs and Slovaks brought similar languages and cultures, but very different histories, to the wedding.

Prague, with its great university and vibrant intellectual life, had long served as a magnet for scholars and thinkers from far and wide, including Slovaks. Many leaders and events important to Slovaks were connected with Prague. However, while intellectual contact and closely similar languages served to maintain a link between Czechs and Slovaks, the separate trajectories of the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary produced many deep differences. These played an important role once Czechoslovakia was established. Here are some examples.



This view of Old Bratislava is from across the *Dunaj* (Danube River). The city, then known as Pozsony, served as the capital and the coronation city of Hungary for several hundred years following the invasion of the Ottoman Turks in 1526. The castle on the left was among main defensive structures of the kingdom. It was heavily damaged and burned during the Napoleonic wars. During my childhood, it was only a ruin. Rebuilt under the Communists, it now serves primarily as a museum and provides formal chambers for governmental functions. The Cathedral of St. Stephen on the right was the coronation church. The old coronation procession route from the castle to the cathedral is marked with brass medallions (insert) in the cobble pavement.



Prague Castle has been a landmark and a seat of government for over 1,000 years. Dating back to the 9th century and reputed to be the largest ancient castle in the world, it houses many institutions within its compound, including the seat of the government, St. Vitus Cathedral, and many others. This view is from across the Vltava River.

Industrial vs. agricultural economy. The Kingdom of Bohemia became heavily industrialized. When Czechoslovakia was being established, an estimated 70-80% of the industry of Austria-Hungary was concentrated there. All of Hungary, in contrast, remained overwhelmingly agricultural. Vast numbers of Slovaks were poor, not middle class.

Transportation. When Hungary finally built a railroad network, the lines linked the Slovak counties to Budapest, not to Prague. Consequently, when Czechoslovakia was

established, transportation between what little Slovak industry there was and Czech centers was awkward at best, and very expensive.

Banking. Czech banking, like industry, was highly developed. Slovaks had only a handful of their own banks, and they were small ones. The larger banks in Budapest had always been choosy about making loans to Slovaks, but with the establishment of Czechoslovakia even this meager source of financial flexibility became unavailable. Czech banks readily served Czech industry, but tended to be wary of loans to Slovaks.

Education. Not only had higher education long been unavailable to Slovaks in their own language, but even elementary education had progressively shifted to instruction in Magyar, an important expression of the official Hungarian government policy of *magyarization*. In comparison, Czech-language education was highly developed and abundant. When Czechoslovakia was established, large numbers of Czech teachers came to Slovak schools to help out. This was an essential and welcome step in advancing education in Slovakia, but it also had two difficult consequences both of which bred resentment: (a) not many of the Czech teachers learned much Slovak, so Slovak children were still not being taught in their own language; and (b) within a decade or so, many new Slovak teachers had been trained, but the Czechs were then well-established in the school system. It would have been very unfair to fire them and replace them all with Slovaks. This dilemma was ultimately resolved by building more and more schools and staffing the new ones with Slovaks, and also by the gradual retirement of the Czechs.

There were many more examples of internal difficulties that arose quite directly from the very different histories of the Czechs and the Slovaks.

Were there alternatives to the Czech-Slovak marriage? Yes, there were. There is a rich and variegated intellectual history relating to the political configuration of Central Europe. Here are some highlights.

Pan-Slavism. Pan-Slavism was a political and cultural philosophy that put forward a vision of the unity of all the Slav peoples. It came to the fore with the rise of nationalism all over Europe, especially in the mid-19th century. The Habsburgs in Vienna saw it as a threat because so many of their subjects (Czechs, Slovaks, Croatians, Serbs, and others) were Slavs. Collectively they were more than half of the total population of the monarchy. If they got together and initiated collective action, Vienna would find it hard to maintain control.

Restructuring Austria-Hungary. Intellectuals in Austria-Hungary thought hard about how to reorganize the monarchy and its parliament so that their own minority nations could gain fair treatment. The most completely developed proposal was the work of the Romanian scholar and political leader Aurel Popovici, which he presented in 1906 in his book *Vereinigte Staaten von Gross-Österreich* (The United States of Greater Austria).

This was not simply an intellectual exercise. The last heir to the Habsburg throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was very interested in such proposals, primarily as a means for reducing the power of the Magyars. He gathered around himself a think-tank to advise him on how he might implement a federal structure once he ascended to the throne. Among those advisers were Popovici and my own grandfather, Milan Hodža. On June 28, 1914, however, the archduke and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo; within weeks Europe was plunged into World War I. After the war, restructuring took a very different turn.

Rebuilding Hungary after the war. Magyars saw Slovaks as integral to Hungary. There were many overtures from Hungarian leaders to Slovak leaders trying to entice Slovaks to stay. This was true not only as the end of the war approached and the defeat of Austria-Hungary became increasingly certain, but even after the war was

over. As Czechoslovakia was being established, the Hungarians even invaded Slovakia militarily.

In short, forming a joint state was not the only option for Czechs and Slovaks.

Why did the marriage happen at all? One very powerful factor was that a small handful of leaders, most notably Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, wanted it to happen. Without their initiative, a shared state might well not have been created in 1918. Even Masaryk, however, based his vision on past history such as we have been looking at. He did not invent Czechoslovakia out of his personal imagination. Czechs and Slovaks were genuinely linked by their oldest history, by language, by many aspects of culture, and by interchanges that took place over the course of centuries despite the separation of the two groups into separate kingdoms. These factors overrode the forces of separation.

Why did the divorce happen? Initially, there was general good will and enthusiasm for establishing and building Czechoslovakia. Soon, however, difficulties surfaced. I listed some of them above, consequences of the long separation of Czechs and Slovaks. There were others, intrinsic to the new state itself. Here are two examples.

Representative democracy. Democracy is a great ideal, but the one citizen—one vote approach has an inherent difficulty, numbers. There were roughly twice as many Czechs in Czechoslovakia as there were Slovaks. Thus, whenever an issue arose in which Czech and Slovak interests conflicted, the Czechs in the parliament would always win. This situation, frustrating for Slovaks, was built into the constitution.

Czechoslovakism. There had never been a Czechoslovak nation. However, when Masaryk and his colleagues were pushing the Allied powers for the recognition of Czechoslovakia as a new state, they felt that their case would be greatly strengthened if they could argue that this state would serve the needs and aspirations of a single people, the Czechoslovaks. In addition, there were more Germans on the territory of the new state than there were Slovaks, but the leaders did not want to give the Germans significant political power. Czechoslovaks would far outnumber Germans. Thus, the Czechoslovak nation was invented. In the new country's first census, in 1920, there was a count of Czechoslovaks but no count of Czechs and Slovaks separately.

Slovaks had long struggled against losing their identity to the Magyars of Hungary. Now it felt like this identity was abruptly lost by the decree of the very government that was supposed to give Slovaks unprecedented advantages. No wonder that Czechoslovakism bred deep hostility among many Slovaks.

The Czech-Slovak divorce was basically engineered by politicians, notably the Czech Václav Klaus and the Slovak Vladimír Mečiar. No public opinion poll ever showed the population at large favoring divorce; the leaders carefully avoided giving the people a say through a plebiscite. Nonetheless, many factors like those I have listed here, both historical ones and those developing within the marriage, contributed powerfully to the atmosphere within which the divorce took place. It is a tribute to the mutual affection between Czechs and Slovaks that existed then, and still exists today, that the divorce was peaceful and that today's relations between the two republics are a model of how nations can relate to one another.



John Palka



This is Part 2- continued from the May *Slovo*: František's new life began very soon after his return from Italy. He married his Miss M. later that same year, in 1919. When their first child was born in May 1920, František named her Vlasta; the Czech word *vlast* means one's native country. František rejoined his Sokol unit and later when he moved his family to the bigger Moravian city of Přerov for work, he joined a Sokol unit there. In the 1920s, the men who fought in World War 1, and especially the Legionnaires, were admired and received first-rate treatment from everyone in this new nation.

František was hired by the largest department store in Přerov, whose owner, Mr. Pražák, wanted to help as many of these young men as possible. František's career progressed and he eventually became the manager of the men's department. He had a family home built in what was then a new part of town.

He was also successful in Sokol Přerov where he was one of the key people responsible for planning, overseeing, and bringing to completion a big project, the beautiful new Sokolovna on the quay of river Bečva. Built as a large multiple purpose structure, it is still there. Since it was built in the 1930s, it has served thousands of Sokol

gymnasts, Sokol and civic events, Přerov citizens, and many occasions.

The 1920s and 1930s were good decades for the new republic. Young people were full of enthusiasm for helping to bring their country into a new order. Many volunteered for teaching jobs in then-underdeveloped, mostly agrarian, Slovakia. One of these young teachers became, much later of course, a member of our Sokol unit in Saint Paul, George Schnajd; our older members might remember George.

It was a time of rapid industrial, economic, and social development for the new Czechoslovakia. During those two decades, Czechoslovaks acquired a very good name for products exported to other European countries and even to other continents. For instance, Czech crystal glass and porcelain products from Karlovy Vary and elsewhere were exported to many reigning royal families in Europe, as well as to the Papal and the English royal households.

The Czech brewery in České Budějovice called *Budvar* struck a deal in early 1930s with the American Anheuser Busch company when it signed a license



(Front) Marie, Dagmar, František.  
(Behind) Alena, Slávek, and Vlasta (Hana's mother).

agreement for *Budvar* to be made in the United States, hence you can now buy Budweiser beer anywhere; although, sadly, the product has not retained the taste of the original. The Brno engineering and machinery company *Brněnské Strojírny* established itself as a first-class producer of machinery and weaponry; a reputation it has maintained for decades.

The *Bata* shoe company in Zlín, Moravia, which grew from a small shoe shop around the turn of the last century into a large international company, was family owned and worker friendly under



### UPCOMING EVENTS

**July 22: Founders Film Festival, 1 p.m., C.S.P.S. Hall, Our Vašek: On the Power of the Powerless (2012)** 52 minutes. This Polish film about Václav Havel, first president of the Czech Republic, directed by Krystyna Krauze, explores the relationship between the Polish and Czech opposition and details what happened to end totalitarian regimes in Europe. Havel was awarded the Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest honor, in 1993.

**2 p.m. Intermission:** meet and greet.

**2:30 p.m. Masaryk (2016)** 114 minutes. Directed by Julius Ševčík, this Czech film traces the life of diplomat and politician Jan Masaryk, son of Czechoslovakia's co-founder Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Jan served as the country's minister of foreign affairs and died suspiciously in 1948, as communists were taking control. Suggested donation: \$5. Proceeds benefit CSCC programming.

**August 11, Saturday, 11 a.m. C.S.P.S. Hall, Rooted in Time, An Architect for All Seasons, A Celebration of the Works of Slovakia's Dušan Jurkovič** by Mark Dillon, presenter, Minnesota Bureau Chief, *Polish-American Journal*, fourth generation Slovak-American. Discover Jurkovič's impact on civic and residential architecture of Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic; how Jurkovič's designs were informed by Rusyn folk motifs; and remembering the fallen: Jurkovič's 35 World War I cemeteries in Poland. Sponsored by the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota (CSCC) and Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota on the 150th anniversary of Jurkovič's birth in August 1868. Suggested donation \$7, reception to follow.

**August 12, Sunday, 2018 St. Mary's Preservation Committee presents Czech Heritage Festival, Bechyn, Minnesota.** Entertainment: Mollie B, host of the Mollie B Polka Party & POLKA will provide music at the Polka Mass, plus entertainment on stage all afternoon.

Mollie B is an award-winning vocalist, TV show host, instrumentalist, performer, clinician, dancer, CD producer, a former music teacher, choreographer, and more. The Jim Busta Band, featuring Karl Hartwich, will join Mollie. New this year: Colton Tupy and the Sand Creek Connection. Colton, the very talented 15-year-old concertina player, is joined by Arnie Ziskovsky on the drums; they play after Mass under the big tent. Also: The Sleepy Eye Area Concertina Club is always a crowd pleaser. The Bechyn Czech Folk Dancers perform for the 25th time. Since 1994, these young people have carried on the tradition of Czech folk dancing in the little hamlet of Bechyn. <info@bechynczechfest.org>

**August 24-26, Friday through Sunday, Czech that Film!,** Minneapolis Saint Paul Film Society, Saint Anthony Main Theatre, 115 South East Main Street, Minneapolis. Read complete list of current Czech and Slovak films in August *Slovo*.

(continued from page 12) the then-business-friendly new Czechoslovak government. A very democratic-thinking man, Mr. Tomáš Baťa, Sr., not only built housing for his workers, but his company also had its own training school and had many advanced technologic elements built in the very modernistic, stylish factory buildings, like air conditioning. Sadly, in the late 1940s and 1950s, with the changes in the work environment due to the Communist era, the Baťa company disintegrated into a poorly government-run shoe industry. Today there is a very nice Baťa museum on the former company campus. The brand is still famous worldwide, but no longer Czech. For František, the 1920s and 1930s were happy years. His family grew to four children, daughters Vlasta, Alena, and Dagmar, plus one son, Vlastislav, called Slávek. All of the children participated in Sokol gym activities as soon as they grew out of diapers. Marie (Miss M.) spent many hours at the old Singer sewing machine making various outfits for them. The whole family happily joined other Sokol families for frequent events and outings.

However, dark clouds came on the horizon in the mid-1930s as the Nazis rose to power in neighboring Germany. The whole of Europe was watching with a wary eye. Sokols had their international gymnastic convention

planned for the summer of 1938. The Czech word *sokol* means falcon in English; Sokols called their conventions *slet* for the gathering of falcons. Our late Sokol Minnesota member, Georgiana Dolejsi, was part of the American Sokol delegation to this *slet* in 1938; she was 20 years old. My mother Vlasta, an 18-year-old junior, represented Sokol Přerov, along with her father František and many others.

That year, the *slet* was of special significance; the whole nation wanted to show its strength, readiness, and resolve to not bend to Nazi propaganda and threats. The Czech military had been working intensively to strengthen the Czech border with Germany and to get ready to fight if necessary. Earlier that year, on March 12, 1938, the Germans marched into Austria, which understandably worried Czechs. Many former Legionnaires, now Sokol members and officers, would support their government no matter what it took.

That summer of 1938, unknown yet to the thousands of *slet* participants and thousands more spectators and visitors from abroad, no matter how well everyone performed, no matter how much defiance the Sokols displayed in their show of strength, it was their last gathering for many years to come. What followed was the Munich Agreement of September 29, 1938.

Czechoslovakia had a large German population living alongside the border with Germany, called Sudetenland. The Munich agreement allowed Germany to annex that region. Czechoslovakia was betrayed and sacrificed by the Allies to appease Hitler; Czech government representatives in Munich were not even allowed at the proceedings. They were simply told the results. The Sudetenland German population greeted the German army with open arms.

But this peace in Europe did not last long, as Hitler had other plans. On March 15, 1939, the German army marched into and occupied the rest of our country. Hence began *Protektorát Čechy a Morava/Protectorat Böhmen und Mähren* with six dark years of Nazi rule.

Within a few days all of the prominent Czech government officials, ministers, high army and police officers, and political leaders were jailed. As the Germans were marching in, some Czech officials managed to get out of the country; later a Czech government in exile was established in London.

František, as a president of Přerov Sokol unit, which was a large organization with thousands of members, knew that it was only a matter of time before the feared Gestapo, the German State Police, would knock on his door. Soon František was at war again.

Read Part 3 in the August 2018 issue of *Slovo*.



## Slavnost Saturday, October 13, 7-11 p.m., a party at C.S.P.S. Hall

to celebrate with awards, recognitions, music, dancing, fun fund-raising games, small bites and desserts, Czech wine and beer.

Tickets start at \$25 (Reserve tickets starting June 15) 383 Michigan, Saint Paul sokolmn.org

**SAVE  
the  
DATE!**



## Miss Czech and Slovak Minnesota Queen Pageant

was delayed a week due to a thunder blizzard that dropped 12" of snow in Montgomery on April 13-15.

On April 21, Heather Vikla became the 29th Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Queen. She was the Princess in 2014-2015.

Czech Helpers are standing here with the 2018 Royalty: Melanie Le Brun, Miss Congeniality and Second Princess Michelle Vlasak, Queen Heather Vikla, Czech Helper Hayden Dietz, First Princess Mary Carson, and Czech Helper Alenka Jans.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, along with the Czech Honorary Consul M.L. Kucera, awarded the new royalty membership in Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota for the year 2019. (Photo: Wade Young, *Montgomery Messenger*)

*Performing Captivity, Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays from the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto*, edited by Lisa Peschel. Seagull Books: London, New York, Calcutta. Expanded English edition 2014. Previously published as a bilingual Czech-German edition, 2008. 446 pages. Available in libraries and bookstores.

Lisa Peschel's book, *Performing Captivity, Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays from the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto*, is a collection of outstanding plays, cabarets, couplets, songs, and children's works written in the remarkably rich cultural life of ghetto prisoners who lived under brutal conditions. All plays were written by Czech and Austrian Jews. Maps, numerous illustrations, a pronunciation guide, a lengthy introduction by the editor, glossary, and a bibliography enhance this excellent book about culture in the ghetto at Terezín in Czech/Theresienstadt in German.

Even under extremely adverse conditions, these prisoners drew and painted; composed, played and sang musical works; and wrote poems, essays, and plays. Concerts, opera, and theater flourished. Naturally the question comes to mind: why did prisoners in the ghetto put such effort into a vibrant cultural life?

In his prologue to the book, renowned author and Terezín survivor Ivan Klíma wrote, "It is significant that people become most aware of the meaning of art in moments of crisis; in moments when they come face to face with death; when they become fully aware of the irreversibility of fate." Similarly, another survivor quoted by Peschel wrote, "In spite of all the harassment, dirt, ugliness, and horror, or rather, exactly because of them, we all sought stimulus through which it would be possible to live and draw hope. It was in the cabaret ... that we forgot about the powerlessness of our daily lives."

The fortress town of Terezín was constructed in 1870, about 60 kilometers northwest of Prague, near today's Czech-German border, to defend the northern borders of Austria against the Prussians. Built for 10,000 inhabitants, Terezín held several times as many captives. It was used by the Nazis from 1940 to 1945 as a prison; as a transit camp to hold Jews who were sent to slave-labor and death camps; as a decimation camp where prisoners died from the horrible conditions; as a ghetto to send

elderly and privileged Jews; and as a 'model' ghetto.

When the International Committee of the Red Cross came to inspect in 1944, a carefully orchestrated and inaccurate scenario of Terezín as a Jewish settlement was presented. The charade for hoodwinking visitors included a bakery, bank, performance of the children's opera *Brundibár*, and a multi-sink bathroom used for only one day, which is still on display today.

There were no gassings at Terezín, although sixteen men were executed by hanging in January and February 1942 because they tried to send letters to their families and buy food in the local shops. All prisoners were forced to work; more than 33,000 died in the fortress due to exhaustion, hunger, illness, and despair. In daily life, they dealt with fleas, lice, bedbugs, and epidemics. In death, their bodies were burned in a crematorium outside the fortress walls.

The toll, as Peschel reported, was brutal: "Of the approximately 15,000 Austrian Jews deported to Terezín, only about 1,700 survived in the ghetto or in other camps. Of the approximately 74,000 Jews deported from Bohemia and Moravia, about 7,000 were liberated in the ghetto; of those who were deported 'to the east,' that is, to various concentration and slave-labor camps, only about 3,000 returned."

Peschel researched theatrical performance in Terezín for her master's degree from the University of Texas and doctorate from the University of Minnesota. She spent several semesters in the Czech Republic, interviewing Terezín survivors, and searching for previously unpublished scripts. In 2011, she was appointed lecturer in theatre at the University of York in the United Kingdom.

Gwen is coordinator of the Literary Ventures: Czech and Slovak book discussion group. For more information, got to <[www.cs-center.org](http://www.cs-center.org)> or contact <[gwen@cs-center.org](mailto:gwen@cs-center.org)>.

Join Czech and Slovak Literary Ventures members in September for another year of book discussions. The Czech and Slovak Cultural Center's website will list the new schedule in late summer.

### Sokol Minnesota Annual Memberships

**Renewals:** Individual \$50; Couple \$90. Senior \$40 (over age 65); Senior couple \$80. **New memberships:** Individual \$55; Couple \$95.

This includes a one-time \$5 registration fee with our national organization, American Sokol Organization. Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's annual membership runs from January 1 to December 31. Dues are reduced for members joining after June 30.

Membership applications: <[www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)> or by request from Norm Petrik (612-822-6147).

Please send your completed membership application and check to

**Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, Attn: Membership, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102**

### Honorary Consuls, plus Sokol Minnesota Committee Chairs (not seated on the BOD)

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## Czech-American? Zoom-In!



Inside the Czech Embassy's main hall in Washington, D.C., the winning photo images from *Czech-American? Zoom-In!* were on display for the almost 4,000 visitors attending the open house on May 12 to celebrate 100 years of Czech Independence and to discover Czech-US connections across America during its annual open house.

Five of the 19 winning photos came from Minnesota: Sokol Minnesota members Jitka Sebek, Martina Gurgel, and Marit Lee Kucera, plus Marisa Rotter (both Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota and Miss Czech-Slovak USA 1998-1999), Montgomery, whose photo is the poster photo; and Brooke Weber, Rochester. In words from the Embassy, "As part of the centennial commemorations, the Czech Embassy reached out to communities across the United States and welcomed Americans of Czech heritage to submit a photo of what it means to be Czech-American to them. The collection, which is the best of the submitted photos, depicts utmost pride and immense love for Czech heritage, language, intellect, theater, cuisine, products, and life. Underlined with a bit of nostalgia, yet brightly glowing with continuation and sincere celebration, the photos of the young, old, and remembered clearly demonstrate the vivid and thriving inspiration brought about by Czech-American transatlantic ties and friendships in the past, present, and the next centennial." See: <[www.mzv.cz/washington/en/culture\\_events/news/photo\\_exhibition\\_czechamerican\\_zoom\\_in.html](http://www.mzv.cz/washington/en/culture_events/news/photo_exhibition_czechamerican_zoom_in.html)>



**1. Martina Gurgel** (Exhibit Photo 14): Children just finished a theatre play based on the book *Rybáři a hastrmani* by Miloš Kratochvíl. It was their second play inspired by the very popular Czech author, who from Prague emailed "break a leg" wishes and personal notes to the little Americans who enjoy his stories and poetry.



**2. Jitka Sebek** (Exhibit Photo 10): Czechs are used to bringing edible treasures from the forests, and our Czech-American children learn how to pick mushrooms from us and their grandparents. The hobby is deeply rooted within us and stays with you through the generations. What other ethnic group picks specifically chanterelles? **3. Marit Lee Kucera** (Exhibit Photo 18): REMEMBERING: Paul Onderka had been living and working in the United States for many years when he died unexpectedly in 2013. He was buried at the Resurrection Cemetery in Saint Paul. His family honored him by placing his name and picture on the family gravestone in Krnov, Czech Republic. They sent photographs to place on his grave in the US, which was also decorated with flowers, a red/white/blue Czech ribbon, and two Czech grave votive candles on Memorial Day 2017.



Captions for the other Minnesota pictures: **Marissa Rotter** (Exhibit Photo 1) A young Czech-American boy enjoys the excitement of our favorite celebration of the year, Montgomery Kolacky Days Grand Day Parade. **Brooke Weber** (Exhibit Photo 6) Whether enjoying Czech music, visiting friends in Moravia, or practicing pronouncing the letter ř, as a Czech-American, I always strive to remember, appreciate, and carry on the culture of my Bohemian grandmother (born in Wisconsin in October 1918) and her family, no matter where I am in the world.

**PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE:** The *Slovo* is published ten times per year 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 *Slovo* Advisory Committee welcomes submissions. Send news, articles, and pictures digitally to <[slovo@sokolmn.org](mailto:slovo@sokolmn.org)>. **The deadline for the August 2018 issue is July 1.**

This issue of *Slovo* will be archived on the Sokol Minnesota website by June 30: <[www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)>

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Email: <[slovo@sokolmn.org](mailto:slovo@sokolmn.org)>, phone: 651-290-0542, or write: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102. *Thank you!*

Member Volunteer *Slovo* staff: Marit Lee Kucera, managing editor; Madison Jerde, copy editor; Mary Kucera, production assistant; Deb Ziskovsky, labels; Martina Gurgel and Joyce Tesarek, photographers; Doreen McKenney, ad designer; Mary Cahill, mailing production; Joan Sedlacek, mailing; with Christy Banks, Arlene Hamernik, Ann Janda, Ken Janda, Norm Petrik, Jitka Sebek, advisors. Photos: Cheryl Benson, Blanka Brichta, Martina Gurgel, M.L. Kucera, Hana Matousek, Joyce Tesarek, Patrick O'Leary, John Palka, Jitka Sebek, Louise Wessinger, Wade Young of *Montgomery Messenger*. Collages by Martina Gurgel.

May *Slovo* mailing party volunteers: Glynis Grosstephan, Wendy Bednar, M. L. Kucera.



**EVENTS AT C.S.P.S. HALL  
ATTEND AND VOLUNTEER!  
Sokol Minnesota Events**

**21st Annual Children's Cultural Day Camp** • June 18-22  
Ethnic crafts, cooking, gymnastics, Czech language, and more.

**2018 Founders Film Festival** (see page 12)  
Sunday, July 22, 1-4:30 p.m. • C.S.P.S. Hall

**See the Sokol Puppets Jitka and Jarda at  
Burnsville International Festival** • July 21, 3-9 p.m.  
**Kolacky Days Parade, Montgomery** • July 29, noon

**The annual 2018 Sokol Minnesota Booya Picnic**  
Sunday, August 12, Noon-5 p.m. • Historic Sokol camp, Pine City

**Czech that Film!** • Friday through Sunday, August 24-26  
Minneapolis Saint Paul Film Society <mspfilm.org>

**28th Czech and Slovak Festival** • C.S.P.S. Hall  
Sunday, September 16, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Folk dancers, live music, ethnic food, childrens' games, more!

[www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota](http://www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota)  
Check for event updates:  
[www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)



**Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* June/July 2018**



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Missing: Denise Stibal, Recording Secretary; Elizabeth Kaliska, Sergeant at Arms. (Photo taken at BOD Meeting, May 17, 2018)