



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

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

May Slovo articles
due April 1

Sokol Gift Shop
open by appointment

**Curbside Spring
Koláče Bake Sale**
Saturday, April 3
Curbside Pickup
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
(info on adjacent)

Easter Saturday Activities
Saturday, April 3
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
(info on page 8)

**Outdoor
Craft and Flea Market**
Saturday, May 1
9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
(info on page 12)

**Saturday
April 3** 20
21

**Spring Koláče
Bake Sale**

Apricot, cream cheese, poppy, prune, or raspberry koláč \$1 each

Curbside

Hosted by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota

PICK UP 10a -2p
C.S.P.S. Hall
383 Michigan St., Saint Paul, MN 55102

Please place your Curbside order
by contacting: food@sokolmn.org
or call/text: 952-941-0426

Payment

Orders must be prepaid and received
by March 30, 2021 via:
PayPal: www.sokolmn.org/cc/
or check: payable and mailed to Sokol Minnesota

For status of events scheduled for the C.S.P.S. Hall, check our calendar at
www.sokolmn.org/at-our-hall/hall-calendar/

Prezidentův komentář/President's Notes by Dave Stepan

As my wife Darnell and I travel the United States, I am constantly reminded that the running of our Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota is not reliant on me or any one person. While we have been traveling, the business of Sokol Minnesota continues.

We all have shoes to fill and the more our feet are moving in a common direction, the more stable our organization will be. We have room for improvement, as does any volunteer organization, but with your support of time, talent, and monetary gifts, there really is not anything we can't do. There is a committee working to help start a Youth Activities Group geared toward participants in gymnastics, dance, and the Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities (*škola*). Sometimes participants are in one or two groups, but the groups overall do not interact. I am hoping we can have a structure that welcomes them into our community outside of their specific physical or educational activity.

Our Youth Leadership Awards will be given again this year. If you have a son or daughter, grandson, or granddaughter involved with Sokol Minnesota, please have them apply at www.sokolmn.org at the Classes tab. Thank you to M. L. Kucera, Czech Honorary Consul, and Louise Wessinger for their assistance in funding the award again this year. Thank you also to Tom Aubrecht, as well as his sister Susan Houlton and her family, for making the initial donation, in memory of his late wife Judy, to the Youth Leadership Award Endowment Fund. If you would be willing to help endow this Award, please contact finance@sokolmn.org

I am currently writing from Zion National Park, after visiting Arches, Canyonlands, Capital Reefs, and Bryce Canyon National Parks. Last week I was snowboarding in Vail, where my younger two daughters, Michelle and Nicole, were able to join Darnell and me. I followed my daughters down black diamonds at Vail's Mountains, happy to come away with only sore muscles and no broken bones. Having only snowboarded at midwestern mountains, the differences between the Rockies and our local pincushions are day and night. We are continuing on our way west, taking in America the beautiful. I have seen the wonders of the "Hoodoos" who the Paiute Indians believed were turned to stone by the all-powerful Coyote Spirit. The stone spires remind me of Aadršpach-Teplice Rocks in the Czech Republic.

I know we are not yet out of this COVID malaise, but the page is turning:

- We are planning to hold the 23rd Annual Czech and Slovak Children's Cultural Day Camp June 14-18.
- The Curbside Spring *Koláče* Bake Sale is April 3.
- Czech & Slovak Literary Ventures continues.
- Czech and Slovak Language classes were again popular and ran through March.
- *Kolo* Sokol bike club is just waiting for the snow to melt.
- Boys gymnastics has begun again, with strict limits based on state COVID guidelines. Girls classes are on hold.
- The Outdoor Craft and Flea Market will take place May 1 at the C.S.P.S. Hall parking lot. Outdoor gatherings are limited to 50 people under the Minnesota COVID Stay Safe guidance of March 15.
- The Second Annual Mushroom Hunt will be May 23 (sign up early at education@sokolmn.org because we are limiting numbers).
- Members/Volunteers picnic will be June 6 in White Bear Lake. I hope you all will come.

While I do not like to put in a plug for cash, I want you to look toward your employer or former employers. My wife Darnell's former employer, 3M, has a program in which they donate on your behalf annually if you are a volunteer for a non-profit group. Whether that group is your local food shelf or Sokol Minnesota, it is a way to support organizations you feel are important enough to give your time and talents.

Please keep Sokol Minnesota in your donation plans. *Nazdar!*



Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota 2021 BOD (Board of Directors)

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Telephone: 651-290-0542

Past issues of *Slovo* and
Hall Calendar of Events:
www.sokolmn.org

**Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota provides fitness and community
for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural,
and social programs for children, teens, and adults.**

Information on our programs, calendar of events, membership, C.S.P.S. Hall rentals,
and gift shop, plus e-addresses for our board, program directors, volunteer staff,
and the Czech Honorary Consul, as well as *Slovo* past issues, are available at
www.sokolmn.org or www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota



L-R: Sokol Omaha President Dan Rannells, Sokol South Omaha President and Men's Physical Director Buddy Benak, Sokol Minnesota Women's Physical Director Mary Cahill, Megan Brozovich with Eddie, Sokol Minnesota Men's Physical Director Jason Brozovich, Western District Education Director/Historian Joan Sedlacek from Sokol Minnesota.

The Minnesota crew made the journey to Omaha the weekend of February 20 to pick up the donated equipment.

Sokol Minnesota Gymnastics Staff Thanks Donors

The Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota gymnastics staff gives many thanks to the following for their generosity:

- American Sokol for its grant of \$325
- the Western District for its donation of \$250 to help offset expenses associated with opening our C.S.P.S. Hall after COVID
- Sokol South Omaha for its donation of gymnastic equipment because of the sale of its Sokol Hall



Sokol Omaha gymnastics equipment loading in process. The truck was full when it departed.



Where there is a will, there is a way.

Announcing the Youth Leadership Award for 2021

The Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Youth Leadership Award was started last year as a way to recognize and encourage outstanding participation of youth members of Sokol Minnesota and to foster a future generation of leaders and members for our organization. In 2020, three Sokol Minnesota youths were the first to receive this award, which was accompanied by a \$300 cash prize. An additional award was given for the best essay and the recipient received a \$100 prize.

The criteria for this award are as follows. Applicants must be in their junior or senior year of high school and applicants and their parent(s) need to be paid members of Sokol Minnesota for at least the current and preceding calendar year. The applicants must actively participate in one or more Sokol Minnesota youth activities, such as *Taneční* Teens dancers, gymnastics, Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities, or Czech and Slovak Children's Cultural Day Camp as a junior leader or teacher, and be a regular volunteer at Sokol Minnesota events. Of course, because of COVID, these activities have not been possible, but prior involvement and help with curbside events will be credited.

Applicants will be expected to complete the Youth Leadership Award application form, write a maximum 300-word essay about how their participation in Sokol Minnesota activities has impacted their life, have a participation verification form signed by an adult director of their youth activity, a letter of recommendation from an adult director, and forms signed by adult leaders of Sokol Minnesota events at which the applicant was a volunteer. Applications are due July 1, 2021.

All forms and further details can be found on the website Sokolmn.org

Applicants can apply multiple times, but may receive the award only once. Up to three awards (\$300) will be given this year and there will also be an award (\$100) given for the best essay. Award recipients will be announced by September 1. Awards will be presented at the annual Czech and Slovak Festival on September 26.

For questions, contact:

Blanka Brichta at brichta.blanka@gmail.com
or Louise Wessinger at louisewessinger@msn.com

Youth Leadership Award Endowment Fund Created

In 2020, the first year of the Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Youth Leadership Award, the prizes awarded were funded by Sokol Minnesota as well as by donations from Louise Wessinger and M. L. Kucera, Czech Honorary Consul. The 2021 awards have the same funding.

An endowment fund has been created to assist with the funding of future prizes. The endowment idea was first proposed at the time of the creation of the award in 2020 and the idea resurfaced at the January 2021 Board of Directors meeting. Funding for the endowment was initiated by Tom Aubrecht, as well as by his sister Susan Houlton and her family, in memory of Tom's late wife Judy. Additional donations to the endowment fund are most welcome. Contact finance@sokolmn.org

Cancelled Again in 2021, Festival of Nations Will Be Missed

By Louise Wessinger



Another year without the Festival of Nations! Because of COVID, the International Institute of Minnesota (IIM) will not hold a Festival of Nations again this May. The decision was made in October because the IIM budget was due and the Institute could not be assured COVID would be under control enough to allow a production that involves the large crowds the Festival of Nations attracts. Canceling the 2020 Festival in April of that year cost the IIM lost revenue in advertising materials, paper product orders, and some pre-rentals. The IIM hopes the Festival of Nations can be held in May 2022.

The International Institute of Minnesota helps settle thousands of refugees in Minnesota each year.

The IIM offer classes in language skills, learning valuable job skills, such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN), and computer skills. The IIM is in the process of rebuilding its facility on Como Avenue in Saint Paul to have more classroom space and meeting rooms. They look forward to being in their new space by fall of this year. As with most other educational programs, all of their classes are offered virtually at the moment.

This 1955 photo from the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* shows a sample of the dancing that we will miss with no 2021 Festival of Nations. "Just wait, you stepped on my basket" is the literal translation of the Czech "*Sla nanyňka*."

Little Annie (left), enacted by Linda (Jansen) Nicoli, was gathering cabbages when Peter, portrayed by Don Haselbauer, upset her basket as a prank. He is threatened with dire consequences by Annie and her sisters, played by Louise (Jansen) Wessinger and Connie Fischbach.

4 April 2021 *Slovo*

23rd Czech and Slovak Children's Cultural Day Camp

By Louise Wessinger and Doreen McKenney

The 23rd Czech and Slovak Children's Cultural Day Camp, for boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 14, will take place at the C.S.P.S. Hall from Monday, June 14, to Friday, June 18, 2021. The camp theme this year is *Medieval Castles and Kings*. The themed activities will include small groups creating a castle, shield, and group motto. Daily activities will include ethnic foods and stories, language lessons, singing, crafts, gymnastics, and dancing. It will be a lively week filled with many great activities. During camp we will abide by COVID restrictions that are in place at that time. Campers arrive by 8:30 and are picked up at 3:30 p.m.

Be sure to register by May 1 to qualify for the Early-Bird discount. All camp registration materials must be received by June 1. Our culture camp was filled in 2019. Although we were not able to hold camp last year because of COVID, we hope lots of campers will be eager to attend this year.

Adult and teen/youth volunteers are a key part of camp. Volunteers use their talents to lead or help with crafts, cooking, music, and other activities. Registration materials for campers, junior leaders, and adult volunteers are available to be downloaded at www.sokolmn.org on the Events tab.

We hope to see you in June at camp! If you have questions, please call Louise at 651-271-3601.

91st Annual Sokol Camp Booya Picnic Sunday, August 15, 2021 Noon until 5 p.m. Rain or Shine!

SAVE THE DATE!

91st Annual Sokol Camp Booya Picnic

We are set to host this highly anticipated event and fundraiser once again.

Where: Historic Sokol Camp (built in 1926)
19201 Woodland Acres South
Pine City, Minnesota 55063

When: Sunday, August 15, 2021 Noon - 5 p.m.
(rain or shine)

Who: All Sokol Brothers and Sisters are invited to attend and/or volunteer!
General public is also welcome.

Why: To raise funds for Sokol Camp's upkeep and structural maintenance projects.

How: COVID-19 Safety protocols will be followed whenever possible!

Questions?

Please contact co-chairpersons Scott and Kari
Muyres: skdlmuyres@yahoo.com or 763-226-0313

23rd Annual Children's Czech and Slovak Cultural Day Camp

Sponsored by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota

Medieval "Castles and Kings"

June 14-18 20
21

Ages: 6 to 14 years old



The 23rd annual Children's
Czech and Slovak Cultural Day Camp
is scheduled for June 14-18, 2021

Register by May 1 to qualify for
the Early-Bird discount.
All camp registration materials
must be received by June 1.
Registration materials for campers
ages 6 to 14, adult volunteers,
and junior leaders ages 15 to 21
can be downloaded at
www.sokolmn.org

***Full refund if camp needs to be
postponed.***

Questions? Contact Louise Wessinger 651-452-6240

Flavors of Slovakia Dinner

Another Curbside Success at C.S.P.S. Hall on Saturday, March 6

Co-Chairs Doreen McKenney, Joan Sedlacek, and Joyce Tesarek



The Flavors of Slovakia Dinner was delivered via curbside pickup at the C.S.P.S. Hall on Saturday, March 6, a gorgeous pre-spring day. It was another sold out dinner, with 167 takeouts! Forty dozen *koláče* were also sold.

While picking up dinners, a gentleman shared that he enjoyed the January Roast Duck Dinner so much that he told his friends about it and about the Flavors of Slovakia Dinner. He took orders for six of his friends, picked them up, and delivered the dinners to each of them.

Carissa and Dylan Freeland's sent a thank you note that was representative of many comments received:

"Curbside Crew, It is so exciting to be able to receive the special care that goes into a warm meal even when so many things are closed. Thanks so much for keeping this going!"

Many thanks to the volunteers who worked in the kitchen and assisted with curbside pickup, while being safe around each other, to make this dinner happen: Mary Cahill, Judy Gavin, Don Haselbauer, Katie Haselbauer, Doreen McKenney, Joan Sedlacek, Joyce Tesarek, and Louise Wessinger.

Photo at left: Just a few of the 167 dinners!
L-R: Katie Haselbauer, Joyce Tesarek, Don Haselbauer, Louise Wessinger



The Jovanovski family sent this photo and comment via Instagram:
"Jako vždy vynikající. Děkujeme."
(As always excellent. Thank you.)



Bagging *koláče*: L-R: Joyce Tesarek, Louise Wessinger, Katie Haselbauer, Don Haselbauer (sitting), and Mary Cahill. Not pictured: Doreen McKenney



Serving curbside: L-R Joyce Tesarek, Doreen McKenney, Joan Sedlacek, and Judy Gavin. The Flavors of Slovakia Dinner included cabbage rolls, *pirohy* (filled dumplings), *halušky a kapusta* (dumpling-cabbage-bacon dish), green beans, and pickled beets, plus rye bread and bundt cake.

Thank You for Your Membership!

By Steve Ernest

Renewed Memberships

Thank you to everyone who renewed their membership in Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota for 2021.

The end of March is the close of the renewal season and we are happy to announce that we expect our membership to remain at around 275 members, which is approximately the amount we have had for the past several years.

Continuing your membership through this past year has given us the support needed to make some much needed repairs to the C.S.P.S. Hall while activities have been curtailed.

Reinstated or New Memberships

If you were not able to renew before now and would like to reinstate your membership, or if you know someone who would like to become a member, **the member application form is at www.sokolmn.org/membership**

Membership rates

\$55 for individuals/\$95 for couples
\$45 for senior individuals/\$85 for senior couples

Please let us know if you have any questions about membership by e-mail at membership@sokolmn.org

MEMBER NEWS

Sokol Minnesota Welcomes New Members

By Steve Ernest

Two new Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota members were accepted at the February Board of Directors meeting:

Stanley Marousek, Spillville, Iowa, with interests in genealogy, history, literature, and festivals; and

Ann Cordes, Edina with interests in genealogy, history, films, theater, and craft classes.

Welcome to Sokol Minnesota!

The CARES Act for Charitable Contributions extended for 2021

By Denise Stibal

In 2020 the Federal CARES Act allowed for cash donations of up to \$300 per tax return, made by December 31, to be deductible without having to itemize for 2020 taxes filed in 2021. On December 27, Congress amended the law for 2021. Now the CARES Act's "above the line" deduction for contributions is \$300 for individual filers and up to \$600 for joint filers. This means you get a deduction for charitable contributions in addition to the Standard Deduction.

Please keep Sokol Minnesota in mind when considering your charitable contributions this year.

Please consult your tax advisor with any additional questions.



Kolo Sokol Bike Club

Kolo means bike in Czech and Slovak. The goal of *Kolo Sokol* is to organize safe, family-friendly outings that help strengthen the physical and social health of our community.

sokolmn.org/bike

Upcoming Sokol Minnesota Events

Easter Saturday Activities

Join Czech & Slovak School
Twin Cities and Sokol Minnesota
on Saturday, April 3
via Zoom for Easter activities.

Here is the Zoom link:
[https://us02web.zoom.us/
j/81740170276](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81740170276)

Watch the website for details:
www.sokolmn.org/easter-saturday/

Mushroom Hunt Sunday, May 23, 1-4 p.m.

Join us for our Second Annual Mushroom Hunt, again with expert forager Dan Kirkpatrick (<https://mojomushroom.com>). We are excited to look for and find morels, oysters, and maybe chicken-of-the-woods. We plan to have a short introductory Zoom meeting prior to the hunt so everyone can get an idea of what to seek. The location in the southeast metro will be sent out to participants prior to the event. After the hunt, we will gather to share information about what we find. If you would like, please bring a snack/lunch for a COVID-appropriate social time. We are limiting the number of participants to the first 30. The event is free to members and just \$5 per person for non-members. Call/text Jean at 651-210-0401 to be included on the hunt list, or sign up on the website (see Registration Information below).



Outdoor Craft and Flea Market

Saturday, May 1, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
C.S.P.S. Hall parking lot

If you have or are looking for handmade goods, new items, items that have been previously loved, or tasty treats, this is the event for you. The event will be held rain or shine.

Vendors, this will be a great opportunity to offer all those COVID craft projects you have been making or lovely objets d'art that you have decided to part with that could brighten a home or office. Vendor spaces will be 10'x10', with ample room at the venue for the COVID-required social distancing. Vendors must provide their own canopy/tent, tables, and chairs. The fee per vendor space is \$19/Sokol Minnesota member, \$25/non-members. Registration and payment are due April 16. Spaces are limited. You may call/text 651-210-0401 or register online at the address below.

Members/Volunteers Outdoor Picnic

Sunday, June 6, from 12-4 p.m.

Lakewood Park in White Bear Lake

whitebearlake.org/parksrec/page/lakewood-hills-park

Members and volunteers are the heart of Sokol Minnesota. We hope that you will join us for this great chance to get together. It will be a fun event with games for all ages. We will provide *kielbasa*, hotdogs, lemonade, plates, napkins, and utensils. Please bring something to share. The more the merrier! Please email your RSVP by May 30 to president@sokolmn.org or register online (see below). Include the number that will be attending.

Registration Information

In addition to the registration options above, you may register for each of these events at www.sokolmn.org/activity-event-registration



CSCC Language Scholarship Fund

The Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota (CSCC) has established a new annual scholarship program to enable a person with a clearly defined interest in Czech or Slovak language and culture to complete a Czech or Slovak language course offered through Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota (sokolmn.org/at-our-hall/language-classes/). This new CSCC Mestenhauser-Pafko Memorial Scholarship has been funded with an initial contribution of \$200 from CSCC. The initial scholarship award will cover tuition for one semester for one student. The scholarship program will commence with the semester starting in September 2021.

The program is named in honor of the late Dr. Joseph Mestenhauser, founder of CSCC and Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic for Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota (1999-2008), and of the late Donald Pafko, Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic for Minnesota (2009-2017).

Interested persons are asked to complete an online application form at <https://tinyurl.com/y36u7djm>

For questions, please contact Renáta Tichá at tich0018@umn.edu



Highlights of the Sokol Minnesota

February Board Meeting By Denise Stibal

The Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota February Board of Directors meeting on February 18 was called to order by Vice President Ed Hamernik.

Blanka Brichta and her committees are working on the Youth Leadership Award and the Youth/Teen Activities Projects.

Activities Director Jean Draheim presented the Activities Committee report and calendar. Two highlights will be the Spring Mushroom Hunt on May 23 and the Member and Volunteer Appreciation Picnic on Sunday June 6. Please visit the Calendar for all posted events.

Corresponding Secretary Glynis Grostephan reported the following donations received in February: Legacy Fund \$90 and General Fund \$3,282. Total: \$3,372.

Donation checks of \$100 each were sent to the Museum of Russian Art and the MSP Film Society in honor of Al Milgrom. A thank you card was received from Tom Aubrecht and family on behalf of Judy Aubrecht.

Treasurer Don Haselbauer reported our total balance for all accounts.

Building and Properties Trustees Committee chair Bob Kotek is procuring bids for updating the Fire Alarm System. The committee will purchase the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) unit for the second floor. Bob is working with Mary Cahill and the Planning Committee to prioritize upgrades for the C.S.P.S. Hall.

Board of Instructors Directors Mary Cahill and Jason Brozevich reported boys' classes have resumed with nine students. We have had a generous offer from Sokol Omaha and Sokol South Omaha to donate their gym equipment on the occasion of Sokol South Omaha selling their building. Joan Sedlacek and BOI members will drive to Omaha to pick up a "truckload" of items. Motion approved to provide an amount not to exceed \$1,500 to cover truck rental and travel expenses.

Board of Budget and Finance Chair Joyce Tesarek noted Tom Aubrecht has donated \$1,000 to open a new Sokol Minnesota Youth Leadership Award Endowment Fund. Interest on the account will go toward the awards and additional donations to the endowment will be accepted. Richard Sargent has researched our online payment options and determined PayPal is the most cost effective; he will research upgrading our account to nonprofit status to decrease fees.

Ed Hamernik, Gaming Chair, noted gaming resumed in January after being shut down in December due to COVID restrictions. He requested approval of the March budget of \$10,975; the motion carried. Gaming will propose a transfer of \$10,000 to Sokol Minnesota, which will be up for approval at the March Board meeting.

New business: Water fountains on the second floor will be converted to bottle filling stations this year. Steve Ernest will monitor the American Sokol Town Hall Meeting on February 21. Motion approved to donate \$200 to the MSP Film Society for the 2021 International Film Festival.

Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors

By Glynis Grostephan

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

LEGACY FUND

\$100 - \$499: Libby Imbrone to Heat the Hall.

In memory of **Judy Aubrecht: Shannon Duffy, Arlene and Ed Hamernik, Charles Rusnacko.**

GENERAL FUND

Under \$99: Lenka Bragg, Dawn Bulera, Ann Marie Cordes, Linda Nicoli, Lida Strot, Mary Ann Tumasmith, Richard Vanyo and the **Minnesota Sokol Camp Association, Agnes Zeman.**

\$100 - \$499: Stephanie Callanan, Network for Good. Katie and Don Haselbauer in honor of **Joyce Tesarek's** retirement and all the work she does for Sokol Minnesota.

M. L. Kucera donation to the Sokol Minnesota Youth Leadership Awards.

\$500 - \$999: Medtronic Foundation Volunteer Grant Program in recognition of **Don Haselbauer.**

IN-KIND DONATIONS:

Laurie Pekarik: Two boxed Slovak dolls.

IN MEMORY OF JUDY AUBRECHT:

Under \$99: Diane Bell to the *Taneční* Mládež Dancers, **Mary Jo and Jim Chlebecek, Jean and Chuck Draheim, Robert Kostichka, Joan Sedlacek, Lida Strot, Louise and Chuck Wessinger, Sharon and Ken Wyberg.**

\$100 - \$499: Pat and Don Andrie, Megan and Jason Brozovich, Mary and Dennis Cahill, Katie and Don Haselbauer, Marlene Hinshaw, Pamela Langworthy, Richard Sargent.

\$500 - \$999: Susan Houlton, Tom Aderhold, Amanda, David and Ariel Saltin, for the Sokol Minnesota Youth Leadership Award Endowment Fund.
Joyce Tesarek and Norm Petrik.

\$1000 - \$9999: Tom Aubrecht to start the Sokol Minnesota Youth Leadership Award Endowment Fund.

TOTALS:

Legacy Fund:	\$ 140
General Fund:	\$ 4,367
TOTAL:	\$ 4,507

Into the Spotlight: New Writing from Slovakia edited by Magdalena Mullek and Julia Sherwood and translated by Magdalena Mullek and Julia and Peter Sherwood, Parthian: Bloomington, Indiana, 2017, 201 pages. Available at libraries and bookstores.

Into the Spotlight: New Writing from Slovakia offers an interesting and efficient way to sample some of the best contemporary Slovak writers. Rather than presenting a comprehensive view into each author's work, this book is meant to be a window into contemporary Slovak writing and "spur the reader to seek out more Slovak writing in translation," according to the editors. Although Slovakia lacks the long and illustrious literary tradition of the Czechs and the Poles, Julia Sherwood says there is a "vibrant and diverse literary scene in present-day Slovakia and an explosion of new talent in the past few decades."

Each entry in the book begins with the author's photograph, a brief biography, a few words from the author, and short remarks about the entry. Also included are a helpful introduction by Magdalena Mullick and whimsical line drawings by Ivana Šáteková.

One of my favorites in the collection is an excerpt from the book, *The Mystery of the Považský Bull*, by Lukáš Luk. The protagonist, Kristián, grows up in a Slovak family whose every male ancestor for generations has played trumpet in the local brass band. At the age of 19, Kristián performs beautifully for Yugoslav television, and moves from there to Italy and France, where he finds a job on a large cruise ship. He works his way up to famous leader of the ship's orchestra. "And so Kristián," wrote Luk, "faithful to everything Grandpa Mutňanský had taught him, spread the good name of the Považec trumpet among the powerful people of the capitalist world. He was playing the trumpet and sailing the seas. What more could he have asked for?" When Kristián returns home to Považský Sokolec, he finds through humorous escapades that tomorrow won't be the same as today and that you truly cannot go home again.

I was also struck with "Denis, 63," a story excerpted from Alta Vasova's *Directory*. Denis is a painter inspired by the idea of losing his eyesight. He prepares himself for being blind by doing various activities with his eyes closed, and in his personal life, uses his newly sensitive fingers to discover the body of his lover, Nad'a. Eventually he goes to a doctor and finds there is nothing wrong with him. He gives up the idea that he is going blind and "didn't contemplate why he had succumbed to that stray, stupid idea," but he also "didn't give up the sensitivity of his ears, of his breath, or of his fingers."

Other stories find a woman as the audience of one at a circus, two fellow musicians in the Prague Symphony Orchestra falling in love, a daughter dealing with her mother's illness, and an absurdist view of capitalistic manipulation of buyers in a former communist country.

Both editors were born in and grew up in Slovakia. Magdalena Mullek moved to the United States more than 20 years ago and works as an independent translator and literary scholar. Julia Sherwood was employed by Amnesty International in the United Kingdom for more than 20 years and since 2008 has worked as a freelance translator, often with her husband Peter Sherwood, who helped translate works in this book.

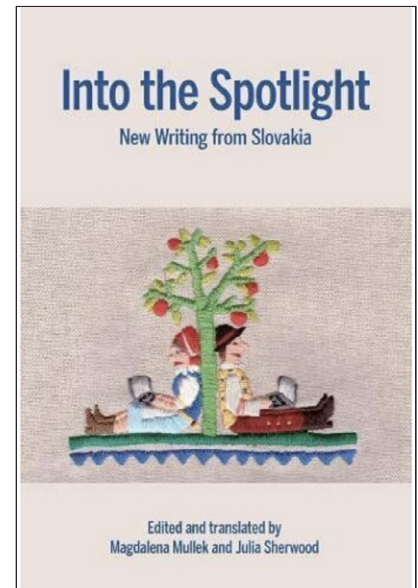
Mullek and Sherwood used these criteria to choose 16 authors and 19 selections for this book:

- Only living authors
- Authors who write in the Slovak language
- Preference given to authors who had few or no book-length publications in English
- Works published in 2000 or later
- Selections not previously published in English translation
- Quality as indicated by literary prizes awarded

The results are diverse in subjects, styles, and forms of writing by authors of differing ages, genders, and levels of fame. The book's structure also helped me identify which authors' writing I would like to explore more.

Gwen is coordinator of the Czech and Slovak Literary Ventures book discussion group which is cosponsored by the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, and the Office of the Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic.

Info: cs-center.org or contact gwen@cs-center.org



Join us on Saturday, April 24
for a discussion of the memoir,
***Reluctant Witness*, by Jarda Cervenka at 10 a.m.**
and Jarda's talk on *The Importance*
of Reading Nonfiction Today at 11 a.m.
 Check cs-center.org,
 for scheduling updates and more information.



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Czech Honorary Consul News

April 2021

The 40th annual Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival will be May 13 through May 23. Final film lineup will be available the end of March. I have learned from Susan Smoluchowski, Executive Director of the Minneapolis St. Paul Film Society, that two Czech and Slovak films are being considered, reported to be the finest new films. Stay tuned: <https://mspifilm.org/festivals/mspiff/>

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, along with Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, and Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities are supporters of MSPIFF, as well as several local movie buffs who are members of Sokol, CSCC, or *škola* (all of whom will be acknowledged in the May issue).

On February 23, The Center of East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies (CEERES) at the University of Chicago sponsored a virtual conversation with Peter Sís, the acclaimed Czech-American children's book author, about his new book *Nicky and Vera, A Quiet Hero of the Holocaust and the Children He Rescued*.

It is the real story (unknown for 50 years) of a 29-year-old Englishman Nicholas Winton who saved the lives of 669 children trapped in Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia by organizing a *Kindertransport* train to England in 1939.

Joining Sís and Esther Peters, Associate Director of CEERES and program moderator, was one of the children on that train. Here we have a Minnesota connection. Karen Pick Wald, the daughter of one of those children, lives in Minnesota. Her mother Liza Pick was age nine when her parents put her on the train.

After several years with a family in Scotland, Liza was reunited with her parents, who miraculously survived the war; the family immigrated to Canada, then settled in the United States. Liza Pick, along with her daughter Karen and her son Charlie Pick, joined the discussion of what happened over 80 years ago and how it has impacted all their lives.

This was one of the most riveting hours that I have ever spent, either virtual or live.

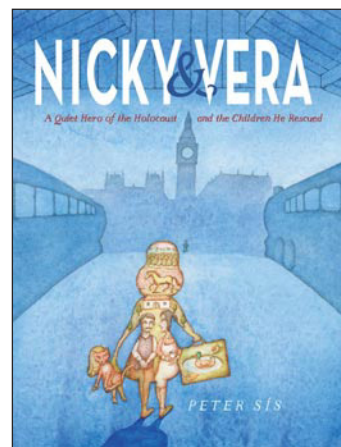
There are two other Minnesota connections. Over a year ago, Jitka Sebek helped Karen Wald prepare the documents in Czech for Wald to apply for Czech citizenship.

Along with Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities, I was one of ten lucky viewers to win a signed copy of Sís' book.

National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has more books on World War II era endurance and survival, including:

- *Franci's War: A Woman's Story of Survival* is an engrossing memoir of a spirited and glamorous young fashion designer who survived three years in concentration camps in World War II.
- *When Time Stopped: A Memoir of My Father's War and What Remains* by Ariana Neumann looks at the secrets of her father's years spent hiding in plain sight in war-torn Berlin.

<https://store.ncsml.org/product-category/featured-products/>



Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic
in Minneapolis, MN

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Slovo Publication Information and Committee

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For a subscription, please include name, address, phone number, email address and a \$15 check payable to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, and mail to *Slovo* at the above address.

The *Slovo* staff welcomes submissions. Send news, articles, and pictures digitally to slovo@sokolmn.org. The copy deadline for each issue is the first day of the prior month.

Advertising in the *Slovo* is available. Please email slovo@sokolmn.org for information on due dates and rates.

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For this reason, we will not send additional issues until we have a current, correct mailing address on record for you.

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Additional photographs or illustrations this issue provided by: Jason Brozovich (page 3), Jean Draheim (8), Jovanovski family (6), Doreen McKenney (Flavors of Slovakia Dinner 6, 7), Ivana Šáteková (10), Louise Wessinger (4).

March issue mailing: Mary Cahill and Joan Sedlacek.

More information at www.sokolmn.org

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Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* April 2021



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20
21

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C.S.P.S. Hall

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