



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

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

February Slovo articles due January 2

Friendly Friday Evenings Social  
Friday, Dec 9 and Jan 13

Roast Duck Dinner  
Saturday, January 21  
10 a.m.-1 p.m.  
(info adjacent)

Sokol Gift Shop  
open during events and by appointment

Use our new QR code to sokolmn.org to follow all of our activities, events, and classes!

- Dinners
- Czech and Slovak Language Lessons
- Folk Dancing
- Sokol Gymnasts



Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! from your Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors

Sokol Children's Holiday Party **2022**

Hosted by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota

7 p.m. Friday  
December 2  
C.S.P.S. Hall

Sokol friends and families are invited to a special program of song and dance by the *Taneční Mládež* and *Taneční Teens*, Louise Wessinger, Director

Activities for the whole family with a visit from *Svatý Mikuláš* (St. Nicholas), *anděl* (angel), and *čert* (devil). Sokol Minnesota Singers performance, Don Haselbauer, Director

January 21 **2023**

20th Annual ROAST DUCK DINNER

C.S.P.S. Hall

383 Michigan St.,  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Half-a-roast duck w/gravy, potato dumplings, sweet and sour red cabbage, applesauce, caraway rye bread and dessert \$25 per person

Hosted by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota



Roast Duck Dinner will be offered Curbside parking lot pickup from 1 - 2 p.m. or 5 p.m. indoor sit down with doors opening at 4 p.m. Cash bar.

\*\*\*\*\*

Order and prepay by January 12 credit/debit card or PayPal at [www.sokolmn.org/cc/](http://www.sokolmn.org/cc/) If paying by check reserve by text/call 952-941-0426

Checks mailed to the hall without calling in advance to reserve a dinner will not be guaranteed a reservation.

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Limited dinners available

## Prezidentův komentář/President's Notes by Dave Stepan

Four years ago, I was both optimistic and apprehensive as I began my role as President of Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota. After serving as Treasurer in the late 1990's, I was asked to serve in various roles on the Board of Directors, but the timing did not work for me. Today, as I write my last President's Notes, I am confident our organization continues to head in the right direction, one that provides program opportunities for both new and long-term members in our revitalized C.S.P.S. Hall. Recognizing that no organization runs absolutely perfectly, I admit we sometimes have our challenges; but for those committed to the organization, any disputes and dissent (thankfully infrequent!) are okay when they lead to an open, productive discussion.

The COVID epidemic has been a challenge to all of us and affected much of what we could do, did do, or didn't do, programmatically in the past three years, including stopping activities inside the C.P.S.P. Hall. This created a need to be more flexible and move forward with modified programs, including successful curbside cuisine and pickup dinners. We survived the difficulties, and with careful protocols, we were able to restart the gymnastics and children's dance programs in-person ethnic dinners, and the Czech & Slovak Festival. We expanded the adult Czech and Slovak language programs with our new partners in Chicago and the Czech Republic, and we continue to coordinate with the Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities and cosponsor the Literary Ventures book discussion group. While we have not presented the *Šibřinky* Dance since 2018 or Band Blast since 2019 and the International Institute of Minnesota's Festival of Nations has been discontinued, we have created a Youth Leadership Award and the Sokol Minnesota Youth Link (SYML) group, as well as added the *Kolo* Sokol bike club, mushroom foraging, and recently Friendly Friday Evenings. Work is underway to digitize the historical records of the various organizations that have called the C.S.P.S. Hall home. We have had to change the way we do things. While change is often difficult, mixing new programming with our primary events gives all of us opportunities to participate in a variety of activities and events.

We have an extensive list of what we have accomplished in the past four years to structurally improve, maintain, and refurbish our C.S.P.S. Hall. We installed new support beams in the basement to reinforce a sagging second floor and stairway to the third floor, insulated the steam pipes, updated the fire suppression and monitoring system as well as the recently completed Hall security system. We now have a new first-floor office, updated classroom bookcases and cabinets, refinished second floor, new third floor tables and eco-shades, safer third-floor balcony railing, new more-secure parking lot side doors, new awning and new exterior grand staircase encasement, a new freezer and two new refrigerators to facilitate our dinners, two new big screen monitors for classes and presentations, an automatic external defibrillator (AED) in the second-floor dining room, a new more sanitary bottle filling station, new pallet racking for supplies for our programs and events, and strikingly-designed Sokol-themed bike racks. None of this work on the Hall could have happened without your contributions, your donations, and the grants received. Income from charitable gaming and rental of the Hall, as well as rental income from our tenant, the Pajarito restaurant, have helped finance our efforts. Income from our many successful programs and events also contribute significantly to making our organization financially sound.

For Sokol Minnesota's continued programming success and the permanency and enhanced functionality of the C.S.P.S. Hall, massive credit needs to go to our Board of Directors including our committee chairs (see the list on this page), and committee members, plus to our members, volunteers, and friends who come to events to support our great organization. We are always looking for, and thankful for, those of you willing to put your time, talent, and treasure toward the success of our Czechs and Slovak Sokol Minnesota organization that has been in existence for 140 years, for 135 years at our C.S.P.S. Hall. We need you to continue to help to support Sokol, which has been in existence worldwide for 160 years. Thanks for a great ride! *Nazdar!*



### Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota 2022 BOD (Board of Directors)

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-

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Telephone: 651-290-0542

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



## Czech Roast Pork Dinner Goes Live!

After several years of having our annual dinners curbside only, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota President Dave Stepan welcomed guests on October 16 to our Czech Roast Pork Dinner, our first in-person dinner at the C.S.P.S. Hall since the Pandemic started. Czech Honorary Consul M.L. Kucera recognized ten diners, all non-members (but hopefully soon-to-become members), who took advantage of her \$5-off offer when they purchased their Czech Roast Pork Dinner tickets at the Czech & Slovak Festival on September 25. She also welcomed diners who are members of other ethnic organizations, but regularly attend our dinners because they like our food so much.

It was a fine afternoon of great food and community, with lots of new volunteers to help with the event. Head cooks Doreen McKenney and Joan Sedlacek prepared the meal of roast pork, raised bread dumplings and gravy, sauerkraut, served with applesauce and caraway rye bread. For dessert, we had baked apricot *koláče*, and the bar served Czech-style beer brewed by Utepils. Some diners preferred to pick up a curbside meal, so we made the event hybrid. We served 88 in-person sit-down meals and 51 curbside/

takeout meals. It was also another successful fundraiser, earning \$2,551.93.

Thanks to all who attended and especially to our wonderful volunteers, including scheduler, publicity team, reservationist, cooks, servers, and treasurer (co-chairs in bold): Pat Andrlé, James Bradford, Dennis Cahill, Mary Cahill, Chuck Draheim, Jean Draheim, Roger Green, Mia Grignon, Ed Hamernik, Don Haselbauer, Barb Johnson, MaryJo Kacvinsky, Chantelle Kley, Lloyd Krocak, **Marit Lee Kucera**, Pam Langworthy, **Doreen McKenney**, Cheryl Nelson, Lucy Rose, Sylvie Rose, Richard Sargent, **Joan Sedlacek**, Savanna Shoultz, Dave Stepan, Michelle Stepan, Jean Hall Sykora, **Joyce Tesarek**, and Louise Wessinger.

Pat Andrlé and Kate Aubrecht were the door prize winners. Their respective prizes were a 2022 Czech wall calendar, which Dave and Darnel Stepan brought from their three-month trip to the Czech Republic in the spring, and a hand-blown glass pumpkin by Sokol Minnesota member James Chlebeck.



1. The Roast Pork Dinner at the C.S.P.S. Hall was well-attended. 2. The kitchen team included L-R: Pam Langworthy, Joan Sedlacek, Jean Hall Sykora, Mary Cahill, and Lucy Rose. 3. Servers L-R: James Bradford, Pat Andrlé, Richard Sargent, Sylvie, and Savanna. 4. *Koláče* team L-R: Chantelle Kley, Mia Grignon, and MaryJo Kacvinsky. 5. The main course of the dinner. 6. *Pivo* team L-R: Ed Hamernik, Lloyd Krocak, and Roger Green.

## Second Annual Trunks with Treats Harvest Fest By Adam Acs, SMYL member

Sokol Minnesota’s Second Annual Trunks with Treats Harvest Fest was hosted by Sokol Minnesota Youth Link (SMYL) teens in the C.S.P.S. Hall parking lot on October 15 from 10 a.m. to noon. Approximately 35 children attended the event on that chilly morning, with all of them wearing colorful costumes, playing fun games, and earning treats.



To start the children off, there was the “Welcome Trunk” where Lucy Rose and our brand new SMYL member Sylvie gave the children a bag to store their treats along with some tasty pretzels. Then Colleen Cahill and SMYL Co-Advisor Doreen McKenney had the children go “fishing” before handing them a goodie bag. Following this, Dave Grostephan directed the children in playing “Bats-Ketball” (very clever) in the trunk of his car to win treats. Mike Grostephan led the children in using the famous “claaaaaaaaw” from Toy Story to obtain their very own Pez dispenser.



1. Mouse getting directions from Lucy Rose and her daughter.
2. Sara playing Bats-Ketball directed by Dave Grostephan.
3. SMYL members Vicki and Seanna in front of the themed photo-op wall.
4. The delightful 2022 Trunks with Treats ad.
5. Henry playing bean bag toss organized by Colin.
6. Phillip and Thomas playing bean bag toss directed by Lenka Hester.
7. Adam directing the disk drop game.
8. Charlie playing bowling led by Mitchell.



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continued from page 4: **Second Annual Trunks with Treats Harvest Fest**

Next for the children were the scary teenagers from SMYL, dressed in mysterious hoods and masks (but the kind to keep warm, not to scare). Among the SMYL volunteers another trunk-based game, I, Adam, was there and played a fun game of disc drop with the children. Colin organized bean bag toss, Mitchell guided bowling, and Lenka Hester filled in when needed.

After the fun games with the SMYL teens, SMYL Co-advisor Glynis Grostephan handed out Magic Scratch Art Halloween ornaments for the children to take home. Following the ornaments was our local “witch”, SMYL member Vicki, who used her “Wheel of Fate” to tell fortunes and hand out cookies to the children.

After all of the fun and adventures the children had, they were able to capture the memories with their friends and family with the Photo Op led by Joyce Tesarek. And, if the children wanted to have some extra fun, they could participate in the juggling performances led by the talented Penny and Tom Tesarek. Once all was said and done, and the children were ready to go home, Marlene Hinshaw handed out one last special SMYL goody bag to the children.

- 1. The Wheel of Fate. 2. Henry, Colleen Cahill, and Charlie enjoying the day.
- 3. Brave children joined the juggling performance by Tom and Penny Tesarek.
- 4. Megan Cahill and Eddie with Marlene Hinshaw.



**Friendly Friday Evenings**  
 Social for  
 Members, Families, and Friends  
 at the C.S.P.S. Hall  
 December 9 and January 13

SMYL teens, sign up for a make-and-take baking class before your Holiday break!  
 Sunday, December 18, 2022  
 12-2 p.m.  
 Instructors/directors will have sign up sheets available for you or contact: youths@sokolmn.org



**Sokol Minnesota Gymnastics Classes**  
 Looking for a fun way for your child to be active in the new year while increasing strength, flexibility, and coordination?  
 If so, check out Sokol Minnesota gymnastics!  
 We offer classes for boys and girls from 4 to 18 years of age; no experience is required.  
 Our third session starts the week of February 20, 2023.  
 For more information, visit our Sokol MN website: www.sokolmn.org and/or contact Courtney or Jason at fitness@sokolmn.org

SMYL teens, mark your calendars to make Valentines for Veterans  
 Sunday, January 29, 2023  
 12-2 p.m.  
 Instructors/directors will have sign up sheets available for you or contact: youths@sokolmn.org

## Looking for More Dancing Youth! By Louise Wessinger

On most Saturday mornings during the school year, you will find Sokol Minnesota's C.S.P.S. Hall filled with activity, including dancing. Since the *Taneční Mládež* (Dancing Youth, or TM) were founded in January of 1990, children ages four to twelve have been meeting to learn Czech and Slovak Folk Dances with their director/instructor Louise Wessinger. Miss Louise grew up dancing in Sokol Minnesota gym classes, taught second and third grade for many years, and danced from a young age with the adult Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers, which she also directs. Her love of children and of dance led her to start a more continuous group of children's folk dance instruction.

After 33 years of constant growth in the numbers of dancers in the group, in March of 2020, before COVID closed most activities, there were 52 youth getting ready to perform for the Festival of Nations, including 27 in the TM dancers (kindergarten to 6th grade) and 25 in the Teen group (6th grade to 12th grade). The over two-year break because of COVID significantly decreased the number of dancers, especially in the grade school age group, where this year we have just six dancers. There are 22 dancers in the teen group. During COVID, five families moved away from the Twin Cities, which also is a factor.



We learn Czech, Moravian, and Slovak songs and folk dances. We are fortunate that over the years our *kroje* (folk dress) closet has grown to about 150 sets of *kroje* from all the regions.

**Children and grandchildren of members dance for free (they pay \$10 per year to borrow a *kroj*). The fee for non-members children is \$40 per year.**

**This year we have begun a preschool group of dancers with their moms at 9:30 on Saturday mornings.**

**The grade school TM dancers meet from 9:45-10:45 and the teens from 11 to noon.**

**Miss Louise, Miss Karin, and the TM dancers would love to have more dancing friends! We will start practice after our December break on January 7. For further information, call Louise at 651-271-3601 or email her at [louisewessinger@msn.com](mailto:louisewessinger@msn.com)**

## Montgomery's First Annual *Svatý Mikuláš* Celebration By Jean Keogh

The City of Montgomery's first annual *Svatý Mikuláš* (Saint Nicholas) celebration is being presented by partners The Rustic Farmer and Revival on Main, the Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Pageant committee, and the Czech Heritage Club.

**Everyone is invited to join in the fun on Sunday, December 4, 2022, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Rustic Farmer/Revival, located at 209/213 First Street South, Montgomery.**

Carrying on tradition, Saint Nicholas, the Angel, and the Devil will be present to quiz all children attending. Each child will be given a bag to decorate for the treats they will receive from Saint Nicholas, plus there will be several make-and-take craft stations.

Music, dancing, door prizes, and plenty of great food will be available for everyone to enjoy throughout the event.

The Miss Czech Slovak Minnesota royalty in *kroje* will be on hand to greet visitors. The Czech dancer topiaries, Alenka and Vlada, will be on display. M. L. Kucera, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic for Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota, will also attend.

Highlighting the event will be the "Czech Country Christmas Market" featuring two performances by the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers, as well as Czech merchandise, including the Sokol Minnesota Gift Shop, along with Czech baked goods by Míša Kotek, who is known as The Czech Baker.

There is something for everyone! Don't miss out on the fun! We hope to see you all there.

**Save the Date: *Masopust* - the Czech Mardi Gras, Sunday, February 19, 2023, Montgomery, Minnesota**

**6 December 2022-January 2023 *Slovo***

## Language Program News By Sally Lieberman and Pat Slaber

Sokol Minnesota's adult language classes will continue to be online this winter and spring. All classes are conducted via Zoom.

This year, Sokol Minnesota has new partnerships with two organizations in order to offer our students multiple levels of Czech language instruction.



Kristýna Horáčková

Beginning Czech students are enrolled in a course hosted by the T.G. Masaryk Czech School in Cicero, Illinois. Lecturer Kristýna Horáčková holds a degree in Czech language and literature from Charles University in Prague and has been teaching Czech to foreigners for 11 years. Kristýna says: "I like to make my lessons varied, playful, and fun. My goal is to discover and overcome language difficulties together with my students. The biggest motivation for me is the students' success and satisfaction with their own progress."



Jana Odevzdaná

Advanced Beginning Czech (A2) students are taking a course by special arrangement with Palacký University in Olomouc. Co-instructors Jana Odevzdaná and Lenka Nosková provide lots of speaking practice and use a variety of materials and visual aids to engage students with the Czech language. Jana's extensive language teaching experience includes working with the Center for Support of Integration of Foreigners in the Czech Republic and a year of teaching in Argentina through the Czech international exchange agency DZS.

Lenka is a doctoral student in the teaching of literature at Palacký University; her research focuses on innovative pedagogies to support reading literacy.



Lenka Nosková

### Three language classes continue to be taught by Sokol Minnesota members:

Beginning Slovak: George Hoffman,  
Continuing Beginning Czech: Tess Dajc, and  
Advanced Czech: Renáta Tichá.

**The class schedule and registration forms are on the website: [www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)**

**Come join the fun! For questions contact [education@sokolmn.org](mailto:education@sokolmn.org)**



### Clarinet and String Bass Players

The St. Paul South Bohemian Bagpipe Ensemble is looking to add one or two clarinet players and an upright bass player to our group.

Intermediate/advanced skill level needed.

We specialize in the traditional folk music of South Bohemia. Practices are every other week and we play occasional weekend gigs.

Contact Frank Trnka with questions: [franktrnka1@gmail.com](mailto:franktrnka1@gmail.com)

### Apartment for Rent in Prague 8, Troja district

One bedroom with full kitchen, bathroom, living area, wifi, and TV. Large balcony with city views. Two bus stops away from Metro C line to heart of city.

Available starting May 2023 for monthly rental. Contact Radmila Rasmussen at [rasmussen0907@gmail.com](mailto:rasmussen0907@gmail.com) for more information.

### Volunteer Cooks

If you like to cook and would like to join the Sokol's dinner teams, please let us know as we are looking for new cooks in 2023. Contact: [activities@sokolmn.org](mailto:activities@sokolmn.org)

## Donations to Sokol Minnesota through AmazonSmile

This is a reminder to Amazon shoppers that when you make your purchases while connected through [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) or using the Amazon app with AmazonSmile turned on, Amazon donates .5% of your purchases to your selected charity.

So far, AmazonSmile has donated nearly \$500 to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota.

See [smile.amazon.com/about](http://smile.amazon.com/about) for AmazonSmile program details.

## Going away this winter? Forwarding your mail?

Do not forget about the *Slovo*! We mail at bulk mail rates.

The post office does not forward bulk mail and we pay an additional amount for each issue returned, so let us know your winter address.

Or, you can change your subscription to receive the *Slovo* in color via email: [slovo@sokolmn.org](mailto:slovo@sokolmn.org)

We think our volunteers produce a great newsletter. We want to be sure you receive it!

## Cecilia Rokusek Czech Republic Gratis Agit Award Recipient

Sokol Minnesota member Cecilia Rokusek was awarded the prestigious Gratis Agit Award from the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is awarded annually in appreciation for “the promotion of the good name of the Czech Republic abroad.” The award for Rokusek notes her leadership at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, an institution cited as “an example to follow of care for Czech cultural heritage abroad, it’s modern presentation, and traditions for future generations.” The award reflects Rokusek’s work at the museum and the importance of the museum on a global level.

Previous American recipients have included Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, folk singer Joan Baez, and Academy Award-winning director Miloš Forman.

## Sokol Minnesota Welcomes New Members By Steve Ernest

Nine new members were accepted at the Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota October Board of Directors meeting.

**Kali Freeman** from Lompoc, California, with interest in her Slovak family genealogy (Kali’s aunt, Mia Grignon, is also a member).

**Kristina Hilger** (couple) from Oakdale.

**Jerry Martinek** from Burnsville.

**Silvie, Chad, Lucas and Claire Nemes** from Apple Valley, with interests in youth culture camp, literature, films and theater, history and genealogy, and language classes.

**Mike Sarnicki** from Minneapolis.

Welcome to Sokol Minnesota!

## Renew your Sokol Minnesota Membership! By Steve Ernest, Membership Secretary

Since 1882, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota has been a place to find community and fitness through physical, cultural, educational, and social activities.

Membership renewal letters will go out after Thanksgiving, but you can renew anytime at [www.sokolmn.org/membership](http://www.sokolmn.org/membership)

This web page allows you to pay your dues via PayPal, change your address or how you receive the *Slovo* newsletter, and express your areas of interest. You will note that rates on the PayPal menu are slightly higher than last year because the American Sokol Organization (ASO) raised its dues. ASO is our very valued connection to nation-wide events and opportunities, in gymnastics and other areas.

Whether online or by mail, please renew by the end of December to maintain your active membership and continue receiving the *Slovo* newsletter.

Thank you very much for being part of the Sokol family, in person when you can and in spirit all year long!

## Keep Sokol Minnesota in Mind for Your Year-End Charitable Giving

Dear Sokol Minnesota members and friends,

As you consider your year-end charitable giving, please add Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota and the C.S.P.S. Hall to your list. Hopefully you have enjoyed reading our *Slovo* newsletter and been able to enjoy some of the many classes, lectures, dinners, activities, and gatherings that are constantly happening in our historic Hall. It takes many volunteers and financial support to make all this possible.

Our current need is to resurface the Hall parking lot. Over the years we have done many spot repairs, but it is necessary to finally do a complete asphalt paving of the entire parking lot. The estimated cost for this is \$35,000. Your donation would help make this possible.

We have had another great year, with strong support from our members and friends not only financially, but also by attending and volunteering at events and participating in and enjoying Sokol Minnesota classes and activities. Thank you for all of your support!

Donations can be made on our website [www.SokolMn.org](http://www.SokolMn.org) or make checks payable to Sokol Minnesota and send to 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102.

Joyce Tesarek  
Chair, Board of Budget and Finance



## Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors

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

**Philothea Sweet**

### GENERAL FUND

**Carol Richter; Ronald and Colleen Tabaika;  
Irene Thayer** in memory of **Matthew H. Thayer.**

**TOTAL \$275**

## Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Volunteer Opportunities

- ★ Do you want to help serve the January 21 Duck Dinner? Contact [activities@sokolmn.org](mailto:activities@sokolmn.org)
- ★ Do you want to help plan the 2023 Czech & Slovak Festival? Contact [festival@sokolmn.org](mailto:festival@sokolmn.org)
- ★ Do you want to help oversee our charitable gaming? Contact the committee at [gaming@sokolmn.org](mailto:gaming@sokolmn.org)
- ★ Do you know Quickbooks and want to assist the Treasurer? Or do you want to help fundraise? To apply, email [Finance@sokolmn.org](mailto:Finance@sokolmn.org)



## Highlights of the Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors October 2022 Meeting By Denise Stibal

The Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors meeting was called to order on October 20 at 7 p.m. Happy Birthday was sung to our October Birthday celebrants. Motion carried to accept the September minutes as edited.

A discussion on the Sokol Minnesota Bylaws was led by Steve Ernest. Steve reviewed the current bylaws with suggested corrections. There should be five Executive Directors and the list was redone to name 17 total directors. Motion carried to accept changes as recommended. Executive directors are subject to term limits (two consecutive two-year terms). The Treasurer position does not have a term limit.

Joyce Tesarek presented the Czech & Slovak Festival update. We had over 100 total volunteers, including many new volunteers. Our final net income from the event was \$13,216. The Festival Committee will meet in January to begin planning the 2023 Festival.

Budget and Finance Committee Chair Joyce Tesarek presented the Finance Committee report. For clarity and ease of tracing capital improvements, legacy building expense will be combined with building improvements. Legacy expenses can still be tracked by class. The committee will investigate hiring a bookkeeper to assist with payroll. The 2021 Form 990 was reviewed by Don Haselbauer, and he will present this at the next BOD meeting. The Pajarito lease is up for renewal and will be reviewed for end-of-year updates.

Don Haselbauer presented the Treasurer's Report and noted tax forms will be distributed as soon as they are received back from the CPA.

Financial Secretary Steve Ernest presented nine new members for approval. Our current membership is at 311.

Activities Director Jean Draheim reported the Friendly Friday Evening on October 14 was a success. Ondřej Veselý helped with the card game *mariáš*. The next event is November 11, with another card game. The last 2022 event will be December 9, no activity is decided on at this time.

The 60th Anniversary Party for the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers will be November 12; tickets are available in advance or at the door. Motion carried that profits from liquor sales for this event will be donated back to Sokol Minnesota.

The Rental Committee report was given by Denise Stibal. We continue to have strong inquiries for Hall bookings. We will do a trial order of 10 new chairs and a cart to make sure they are suitable for all events and fit in the elevator. Funding for additional chairs will hopefully be provided by a grant; we will know that status in December. Dawn Bulera has found some beautiful chandeliers for the Hall which add ambiance to the event space.

Gaming Chair Ed Hamernik presented the November expense budget, motion carried to approve. Approval of transfer of \$15,000 from Gaming to the General Fund.

Corresponding Secretary: Because Mia Grignon is traveling, Arlene Hamernik reported that five cards were sent to Sokol Minnesota members.

Board of Instructors Co-Director Mary Cahill reported gymnastic class enrollment is down. Mary will attend a Sokol conference in Chicago. A District gymnastics meet will be held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in April.

Building and Properties Committee Chair Bob Kotek reported on the parking lot repaving project. He has received one bid and is awaiting another. Motion carried to authorize not more than \$5,000 for conduit access across the parking lot for electricity. Replacement of the three south entrance doors will be done shortly. Also, a fourth door on the east side (on Western Avenue) will be replaced for environment and security reasons.

Fred Simon invited everyone to a tour of Saint Wenceslaus Church and School in New Prague on October 23 at 1 p.m.

The Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota annual meeting will be November 18. It will be a hybrid of "in person" and Zoom. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

### *Slovo* Publication Information

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Sokol Minnesota members receive the *Slovo* with their membership. **To receive your *Slovo* in color via email instead of the black and white mail version, contact [slovo@sokolmn.org](mailto:slovo@sokolmn.org).**

A subscription to the *Slovo* is available for \$15 annually. 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.

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*Aaron's Leap* by Magdaléna Platzová, translated by Craig Cravens. Bellevue Literary Press: New York, 2014, 224 pages. Originally published in Czech in 2006. Available at libraries and bookstores.

Magdaléna Platzová offers a lauded example of contemporary Czech literature. She has published a children's book, a young adult nonfiction book, short stories, plays, and several novels. *Aaron's Leap*, her first book translated into English, is a Lidové Noviny Book of the Year Award finalist. *The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* praised it as a novel that "must be counted among the best written by contemporary Czech writers." The author was raised in Prague, now lives in Lyon, France, and has also lived in Washington, DC, and New York City.

*Aaron's Leap* is a fictional novel about Berta Altmann inspired by the real-life story of Bauhaus artist Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, who taught art to children at the Nazi transport camp at Terezin and died at Auschwitz. We get to know Berta through the investigation of her life by a contemporary Israeli documentary film crew. Add to that the reminiscences of Berta's friend and fellow artist Kristýna Hládková and Berta's diaries. Despite Platzová's skill as a writer, she has taken on too much in one book. It is sometimes confusing as the book takes us back and forth in time, place, and between characters. It is also all presented in first person. A helpful addition would be brief descriptions of the famous artists and art movements of the time that got short shrift in the book. A subplot entangling Kristýna's granddaughter Milena and Aaron, the Israeli cameraman, is distracting and over-complicating to Berta's story. However, his option to "leap" into love gives the book its name.

The reader's earliest view of Berta Altmann is a few days before the First World War is declared, when Berta is coming into her own. Platzová wrote that Berta is "A girl in Vienna, 1914. She's just turned fourteen. She grew up without a mother and feels more mature than her peers. And more alone. Disjointedly, but all the more intensively, she perceives everything going on around her. She doesn't think about it. She drinks in everything, like a mushroom, without discrimination, without a teacher; she hungers for everything that resonates with her inner pulsation, with her longing, with her trepidation."

Her father recognizes Berta's creativity and steers her in the practical direction of photography, which she enjoys. She studies it for two years, and then applies to the Academy of Fine Arts, where she concentrates on weaving, designing patterns, and handling different materials. The people she meets and her experiences open a wide world of art for her, leading eventually to her teaching.

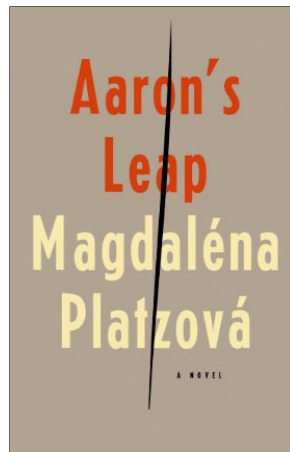
In this passage from Berta's journal, she is reinforcing her belief in the crucial role of art and the importance of her teaching it: "Art assuages and illuminates their lives; it illuminates them from the everyday grueling banality, the dirt, the struggle for basic necessities. I myself know well enough how grueling this struggle is! And how much a flash of beauty, of color, of understanding, a glimpse of another world can give someone who trudges day after day with his eyes fixed on the tips of his shoes. I want to believe that this experience can lead them further, like a lucky star. Especially for a child."

The complicated plots cover a century of Central European history. They show how Berta's experiences with the European Modernist movement, her lovers, and fellow artists affected her. In her diary, she records all of this, including the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the establishment of the Austrian Communist Party.

We follow Berta to Berlin, where she joins a commune based on Bauhaus thinking.

Berta gets married to a Jew, Milan Drůza, in Prague Town Hall in 1936 and becomes a Czech citizen. Platzová wrote beautifully of how "Berta most likes taking walks along the river, across levees, bridges, and islands. The gulls flying above the Moldau create the illusion of being near the sea and the open, distant horizon. Here, Prague is not small and cramped, one can breathe freely. Toward evening, the surface of the water is festively silvered, the lamps lit up; well-dressed people are heading to the theater or the Žofin Palace. Trams jangle, and a cool wind blows from the wooded slopes of Petřín Hill. For a moment, the dark stone of the castle retains its reddish tinge, then the west turns yellow, green, then pales, and the first star appears overhead."

As she approaches the peak of her artistic talent, Berta is condemned to Terezín (1942) and Auschwitz (1944) because of the company she keeps, her belief in helping others, and thus her reluctance to flee when she could.



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Gwen is coordinator of the Czech and Slovak Literary Ventures book discussion group. Literary Ventures 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. Find information and updates at [cs-center.org](http://cs-center.org) or contact [gwen@cs-center.org](mailto:gwen@cs-center.org).

Join Literary Ventures for a discussion of  
*Thinking about Ordinary Things: A Short Invitation to Philosophy*  
by Jan Sokol at 10 a.m. on Saturday, December 17.

## Czech Honorary Consul News

December 2022  
January 2023

Among the Honorary Consuls who attended the celebration of German Unity Day (*Tag der Deutschen Einheit*) on October 3 at the Germanic-American Institute in Saint Paul were Barbara Müller (Germany), Kurt Witte (Austria), Csilla Grauzer (Hungary), Teresa Palacios Olson (Chile), and M. L. Kucera (Czech Republic). Members of the Minnesota Ukrainian Community Center first thanked, then urged continued support for their homeland.



The Czech Heritage Club's program on October 23 had three parts: a tour of the Church of St. Wenceslaus in New Prague by Darlene Witt, with detailed explanations of the beautiful stained glass windows; a presentation by James Simon on the life and history of St. Wenceslaus; and a tour of the St. Wenceslaus Catholic School, pre-K to 8th grade, by Principal Kim Doyle. The parish, organized in 1856, is among the oldest in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis; it is the oldest Czech parish.

The present-day church (built in 1907), the rectory, and school building were placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1982. Several in the audience were students at the school many decades ago; they enjoyed visiting their old classrooms, remembering classmates and teachers, plus they marveled at the hands-on teaching methods and expansion of subjects, including robotics, now in the 21st century. Photo credit: New Prague Times

After attending the celebration of Czech National Day at the Union League Club of Chicago on October 26 with Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota President Dave Stepan, I spent the next day at the Consulate of the Czech Republic in Chicago with Sharon Valasek, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic/Kansas City, to receive updates and instructions from Consul General Jaroslav Kantůrek and Deputy Consul General Ondřej Pometlo.

We also were invited to participate in two other meetings that day at the Consulate. As it does annually, a delegation from the American Jewish Committee (AJC) presented its appreciation to the Czech Consulate/Chicago and the Czech government for its continued support for Czech-American and Czech-Israel relations. Consul General affirmed this support. The AJC also expressed its deep appreciation for the Czech government's commitment to Holocaust remembrance and education, as well as organizing the upcoming high-level Terezín Conference in Prague and Terezín (November 2-4, 2022). (L-R) Irving Bain, Columbus, OH AJC; Beverly Bain, Columbus, OH AJC; Sam Simon, Chicago AJC; Czech Honorary Consul/Kansas City Sharon Valasek; Czech Honorary Consul/Minneapolis M. L. Kucera; Czech Deputy Consul General/Chicago Ondřej Pometlo; Nancy Lisker, AJC Regional Director, St. Louis; Martin Gradman, Chicago AJC; Carolyn Gilbert, Cincinnati AJC; Czech Consul General/Chicago Jaroslav Kantůrek; Czech Vice Consul/Chicago Monika Bokšová; Assistant Czech Honorary Consul/Kansas City Gary Lofquist; Joe Tescher, Chicago AJC.



Our second meeting was with a group of students from the English Section of gymnázium Olomouc Hejčín in the Czech Republic, along with their English-immersion teacher František Brauner. The students spent ten days in Owensboro, Kentucky, sister city to Olomouc, and three days in Chicago. Every other year, students from one city visit the other city, living with families, and with the chance also to visit another city for a few days. This is the first time that Chicago was the second city for Olomouc students. After many years in English immersion classes, these Czech students are completely fluent in English. This Owensboro/Olomouc exchange began several years ago when Kelia Ellis West and her family had a Czech student, whom they enjoyed so much that Kelia sought to make this an annual exchange with Olomouc. (L-R kneeling) Helena Jeníková, Markéta Valentová, Kelia Ellis West, Izabela Heczková, Julie Piechová. (L-R standing): Sharon Valasek, Ondřej Pometlo, Monika Bokšová, Gary Lofquist, Jaroslav Kantůrek, M. L. Kucera, Terezie Dubová, Ondřej Sedlák, Kryštof Žaluda, František Brauner, Dave Stepan.



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## Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* December 2022-January 2023

Hey kids!  
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