



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 1 and Jan 12

New Year's Dinner
Saturday, January 20
5 p.m.
(info adjacent)

Sokol Gift Shop open during events and by appointment

Use this 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
Happy Holidays
and
a Happy New Year!
from your
Sokol Minnesota
Board of Directors

Sokol Children's Holiday Party **2023**
7 p.m. Friday, December 8

Hosted by
Czech and Slovak
Sokol Minnesota
at the
C.S.P.S. Hall
383 Michigan St.
Saint Paul



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

Visit from:
Svatý Mikuláš (St. Nicholas),
anděl (angel),
and *čert* (devil).
Performance by: Sokol
Czech and Slovak Singers
Don Haselbauer, Director.

Saturday, January 20 **2024**

New Year's Dinner
Svíčková s knedlíkem

5 p.m. (doors open 4:30 p.m.)

Price: \$30. per person
Menu: Beef in cream sauce,
bread dumpling,
dessert, coffee,
and cash bar.

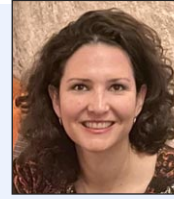
Hosted by:
Czech and Slovak Sokol
Minnesota
C.S.P.S. Hall
383 Michigan Street
Saint Paul, MN



Payment:
Prepay and reserve online:
credit/debit card
or
PayPal go to
www.sokolmn.org/cc/
or
if reserving
and paying by check
Voice/text: 651-210-0401
Limited number
of dinners available

Komentáře prezidentky a členů Sokol Minnesota Comments from the President and Members of Sokol Minnesota

Throughout the year we have gotten to know a number of our Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors' members, but there are many others who volunteer their time to keep our organization humming along. I was grateful when Tom Aubrecht accepted my request to tell us more about himself. Editing the Slovo is no small commitment and I know each one of you reading this today would agree that we are lucky to have Tom as such an active member! I was not surprised to learn that he worked as a Quality Assurance Analyst; that dovetails right in with the eye for detail and gentle tweaking needed in copy editing.



Cinnamon
Whaley



Tom Aubrecht

Have you heard of the Hopkins Raspberry Festival parade? It is an annual tradition with Czech-linked roots that I have fond memories of attending as a child. I am half Czech through four great-grandparents, with the earliest arriving in Minnesota in the Hopkins area in 1855. Czech culture was not a direct part of my upbringing. However, I did pick berries as a young teen at one of the Bren berry farms in Hopkins (the Brens were one of many Czech families in the area), which involved starting the day by joining my sisters and neighbors in hopping in the back of a flat-bed truck at 6 a.m. My memories of participating in these activities contributed to my interest in Czech culture.

My first connection with Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota was through my taking a *koláče* baking class given by Georgiana Dolejsi and Florence Haselbauer in the early 1990s. My late dearest wife Judy's and my daughters, Kate (Aubrecht) Gilman and Jen Aubrecht Massey, danced with the *Taneční Mládež* and *Taneční Teens* for approximately 10 years each. Jen also danced one year with the adult Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers before moving to California. Judy and Kate visited the Czech Republic in 1996 with a Venture Scout group from Sokol Minnesota. I traveled to the Czech Republic in 2000 as a chaperone for Jen, two other Saint Paul girls, and one from Chicago who participated in a multi-faceted three-week international Sokol camp and tour. Jen and I were fortunate to visit two of our family's ancestral villages, Borova and Široký Důl, in Moravia near the camp, thanks to one of the leaders. Our group, along with other Sokols from Minnesota, also participated in the International *Slet*, which led to two of my key memories of the trip. One memory was marching in the *Slet* parade with the United States contingent and seeing the tears of some of the Czech senior women attendees as we went by. The second vivid memory was marching under the stands into the *Slet* stadium singing *Kde domov můj* (the Czech national anthem) and hearing our voices reverberate.

When Jen got her driver's license, Judy and I joined the adult dance group. Despite my being barely able to polka in a straight line when we started (many thanks for your patience, Louise!), we enjoyed practicing and performing with the group for 15 years and touring the Czech Republic with the group in 2012. On each trip our family took, we were most glad to see many cultural, historic, and natural sites throughout the Czech Republic. Judy and I retired from the dance group in 2020.

Like many of you, I have volunteered with Sokol Minnesota in a variety of ways. Much of my volunteering has been on the periphery of our dinners and events, but the volunteers that are heavily involved in organizing our activities on an ongoing basis are amazing. Judy, who was not Czech or Slovak, volunteered in several key roles for Sokol Minnesota, including as president for five years (*Slovo*, March 2021). Volunteering in any capacity with Sokol Minnesota is a great way to connect with people and with our shared culture and history.

My more formal roles for Sokol Minnesota included the Board of Directors positions of Member-at-Large, Sergeant at Arms (no need for being a "bouncer," thankfully), Treasurer, and Financial Secretary (membership records). I am finishing my fifth year as *Slovo* co-managing editor and copy editor. I am honored to work on the *Slovo* to assist in promoting and documenting the organizers' efforts on, and attendees' participation in, our physical, educational, cultural, and social programs. The *Slovo* would not be possible without the outstanding and much-appreciated efforts of the many contributors, the reviewers of the draft issues (I especially appreciate the assistance with the finer, or even not-so-fine, points of grammar), and the *Slovo* team (see the list on page 13). I had several careers, resulting from getting to know myself better over the years and from keeping up with rapidly changing information technology. I worked in city and regional planning in Ohio, Maple Grove, and Milwaukee (earning a Masters at Rutgers along the way); as a research analyst for two State of Minnesota departments and the University of Minnesota School of Public Health; and as an application software developer or IT Quality Assurance (QA) Analyst for several Twin Cities Fortune 500 companies. While I retired in 2016, my work as *Slovo* copy editor ties in with my QA background as well as my Gallup Strengthsfinder tool's top strength of Maximizer (take something good and make it better).

My current hobbies include the adult dance group (I rejoined a year ago and I am finding it has not gotten any easier than when we retired), golf (I started as a caddy), walking (during which I sometimes write haiku), Tai Chi (I may join the new Wednesday evening group), and riding both my indoor exercise bike and my new e-bike. I enjoy reading history of all time periods, historical novels, and biographies, as well as keeping up with the news. I readily purchase discount books on historic, natural, art, and technical topics, which I read as a way to keep my mind fresh.

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



Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota 2023 BOD (Board of Directors)

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Recording Secretary

Theresa Hudachek

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Telephone: 651-290-0542

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

First Czech Schnitzel Dinner a Success By Joyce Tesarek

Breaded pork schnitzel (*řízek*, featured for the first time), homemade Czech potato salad, rye bread, and apple strudel delighted the diners at our Annual Czech Dinner on October 29th. This event celebrated Czech National Day, October 28, the anniversary of the 1918 official creation of

Czechoslovakia. It was a special time to enjoy a delicious meal and to visit with new and old friends. In total 122 diners, both sit-down and take-out, enjoyed the dinner. Thanks to all who attended or volunteered!



1. Happy Diners. 2. Three of the Schnitzel Dinner chefs: Markéta Pálková, Jana Castillon, and Míša Kotek. 3. The Schnitzel Dinner. 4. Sylvie preparing a centerpiece. Each centerpiece also included a Czech flag in honor of Czech National Day.

The meal was prepared by Markéta Pálková, Míša Kotek, and Dawn Bulera, with help from Katarina Bílá, Jana Castillon, Ludmila Maxey, Ludmila Pálková, Katka Svensson, and Alena Youngberg.

Additional event volunteers were Pat Andrlé, James Bradford, Jean Draheim, Roger Green, Lloyd Krocak, M. L. Kucera, Pam Langworthy, Sally Lieberman, Luboš Mareš, Doreen McKenney, Matthew Resong, Lucy Rose, Sylvie, Richard Sargent, Dave Stepan, Joyce Tesarek, Kathy Weese, and Louise Wessinger.

At the Czech & Slovak Festival on September 24, 21 non-members purchased advance tickets to the Czech Schnitzel Dinner. Thanks to the Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic/Minneapolis, M. L. Kucera, who paid \$5 of each of their \$25 tickets as an incentive for them to attend.

Mark January 20, 2024, on your calendar for our special New Year's Dinner of *svíčková* (beef in cream sauce) with dumplings and dessert! Check www.sokolmn.org/events for reservation information.

Renew your Sokol Minnesota Membership for 2024! By Steve Ernest

Our web page allows you to pay your dues via PayPal, Renewal letters for 2024 membership went out after Thanksgiving, but you can renew anytime at www.sokolmn.org/membership On this web page, you can provide updated information, change your address, change how you receive the *Slovo* newsletter, express activities you would like to become more involved in, and provide other feedback.

You can make your dues payment via PayPal on this page even if you do not have a PayPal account. If you would rather renew by mail, information on how to do that can also be found on the bottom of the web page.

Since 1882, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota has been a place to find community, fitness, and fun through physical, cultural, educational, and social activities. Please renew your membership by the beginning of January and continue being part of the Sokol family in 2024!

**Friendly Friday
Evenings 7-10 p.m.
Social for
Members, Families, and Friends
at the C.S.P.S. Hall
December 1 and January 12**

Third Annual Trunks with Treats Harvest Fest

By SMYL Committee

The Third Annual Trunks with Treats Harvest Fest took place Saturday, October 28, 2023, at the C.S.P.S. Hall.

The family-friendly event was hosted by Sokol Minnesota Youth Link (SMYL) teens.

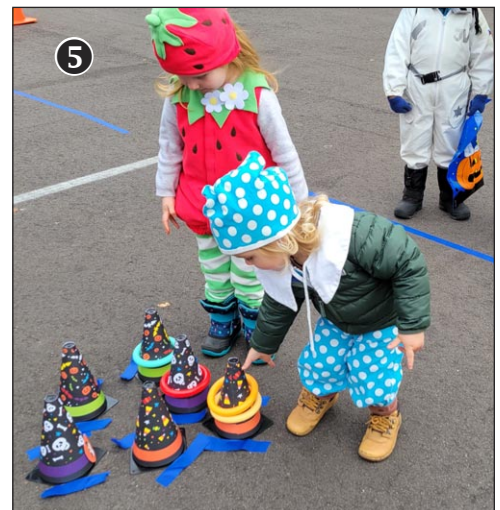
Each of the 38 children attending received a welcome bag before proceeding to the 12 decorated game and activity stations in the Hall parking lot. Special guests Penny and Tom Tesarek entertained families with their amazing juggling skills. As families exited the Fest area, each participant left with a goodie bag from SMYL.



Funding for the games and treats was provided by SMYL from used book sales at the recent Czech & Slovak Festival.

Many thanks to the volunteers: Aaron Armstrong, Mary Cahill, Izzy and Olga Espinosa, Dave and Glynis Grostephan (advisor), M. L. Kucera, Becca, Julia Johnson, Lisa Johnson, Doreen McKenney (advisor), Judy Metcalf, Mathew Resong, Lucy Rose, Sawyer, Sylvie, Vicky Schousek, Dave Stepan, Joyce Tesarek, Penny and Tom Tesarek, and Kathy Weese.

1. The Robins family attended dance practice and stayed for the festive activities. 2. SMYL volunteer Aaron Armstrong encouraging a toss at the octopus. 3. SMYL volunteers Vicky and Sylvie. 4. Two fish on one cast! 5. Enjoying the ring toss.



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:

Contact: slovo@sokolmn.org

We think our volunteers produce a great newsletter.

We want to be sure you receive it!



KIDS GOLD OUTSIDE?

Gymnastics Classes Ongoing and Available
Gymnastics classes for boys and girls continue through winter!

Spots are still available. No experience necessary!

For more information, please visit
www.sokolmn.org/at-our-hall/sokol_fitness/

**COME INDOORS OUT OF THE COLD
AND GET ACTIVE WITH
GYMNASTICS AT THE C.S.P.S. HALL!**



Participants in the Fun Run/Walk, L-R: Seated: Alex Cho, Henry, and Megan Brozovich. Middle row: Kája Jost, Honza, Viktorka, Joyce Tesarek, Colleen Cahill, Charlie, and Eddie. Back row: Dave Stepan, Luboš Mareš, Kevin Lundeen, Steve Ernest, Jitka Sebek, Mary Cahill, Jason Brozovich, and Katka Svensson with Karolinka.

Sokol Minnesota Fun Run/Walk Celebrates 1918 Independence By Steve Ernest

Despite the temperature hovering around freezing, 19 hearty souls enjoyed the Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota fun run/walk on October 28 to mark the 105th anniversary of the founding of the first modern Czech and Slovak republic. The October 28, 1918, creation of Czechoslovakia joined Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia Silesia, and Carpathian Ruthenia in an independent country. Czech and Slovak Sokol members of those days were strong contributors to the events that made independence possible. The fun run/walk was held in coordination with the international Sokol *Běh Republiky* (Run of the Republic) activities, which are done partly in remembrance of the events more than a hundred years ago. The two-kilometer course went around the C.S.P.S. Hall neighborhood and included part of the Little Bohemia Trail.



SAVE THE DATE
Montgomery's 24th Annual
Masopust Celebration
is Sunday, February 18, 2024

Please note that Masopust will be one week later than normal due to Super Bowl Sunday falling on February 11, 2024.

Please watch for all the details in the February *Slovo*.

June 30 to July 5, 2024
in Prague

2024 XVII All Sokol Slet

Sokols from around the world will flock to Prague for the XVII All Sokol Slet to be held from June 30 to July 5, 2024. Tours are being planned. Watch the *Slovo* for more information or contact joan@sokolmn.org See photos of the past Slet events at www.slet2024.cz/galerie

The visiting students and teachers from Ždar nad Sazavou, Czech Republic, returned home on October 19. For more information on their visit, see the associated article in the November *Slovo* on page 5 and teachers Petra Stárková's and Martina Janurová's post-trip article on their school website www.bigyzt.cz/clanek/expedice-usa (if needed, use a browser that provides a translation).

Thanks to the efforts of the students, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota now has a translated copy of the book "Sokol St Paul, Minn" minutes 1882-1890. Based on the June 13, 1882, minutes that refer to a "previous Sokol," it is possible our organization is even older than 1882, which was thought to be our year of origin. A note from the February 25, 1887, minutes refers to V. Picha speaking to Mr. Pozdena on the matter of the newspaper article about the beginnings of Sokol. Perhaps finding this newspaper article might clarify the issue.

The book translated includes Sokol meeting minutes from 1882, 1883, 1884, 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1890. The book has no minutes from 1885-1886. It is indicated at the meeting of September 29, 1884, that the Sokol unit might have been disbanded as it was agreed to move all Sokol furniture (equipment?) to the hall of Sokol member Vaclav Picha. On February 18, 1887, the St Paul Sokol re-established itself and on March 21, 1887, Sokol Saint Paul changed its name to Sokol Žižka. But again, at a special meeting on October 1, 1890, the eight members in attendance voted to donate the remaining \$78.17 in the treasury and the Sokol tools (gym equipment?) to the *Rad Čech* c.12 C.S.P.S. until a future date when "at least 20 members and a trainer can be organized."

"I believe this translation of the earliest minutes will add important details to the history of our organization," Dr. Lukas Perutka of Charles University in Prague noted, when he was copying the pages of this same book, and that there were gaps in our history and that many organizations created by immigrant communities had the challenge to interest new members. That challenge continues to this day, but if it weren't for the perseverance of those early members to continue the effort, we wouldn't be in existence today. Today we are fortunate that the relative affluence of our current society has allowed you as members to support our Sokol Minnesota programs at the C.S.P.S Hall. In the 1880's, I can imagine the struggle to earn a living was, perhaps, more important than participation in Sokol activities.

Additional work needs to be done with this book, including compiling a complete list of all individuals mentioned; both members and non-members. The plan is to share all of this information in more detail with Sokol Minnesota members and the community at large. In addition to the translation work, we also now have a digital print of all of the Thomas Edison "type" music rolls that have been stored at C.S.P.S. Hall. There is interest in the rolls from Filip Šír, Coordinator for the



Student Archivists and Teachers at the C.S.P.S. Hall, L-R: Teachers Petra Stárková and Martina Janurová; students Alžběta Novotná (seated), Viki Hadová, Filip Zbořil, and Sylvie Troubilová. The puppets Jarda and Jitka look on.

Digitalization and New Media Department of the National Museum in the Czech Republic.

We also have new digital copies of miscellaneous (untranslated) correspondence from Vaclav Picha and miscellaneous unidentified pictures.

Thank you to Diane Bell, Tricia (Mestenhauer) Bergh, Jan Košťál, M. L. Kucera, Joe Landsberger, Luboš Mareš, Daniel Nečas, Markéta Pálková, Pat Slaber, Pavlina Tesch, John Topič, Louise Wessinger, and Sokol Minnesota for providing the support to make the students' and teachers' visit a success.

Thank you to the Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities, the *Taneční Mládež* and *Taneční Teen* dancers, and the St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers for allowing the students and teachers to see our community in action.

Bohemian Flats Connections Sought

Do you or your family have connections to the historic Bohemian Flats settlement along the Mississippi River in Minneapolis? A spring program about Bohemian Flats, and the city park that bears its name, is in the planning stages.

We would love to have your input!

Contact Sokol Minnesota Education Director Sally Lieberman at education@sokolmn.org

2024 Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Pageant Seeks Contestants By Anne Jans

The Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota pageant is seeking contestants for the 2024 pageant contest on April 13. The pageant aspires to promote the Czech and Slovak heritages through participation in many festivals across Minnesota and the United States. The candidates and royalty selected spend time learning about their heritage and sharing their common passion and interest in it, while practicing and gaining public speaking and interpersonal skills.

Girls and boys ages 11-15 can become a Junior Ambassador. Young women between the ages of 16 and 25 are invited to compete in the Queen pageant. Contestants compete in four areas: private interview, talent, on-stage interview, and *kroj*. Cash prizes and Czech crystal are awarded.

Contestants must be of partial to full Bohemian, Moravian, Slovak, Silesian, or Rusyn descent; unmarried; and a resident of Minnesota or attend an accredited school in Minnesota.

Applications are due February 1, 2024. For applications and more information, contact the Board of Directors at MissCzechSlovakMNPageant@gmail.com

Tai Chi and Kung Fu at Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota

Kung Fu: Wednesdays 6-7 p.m.

Tai Chi: Wednesdays 7-8 p.m.

The classes at Sokol Minnesota's C.S.P.S. Hall are continuous, so you can join at any time!

Fee: \$40/month.

Family discounts are available.

More information at:

AmerikanKungFuNorth@gmail.com

A CZECH COUNTRY CHRISTMAS
SVATÝ
St. Nicholas
MIKULÁŠ
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023
11:00 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.
The Revival on Main (213 1st St South, Montgomery, MN)

- Children's treat/gift bags, Make-and-Take crafts and Czech activities
- Svatý Mikuláš (St. Nicholas) & friends
- Horse and Carriage rides (weather permitting)
- St. Paul Czech and Slovak Adult and Children Folk Dancers
- Adult and Children's Door prizes *Need not be present to win
- Montgomery's own Alenka and Vlada topiary Czech dancers on display
- Christmas Market with Czech gifts
- Czech Bakery with authentic, baked goods
- Czech hotdogs, vomacka with zelniky, halušky, hot cocoa, mulled wine for purchase



NO ADMISSION – FREE-WILL DONATIONS ACCEPTED
RUSTICFARMERONMAIN.COM

Accepting personal hygiene products/paper products/canned goods for the Montgomery Food Shelf



Czech and Slovak Language Classes for Adults

Online and in-person options

**Winter trimester registration
opens in December**

**Classes begin the week of January 8
and end the week of March 11**

Visit the website for the schedule
and registration form:

www.sokolmn.org

Questions?

Email Education Director Sally Lieberman
education@sokolmn.org

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.

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 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.

GENERAL FUND

\$100 - \$499: Wayne Zbytovsky.

LEGACY FUND

\$100 - \$499: Becky Green in memory of her mother
Marilyn Frolík Green; Terry Shima.

IN KIND DONATION

Katka Svensson: refreshments and runners'/walkers' bibs for the October 28 Run of Republic (see article on page 5).

TOTAL \$730

Sokol Minnesota Welcomes New Members By Steve Ernest

Seven new members were accepted at the Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota October Board of Directors meeting. Some of these membership applications were from the summer, but the Board did not meet in September.

Bonnie Oldre of Minneapolis, with interests in the literature group, history & genealogy, and language classes.

Lori Schleis of Saint Paul, with interests in films & theater, music & dances, history & genealogy, language, cooking classes, and crafting classes.

Bonnie and Ron Simon of Lonsdale.

Grace and Sam Welle of Minneapolis, with interests in youth dance, youth singing, culture camp, Sokol Minnesota Youth League, the Kolo Sokol bicycle group, films & theater, music & dances, history & genealogy, staffing booths and serving for events, building upkeep, language, cooking classes, and crafting classes.

Wayne Zbytovsky of Minnetonka.

We welcome you to Sokol Minnesota!

**Hey kids!
Come join me, Ms. Louise,
after the Holiday break
for fun-filled
Saturday mornings at
the C.S.P.S. Hall
with Czech and Slovak
dancing !**



**Contact:
Louise Wessinger at 651-452-6240**

Join Sokol Minnesota Singers

Czech & Slovak
songs are sung at
the C.S.P.S. Hall
the first and third
Tuesday of the month
from 10 a.m. -12N

383 Michigan St., Saint Paul, MN

Special piano accompaniment
by Don Haselbauer

Questions: activities@sokolmn.org



Highlights of the Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors October 2023 Meeting

By Tom Aubrecht from Theresa Hudachek's Minutes

The Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors October 19, 2023, meeting was called to order by Vice President Lucy Rose at 7 p.m.

Discussion was again held on the Slovak-centered dance group *Holubica's* hope for a formal relationship with Sokol Minnesota.

The 2026 American Sokol Convention Co-chairs, to be held in Minnesota, are Mary Cahill and Joan Sedlacek.

The October 28 Czech and Slovak Independence Day run/walk was discussed.

Membership Director Steve Ernest presented eight applications for membership, which were approved (see article on page 8). Sokol Minnesota now has 308 members.

Mary Cahill and Jason Brozovich noted for the Board of Instructors that gymnastics classes are going well. There are over 10 students in the Tuesday 4- 6-year-old class. Other classes have more modest numbers, but new inquiries are coming in. The search is ongoing for a coach to primarily help with the more advanced classes. The Western District Gymnastics Competition will be held at Sokol South Omaha on April 27, 2024. Kung Fu and Tai Chi classes have been slowly gaining participants. The *XVII All Sokol Slet* in Prague will be June 30 to July 5, 2024. Three different calisthenic routines ("cals") will be performed at the *Slet*. Several Sokol members from Chicago area have committed to learning and performing a cal at the *Slet*, and one member has committed from the Western District.

Education Director Sally Lieberman noted 45 students are enrolled in language classes: 28 in Czech, 17 in Slovak. All classes met the four-student minimum. One class is over the 10-student maximum. Of the online students, 14 out of 32 are from outside the metro area, primarily from outside Minnesota, with beginning Slovak accounting for the largest share of out-of-state students.

The *Second Life of Vendulka V.* exhibition at the C.S.P.S. Hall during the Festival was visited by approximately 100 people.

The author, journalist Ondřej Kundra, was at the Festival and gave two talks during the week prior, one on the Vendulka V. project, the other on his reporting on the war in Ukraine. Both talks were attended by approximately a dozen people. We co-sponsored Kundra's visit with the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota.

Possible future activities include:

- Screening of Mara Pelecis film about Latvian independence.
- An online informational session on summer study programs in the Czech Republic (Poděbrady, etc) will be held in early February.
- Cooking classes: a possible dumpling mini-series in late winter/early spring.
- Bohemian Flats Park tour and talk in May; see page 6.

Denise Stibal noted for the Rental Committee that rental inquiries continue to come in steadily.

Finance Committee chair Joyce Tesarek reported that the Czech & Slovak Festival did very well financially.

Building and Trustees Committee Chair Bob Kotek noted that planting trees on the west side of the parking lot is planned before cold weather sets in. Installing a remote access thermostat is planned to better control the temperature of the C.S.P.S. Hall.

Gaming Manager Ed Hamernik presented requests for approval. The November Expense Budget was approved.

The September Actual Operation Summary was approved. Transfer of \$10,000 to the General Fund in October was approved, as was an appropriate transfer in December.

Activities Director Jeannie Draheim noted there are 81 registrations for the Czech schnitzel dinner (see page 3).

2024 calendar event dates have been proposed and were discussed. Dates will not be publicized unless there is an event chair/organizer. The Dvořák Visit Celebration on September 17 was recapped.

Joyce Tesarek reported on account balances for Treasurer Don Haselbauer.

Slovo Publication Information and Committees

The *Slovo* is published ten times per year by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, a non-profit organization, 383 W. Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102. Phone: 651-290-0542.

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

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.

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

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Letters from Spain by Karel Čapek, translated by Paul Selver. Geoffrey Bles: London, 1931 in English, 196 pages; 1930 in Czech. Available at libraries and bookstores.

Letters from Spain is third in the series of five travel books by beloved author Karel Čapek. It was published in Czechoslovakia in 1930 and in English translation the following year. The title is misleading, at least in the English edition, since the book is a collection of essays, not letters.

Approaching this book, the reader needs to remain aware that Čapek's observations and stories are plucked from a very specific time and place.

He begins the book as his trip begins, with train rides across multiple countries to get to Spain. Are you up for train trivia, such as fake luggage labels, fast vs. slow trains, bunk beds?

"My poetical friends, let me tell you the plain truth about Pullmans and Sleepings Cars," Čapek writes. "If you must know they look infinitely more enticing from outside, when they flash past some sleepy little station than from within. It is true that they make up for this by their tremendous speed, but it is no less true that all the same you are boxed up in them for fourteen or even twenty-three blessed hours at a stretch, and as a rule that's enough to bore you stiff.... Confound it all, thinks the man in the Pullman, where are we? What, only Bordeaux? Good Lord, this is a slow business."

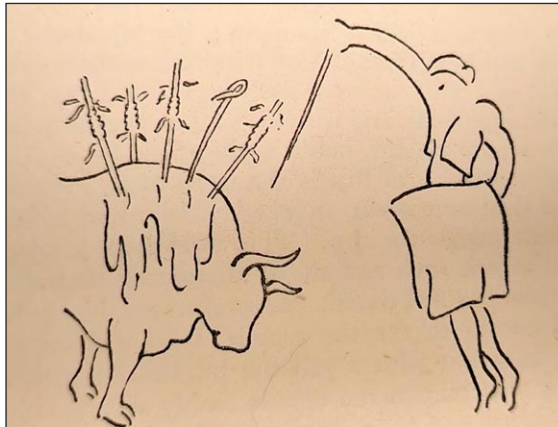
He reminded me of the unexpected reality of my train ride across Spain many years ago. I was twenty-one, on winter break from university, and coming back from Morocco to Germany. After many hours riding, I found out how ridiculously slow and long the train ride would be across Spain, but fortunately I could change plans and hop a plane halfway across Spain to make sure I didn't miss my international flight home

Čapek tells a humorous tale of the "complicated adventure" it is to get into the upper berth of a sleeping train car, especially when someone is already asleep in the lower one. "It is somewhat disconcerting," he writes, "to trample on the head and abdomen of a person whose nationality and character are alike unknown to you." He suggests different methods for maneuvering up to the top bunk and warns you to not get thirsty or anything of the sort which would involve climbing down.

Throughout his vast writings, the author retains his fascination and admiration for nationhood. "Spain has not yet ceased to be in close touch with nature," Čapek writes, "and has still not lost sight of its history; that is why it has managed to preserve itself to such an extent. And all that the rest of us can do is to observe, with a certain amount of wonder, how fine a thing it is to be a nation."

Passages in the book focus on a variety of topics—cities

and regions; artists (work by Goya, El Greco, Velázquez); well-known, traditional, cultural aspects of Spain, such as bullfighting, flamenco dancing, and mantillas; and *rejas*, the metal-work lattices on buildings. He includes descriptions of his favorite topics—gardens and food—as well. Each province had its own wines and different sorts of fish and cheese, sausage, beans, melons, olives, grapes, sweetmeats, and "other local gifts of God."



Bullfighting in Spain. Illustration by Karel Čapek.

Two chapters are devoted to bullfighting, the different types of bullfights, the men and horses involved, the cruelty, the injuries, and deaths. Čapek seemed both fascinated and bored with it. He raised the question, "Is it magnificent or cruel? I do not know; what I saw was, if anything, most magnificent; and when I look back at it now—I cannot help wondering whether it would be better for that dauntless and noble specimen of a bull to end in the shambles by being

banged on the head with a bludgeon! Would that be more humane than for him to perish this way in a fight, as befits his mettlesome and pugnacious heart? Well, I don't know...." To Čapek, a Spanish garden was "an artificial paradise" and "an intimate dream." As a passionate gardener, he found the Spanish gardens consisted of three things: (1) greenery including cypresses, clipped box-trees, myrtle, privet, laurel, holly, lauroceras, honeysuckle, diverse shrubs, and on and on; (2) flagstones, ricks, glazed tiles, majolica flights of steps, seats, fountains, jets, balconies, pergolas, balustrades, and on and on, and (3) a most luxuriant jungle. Tourism can surprise you. An exact model of the Santa Maria, on which Christopher Columbus came to America, was available for touring. Čapek looked it over, top to bottom, and laid on the bed in Columbus's cabin. He wasn't inspired. He even "meddled with the falconetas or culebrinas or whatever they call those old cannons, during which process I nearly broke my leg with an iron bullet, for they were loaded; but I discovered nothing except my own astonishment at finding the famous ship so small."

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 or contact gwen@cs-center.org.

Join Literary Ventures for a discussion of *Prague Spring* by Simon Mawer on Saturday, December 16, and *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* by Madeleine Albright on January 27, both at 10 a.m.

Czech Honorary Consul News

December 2023
January 2024

On their first day in Saint Paul, October 10, the students and their advisors from Žďař nad Sázavou, Czech Republic, visited the Honorary Consul Office. (L-R) Advisors Martina Janurová and Petra Stárková; students Filip Zbořil, Alžběta Novotná, Viki Hadová, Sylvie Troubilová. They came to C.S.P.S. Hall to digitize materials from the Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota archives. I gave each of them a 2018 quarter which honors Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota, as a souvenir of their trip to Minnesota. At the end of their stay Viki, with technical assistance by Filip and Petra as supervisor, interviewed me for a future podcast. Patricia Mestenhauer Bergh, Joe Landsberger, and Renáta Tichá were also interviewed, each by a different student.



Assistant Professor Igor Tchoukarine (wearing mask), Department of History, University of Minnesota, brought ten of his students to C.S.P.S Hall on October 11. Joan Sedlacek (with the Sokol t-shirt in front) led the tour, which concluded in the Honorary Consul office. All enjoyed a delicious Sokol-made *koláč* as they departed. For fall semester 2023, the class studied Central European/Scandinavian/German migration to the Twin Cities in the 19th and 20th centuries, focusing on the lives of immigrants and their descendants in the Twin Cities by looking at socio-economic questions and racial issues, as well as relationships with other ethnic/racial groups, associations, social and religious life.

After the opening session of the 19th Genealogical/Cultural Conference of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International in Milwaukee on October 18: Sharon Valasek, Honorary Czech Consul/Kansas City, and M. L. Kucera, Honorary Czech Consul/Minneapolis; watched as Sister Anita Smisek presented her book, *Minnesota's 'Big Woods' Musicians*, to Jakub Utěšený, Consul General of the Czech Republic/Chicago. The book is a narrative on the rich tradition of music in the culture and life of the people who emigrated from South Bohemia to the communities in and around New Prague. cgsi.org



At the 105-55-30 Celebration Dance sponsored by the Czech Heritage Club in New Prague on October 22, Club President Gary Pikal, New Prague Mayor Duane Jirik, and Deputy Consul General/Chicago Ondřej Pometlo reflected on these historical events: the formation of Czechoslovakia (1918), the Prague Spring reform movement (1968), and the creation of the two nations of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic (1993).

Among the over 150 people on October 26 who attended at the Czech Consulate/ Chicago celebration of Czech National Day (October 28) in Chicago were Dalibor Mikuláš, Vice President and COO of National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML); Renáta Tichá, president of Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, M. L. Kucera, Honorary Czech Consul/Minneapolis, Cecilia Rokusek, CEO and President NCSML; and Vít Voženílek, Professor, *Universita Palackého v Olomouci*.



Attending a briefing at the Consulate of the Czech Republic/Chicago on October 27 were Renáta Tichá; Jakub Utěšený, Consul General/Chicago; M. L. Kucera, Honorary Consul/ Minneapolis; Sharon Valasek, Honorary Consul/Kansas City; and Ondřej Pometlo, Deputy Consul General/Chicago.

On October 29, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota served its annual Czech Dinner (see page 3). Each table had a small Czech flag to honor Czech National Day, October 28. As Honorary Czech Consul, I greeted the dinner guests at the door and gave a special welcome, explaining the significance of Czech National Day, the date in 1918 when Czechoslovakia was created at the end of World War I. The Czech Republic continues to use that date as its National Day. Sokolmn.org

On November 5, I joined Joan Sedlacek for a dinner in New Prague to meet Chris Campbell, the new CEO and Chairman of the Board of BetterLife (originally ZCBJ Fraternal Organization), now headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin. Joan is President of the Minneapolis lodge and represents the state of Minnesota on the Fraternal Advisory Board. Duane Jirik, who is on the National Board of Directors for BetterLife, invited the national office's team to New Prague, where he is Mayor, to celebrate BetterLife's local membership. Members from Minneapolis, New Prague, Montgomery, and Glencoe attended the dinner in New Prague.

With its 125-year history, BetterLife supports its members through member-led community service projects by providing direction and financial assistance, as well as awarding student scholarships. In 2023, 58 national scholarships totaled \$68,000. betterlifeins.com



Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic
in Minneapolis, MN

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For status of events scheduled for the C.S.P.S. Hall, check our calendar at

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Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* December 2023-January 2024

Saturday, January 20

20
24

New Year's Dinner
Svíčková s knedlíkem

5 p.m. (doors open 4:30 p.m.)



Price: \$30. per person

Menu:

Beef in cream sauce,
bread dumpling,
dessert, coffee, and cash bar.

Payment:

Prepay and reserve online:
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or

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Voice/text: 651-210-0401
Limited number of dinners available

Hosted by:

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