



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

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

March Slovo articles due February 1

Friendly Friday Evenings Social  
Friday, February 10

Flavors of Slovakia Dinner  
Sunday, March 12  
(info adjacent)

Spring Pancake Breakfast, Craft and Koláče Sale  
Sunday, April 2  
(info adjacent)

Watch for information in upcoming Slovos:  
Curling  
Mushroom Hunt

Sokol Gift Shop open during dinners 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



**Flavors of Slovakia Dinner**

Hosted by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota • C.S.P.S. Hall 383 Michigan St., St.Paul



**Sunday, March 12** 2023

Dinner is offered Curbside parking lot pick-up from 10-11 a.m.

or

12:30 p.m. indoor sit-down with doors opening at 12N \$25. per person

**RESERVE**

Prepaid dinners must be received by Wednesday, March 8

Prepay: credit/debit card or PayPal at [www.sokolmn.org/cc/](http://www.sokolmn.org/cc/)

If prepaying by check and or picking up curbside call/text 952-941-0426

Checks mailed to the Hall without calling in a reservation cannot be guaranteed a dinner.

**MENU**

Cabbage roll (*plnená kapusta*) dilled green beans (*kôprová zelená fazuľka*), dumplings w/cabbage (*halušky s kapustou*), pickled beets (*nakladaná repa*), filled dumplings (*pirohy*), caraway rye bread (*rascový ražný chlieb*), and dessert. Cash bar.

**Spring Pancake Breakfast  
Craft and Koláče Bake Sale**

**Sunday, April 2** 2023

**9 -1 p.m.**

\$10 Adult; \$6 child under 9; \$30/family of 4  
No reservations needed.



**Ordering koláče**

Apricot, cream cheese, poppy, prune, or raspberry koláč \$1.50 each

Prepaid koláče orders must be received by Wednesday, March 29

Prepay: credit/debit card or PayPal at [www.sokolmn.org/cc/](http://www.sokolmn.org/cc/)

If prepaying your koláč order by check through the mail, or to reserve vendor space, call/text: 651- 210 - 0401

Hosted by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota • C.S.P.S. Hall, 383 Michigan St., St.Paul

## Prezidentčín komentář/President's Notes

by Cinnamon Whaley

Welcome to 2023, a new year and a new Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota president! I would first like to thank Dave Stepan for his outstanding work as president over the last four years! Dave will, of course, still be around, likely working on building projects and bettering our C.S.P.S. Hall for future generations.



In the way term limits sometimes work out, I am stepping into the presidential shoes after serving one year as Vice President. Over the last year, I assisted in supporting Sokol Minnesota while Dave was in the Czech Republic for three months, attended the American Sokol National Convention in Ennis, Texas, as a delegate of Sokol Minnesota, and chaired our Czech & Slovak Festival Sweet Shoppe. I have been involved with Sokol Minnesota since 2009, including a previous term on the Board of Directors as a Member at Large. I have also served as *Slovo* editor and Sokol Minnesota webmaster.

Although the world has "reopened" from the COVID pandemic more slowly than many would have predicted, 2023 will definitely provide more opportunity for in-person get-togethers. The Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors has a number of new ideas that are being discussed for events at the Hall for the coming year. We will continue our Friendly Friday Evenings on the second Friday of the month at 7 p.m. The first of these events was held in October and started a series at which the Czech card game *mariáš* is being taught. I am also looking forward to the mushroom hunt held in the spring at a secret location! When the weather warms up, a new personal goal is to participate in the *Kolo* Sokol Bike Club, which hosts 2- to 3-hour bike rides at least once a month in the summer and fall.

I am also looking forward to interacting with the American Sokol Organization (ASO). ASO President Adam Wilt is scheduling regular meetings with units across the country to discuss how different units operate so we can share and learn from one another. The first such meeting was on fundraising and it was very interesting to hear what other units do! We heard about an Oktoberfest event, a steak dinner involving giving away \$10,000 in a raffle and more.

Prior to the pandemic, my work as an IT Project Manager was based in downtown Minneapolis. The company I work for moved to a work-from-home model in March 2020. After nearly three years, we ended our downtown lease and now rent a co-working space we are able to access, but for all intents and purposes, we are working from home permanently. As someone who loves to travel, this has opened the door to the possibility of working from different locations during the year, possibly spending a month in New Orleans and later in the year, Portugal.

While video conferencing certainly is not new, the technology enabled the world to keep in touch over the last few years. It has allowed the Board of Directors to continue meeting monthly and I believe it has helped expand the leadership to those who may not have been able to commit to the drive if meetings were only in person. It will allow me to work and continue to meet with the Board of Directors while out of state, as well as meet with leadership in other units through ASO President Wilt's initiative. 2023 will hopefully bring us together in person more often, but today I have gratitude for the flexibility in communication that the pandemic drove and how it has positioned us to move forward as a more inclusive organization. *Nazdar!*

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)



Use our QR code to [sokolmn.org](http://sokolmn.org) to follow all of our activities, events, and classes!

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

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



# The Holiday Breakfast, Craft, and *Koláče* Sale Is Back!

By Doreen McKenney, Joyce Tesarek, Mary Cahill, Co-Chairs

After a two-year hiatus because of the COVID pandemic, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's Holiday Breakfast, Craft, and *Koláče* Sale was held on Sunday, November 20, 2022. It was wonderful to see members, friends, and neighborhood residents in person and reconnect. We served approximately 111 individuals and we are very appreciative of their support.

Before the event, unsure about attendance and the possibility of having unused perishable product afterwards, the menu was adjusted; the French toast option and fruit cups were not available, to the disappointment of a few of our regular attendees. However, the widely popular sausage links and the all-you-can-eat delicious pancakes were served up aplenty. The proceeds from this fundraiser help pay expenses to keep our historic C.S.P.S. Hall operational.

We could not have held this event without the help of our many volunteers. Very special thanks to: Doreen McKenney: shopping for event product and prepping the kitchen for event; Richard Sargent: setting up the event

online order site; Ed Hamernik and Lucy Rose: pancake batter makers; Dennis Cahill and Bob Kostichka: pancake flippers; Ed Hamernik and Lucy Rose: sausage cooks; Les Kobza, Mary Jo Kacvinsky, James Bradford, and Sylvie R.: food servers; Mia Grignon: coffee and juice station; Tereza Treanor and Abra Gillman: clearing, bussing, resetting tables; Jason Brozovich, Joyce Tesarek, and Mary Cahill: all around kitchen; Sylvie R., Adam A., Marius Elias M., Lucy Brudnak Rose, Michael Topic, Friendly Friday Evenings group: set up and take down tables; Tom Aubrecht and Steve Shimer: cashiers; Roger Green, Don and Katie Haselbauer, Pam Langworthy, Richard Sargent, Joan Sedlacek, Doreen McKenney, Joyce Tesarek: *koláče* bakers (1,152 baked and sold!); Bob Kostichka for his delicious caramel corn; Arlene Hamernik, Glynis Grostephan, Darla Kolb, Shannon Duffy: bakery table sales; Joan Sedlacek: dish washer; Jean Draheim: marketing vendor tables. Thank you also to the vendors, who added to the festivities and holiday spirit.



1. Kitchen volunteers L-R: Les Kobza, Mary Cahill, Bob Kostichka, Dennis Cahill, Ed Hamernik, Mia Grignon, and Mary Jo Kacvinsky.  
2. Lucy and Steve Rose and daughter, Dave Stepan, Diane Bell, and Gibson Batch. 3. A family enjoying the breakfast.



## 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](http://www.sokolmn.org) and/or contact Courtney or Jason at [fitness@sokolmn.org](mailto:fitness@sokolmn.org)



## Sokol Minnesota Children's Holiday Party

By Louise Wessinger



On Friday, December 2, the C.S.P.S. Hall was ready for the holiday season to begin. On the prior Monday evening, the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers spent part of their practice decorating the Hall, including putting up the 14-foot Christmas tree, placing wreaths in all the windows, and laying garland on the stage and balcony. On Friday, Hall Rental Manager Dawn Bulera and her assistant Juan put up the chairs and tables, readied the stage, and put the finishing touches on the dining room. At 6:30 the *Taneční Mládež* and *Taneční Teen Folk Dancers* began to arrive dressed in their *kroje* (folk dress) ready for their performances.



Guests were welcomed by Sokol Minnesota President, Dave Stepan. Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic, M.L. Kucera, joined us for part of the evening and gave a special Christmas greeting to all the guests. The Sokol Minnesota Singers began the program by singing Slovak and Czech Holiday *koledy* (carols) and the children joined them to sing some of their favorites. The children and teens then presented Holiday Traditions as they were celebrated in the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic in the past. The two groups presented their favorite dances. Then the dancers invited audience members to join them for a rousing *Šla Nanyňka do zeli*.



We were all surprised when *Svatý Mikuláš* (Saint Nicholas), *anděl* (angel), and *čert* (devil) came up the grand staircase to greet the audience. Of course, *Svatý Mikuláš* asked the children to promise good behavior for the coming year. All those promising to be good were given a delightful goodie bag as a reward.



Thank you to all those who helped make this such a wonderful and magical evening.

1. Presenting Holiday Traditions. 2. *Taneční Mládež* and *Taneční Teen Folk Dancers*. 3. Audience members Megan with Eddie and Colleen with Charlie joined the dancers. 4. *Čert*, *anděl*, and *Svatý Mikuláš*.

## Friendly Friday Evening

At the Friendly Friday Evening on December 9, card players enjoyed playing *mariáš*, led by instructor Ondřej Veselý.

Mark your calendar  
to attend the next  
Friendly Friday Evening  
on February 10 at 7 p.m.

Front (L-R): Marshall Toman, Ed Hamernik,  
and Ondřej Veselý.

Back (L-R): Rosina Bianco, Jan Kostal, and  
John Topic; Luboš Mareš, Niko Mareš,  
and Cinnamon Whaley.





## Visiting My Family in Slovakia for Christmas 2022

By Karin Fisher

Before the pandemic, I visited Slovakia and my family approximately every other year. My parents also used to come to the United States every spring to bond with my daughter Luna while my husband and I were completing our Ph.D. programs. Because of COVID travel restrictions and extra hoops to jump, my family and I had not seen each other in person for three years. Visiting Slovakia this Christmas was motivated by two important reasons. I wanted my seven-year-old daughter to experience what I call “the real Christmas in Slovakia.” As a transplant to Minnesota, I always found it hard to recreate



the typical Slovak Christmas with atmosphere, traditions, and customs which I remember experiencing as a child. In this country, I typically work until Christmas day and have only that day off. Also, the whole month feels rushed and busy. In Slovakia, people are off for three days at Christmas and the whole country shuts down to celebrate the holiday. The second reason to travel was to see my father, who was diagnosed with cancer and had two surgeries and chemotherapy within one year. I knew it would perk him up to see his whole family, including my daughter, at the dinner table.

When we arrived in Slovakia, I introduced Luna to most of the Christmas customs and traditions. She was able to bond with the carp, a fish eaten for Christmas dinner. During my childhood, after we bought the carp, it swam in our bathtub for a day or two before it was processed. I often gave the fish a name as a child. Luna played with carp swimming in a large tank in front of the store; she didn't want to buy one because “we would have to kill it.”



Before Christmas dinner, we visited a local village cemetery to light candles for family members who are no longer with us. My daughter Luna enjoyed playing with the fire and oversaw lighting the candles. Our other tradition is to attend midnight mass in our local village on Christmas Eve. On Christmas day, children have a meeting at the same local church to thank Jesus for Christmas presents. Children typically gather and show their talents; they sing, dance, play an instrument, or recite a poem. Two singing groups, one of adults and one of children, visited our house and sang carols.

Luna was able to experience traditional Christmas dinner with cabbage soup, potato salad, and fried carp. We cut an apple horizontally to see whether there was a star, which can mean health for the family for the coming year. We cracked walnuts to see whether the nuts were healthy, also meaning that we too will be healthy in the next coming year. We ate *oplatky* (waffles) with garlic and honey.

During our stay in Slovakia, we ate many local foods and desserts. I did not limit myself much in eating them because, to find these scrumptious dishes and cakes in the United States, you must often cook or bake them yourself. We also went to two spa towns and swam in healing, geo-thermal, mineral water.

When I asked Luna what she enjoyed the most in Slovakia, she mentioned that she really loved spending time with family. For now, my father is doing very well. Luna also enjoyed playing with the bunnies and chickens in my father's yard. When I asked what was different in Slovakia, she paused and replied: “The language, the language was really different. You do not hear it in Minnesota.”



About eight years ago, I remember hearing an inaccurate statement during one of my cultural competency college classes; it was that people arriving from Europe to the United States “lack their own culture and try to blend in.” Our family's practices, and those of many other families I know, debunk and challenge this myth. Staying connected to Slovakia, and my culture, traditions, and language, assisted by visiting my homeland, and introducing them to my family and my daughter is very important for me. I plan to continue visiting Slovakia with my family as much as it is feasible in the future. I also plan to continue attending Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities' Slovak lessons, and folk dancing, with Luna on Saturday mornings at Sokol Minnesota to further foster my daughter's bond with my homeland. One never knows what the future will bring, where our children will end up, and what knowledge may be helpful as they become well-rounded young adults. Travel, learning the language, and connecting with our family overseas provides great education to all of us.

1. Luna playing with carp. 2. Lighting candles for loved ones. 3. Viewing *Betlém* (Bethlehem) scene at church. 4. Children caroling group. 5. Luna playing chess with grandfather while grandmother reads.





## Montgomery's Svatý Mikuláš Celebration on December 4 By Jean Keogh

Montgomery's First Annual *Svatý Mikuláš* (Saint Nicholas) celebration was a huge success. Held on December 4, 2022, at the Rustic Farmer/Revival on Main, nearly 100 visitors of all ages enjoyed music, dancing, and great Czech food. Visitors were greeted by Alenka Jans with the traditional offering of bread and salt.



Čert (devil), Svatý Mikuláš, Marcy Tupy, anděl (angel).

Lively music was provided by Kenny Pomije on button accordion and Colton Tupy on concertina. A special visit by Most Holy Redeemer Catholic School's Singing Angels, with a selection of Christmas carols, enhanced the event.

Over 75 children decorated treat bags before their visit with *Svatý Mikuláš*, anděl (angel), and čert (devil), who, after quizzing them, handed out candy, a wooden toy top, and a clementine. Portraying these traditional characters were Dan Germscheid, Bette Traxler, and Andy Velishek.



Colton Tupy on concertina and Kenny Pomije on button accordion.



Most Holy Redeemer Catholic School's Singing Angels with their director Christine Trcka.

Highlighting the afternoon were performances by the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers,

including visitors of all ages joining in the mixer dances. People of all ages took advantage of the make-and-take craft stations that included the golden pig, fish scale, and Czech coloring pages. The Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota royalty and the Kolacky royalty were on hand to assist with crafts. The Czech Country Christmas Market featured Czech merchandise from the Czech Heritage Club,

### Call for Slovo Articles of Czech or Slovak Interest

Do you have an article or suggested topic for an article, that may be of interest to *Slovo* readers about Czech or Slovak culture or history, Sokol history, or an upcoming Czech- or Slovak-oriented entertainment, event, or celebration that you would like to share with the *Slovo*? The *Slovo* Managing Editors welcome readers submitting information for possible publication in the *Slovo*.

We hope to hear from you.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's Gift Shop with Doreen McKenny, and Becky Korbel's Czech beaded jewelry. Miša Kotek, The Czech Baker, provided a delightful selection of baked goods and cookies.



Alenka with topiary creator Megan Petricka and Vlád'a.



Many took advantage of great photo opportunities with Alenka and Vlád'a, the Czech topiary dancers.

Traditional *vomáčka* (soup) and *zelinky* (salad) were provided by the Veseli Area Lions. The Montgomery Lions served hot cocoa, and the event committee provided Czech hotdogs (*párek*) and hot mulled wine.

Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic M. L. Kucera displayed brochures about the Czech Republic.

Door prizes were awarded by random drawing, with separate sets of prizes for adults and children.

The committee extends special thanks to our sponsors: Rustic Farmer/Revival on Main/Moonshot Enterprises, Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Pageant, Czech Heritage Club, NPCL Mutual Insurance, Charlie Sticha Insurance Agency, Keepsake Insurance, Duane Jirik, Milton Trnka, Fred Simon, Carol Kotasek, Kolacky Day Royalty, and the Montgomery Area Community Club.

Save the Date: The Second Annual *Svatý Mikuláš* Party will be held Sunday, December 3, 2023.

### Slovo Member News Articles Request

The *Slovo* Managing Editors would like your assistance with our Member News section. If a member or their immediate family has a wedding, birth, graduation, significant birthday (with permission!), obituary, or any special news to share, please send a paragraph or short summary and photo. For memorials, please include a link to an obituary where we can send readers for more information.

Copy deadline for each issue is the first of the previous month. Use Word format; please do not use Pages or PDF). Attach any photos to an email (do not embed in the article or email) and provide the caption and photographer's name. As with all submitted articles, *Slovo* reserves the right to edit as needed for length or clarity. Please submit articles for publication consideration to *Slovo* Managing Editor Tom Aubrecht at [tjaubrecht@comcast.net](mailto:tjaubrecht@comcast.net)

## Youth and Teen Dancers Perform at Prior Lake Heritage and Cultural Festival

By Louise Wessinger

On Saturday November 5, the *Taneční Mládež* and *Taneční* Teen Folk Dancers performed Czech and Slovak dances at the Twin Oaks Middle School in Prior Lake, Minnesota. The performance was part of the Heritage and Cultural Festival sponsored by the Prior Lake Rotary Club. Food, craft, and display booths offered many hands-on and tasting opportunities for families to learn more about a variety of cultures from all over the world, as well as Native American culture.

Sixteen dancers represented our group: Adam, Liliana, and Adela Peterson, Luna Fisher, Kamila and Olivia Marko, Sara Rosenthal, Sophia Wenberg, Juna Krikava, Adela Bragg, Savanna Shoultz, Callista, Keely, and Seanna Kluzak, Sofia Schoultz, and Sylvie Rose, along with Louise Wessinger, Director, and group helpers Karin Fisher and Lucy Rose.



### 23rd Annual Masopust in Montgomery

Celebrate Mardi Gras Czech-style in Montgomery on Sunday, February 19, 2023. We return to the Revival on Main, located in the heart of the Historic Downtown district, 213 – 1st Street South. Don't miss out on all the fun!

Doors open at 11:30 a.m. with the festivities beginning at noon and continuing until 4 p.m.

There will be music for your dancing pleasure, with the afternoon featuring performances by the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers. Plenty of Czech food will be available, along with a cash bar. Costumes are encouraged (but not required) so put on your best *Masopust* costume and look for the judges who will be strolling the dance floor to determine prize winners.

A shortened version of the traditional *Masopust* skit will be performed, with the Mayor granting permission to the villagers to party as they say "good-bye to meat" for the Lenten season.

The 2023 *Masopust* King will be crowned; an honorary membership to the Czech Heritage Club presented to him; and a scholarship awarded by the Montgomery Lions to the out-going 2022 King.

Lots of great merchandise will be available at the silent auction. Bidding will take place from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. You are sure to find something special, and your generosity funds future celebrations.

The Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic for Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota, M. L. Kucera, has been invited to attend as our special guest.

For more information or any questions, please contact Jim Mladek at 507-364-5659.

Save the date: May 7, 2023, May Day in Montgomery



### Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International

#### CGSI Quarterly Webinar

Looking to improve your family history research skills?

Please join us virtually on  
Saturday, February 4, at 10 a.m.  
for CGSI's next webinar,  
***How to Use  
Czech and Slovak Archives***

Scheduled presentations include:

**Slovak Archives — Prešov, Košice and Bratislava,**  
presented by Michal Razuš

**Czech Archives — Opava and Plzeň,**  
presented by Blanka Lednická

**Czech Archives — Prague Regional and Třeboň,**  
presented by Jim Hudec

**Bohemian-German Archives in Bavaria,**  
presented by Marcel Elias

### Finally a Czech bar in Minnesota!



Czech beer, Alphonse Mucha art,  
on the  
beautiful Minneapolis riverfront

Sokol MN member Ryan Pulkrabek  
is opening a Czech pub February 1

### Come Czech it out!

65 SE Main Street, Minneapolis [www.pivoriverplace.com](http://www.pivoriverplace.com)



## Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers Celebrate 60 Years By Louise Wessinger

On November 12, 2022, the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the group. After weeks of planning, the group and their guests were ready to party at the C.S.P.S. Hall. The celebration was a Double Dance, with two of the groups favorite bands.



Grand March of guests and current and former dancers

The dancing began with George's Concertina Band. George is the brother of dance group member Rick Palma. George's band has played for our Czech and Slovak Festivals in the fall several times. His group plays many of our Czech/Slovak and old-time favorites. The dance floor was full, as lively polkas and waltzes drew the guests out. Thank you, George's Concertina Band. We enjoyed your music!

From 7 to 8 p.m., the dance group honored our anniversary in several ways. A dance presentation of some of our favorite dances was given by group members, including *Bohemian National Polka*, *Už som sa oženil (Horsy Czardas)*, and *Išla Marina / Tancuj*. Next was the Grand March as the audience joined the dancers to fill the dance floor. Several mixer dances kept everyone on their feet! Special recognition was given to former dancers in attendance. Among those was Roberta Chandler, one of our fifty-year dancers. Also recognized were former directors and teachers, including Don LaCourse of Ethnic Dance Theatre. It was great to see several of our former dancers and also dancers from other groups join us for the evening.

At 8 p.m., SlovCzech Band took the stage. With their modern Euro rock sound, the dance floor was full of happy dancers. At 9:30, Anne and Alenka Jans treated the guests to delicious cupcakes in honor of this special Anniversary. Everyone was having so much fun that the party went beyond the ending time. Thank you, SlovCzech for helping us celebrate!

One thing that brought me extra joy was that, the night before the party, Dorothy Mulko Kucera, one of the group founders, called me to wish us luck. Dorothy lives in Chicago and was unable, because of her age, to travel to Saint Paul. It was great to hear her voice (she is as sharp as ever) and be reminded of some of the early times with the group.

Another fun thing was that one of our first guests was former Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak. His family at one time operated a grocery in the C.S.P.S. Hall. It was his birthday, so his wife Megan brought him to the Hall to celebrate. They had a great time and we felt it was a good omen for the rest of the evening.

All of the dance group members worked very hard to make this both a fun evening and a way to earn some money to help enable us to go to the Czech Republic this August. Our group has been invited to dance in a festival in Moravia.

Thank you also to all those who helped to make this such a memorable time.

8 February 2023 *Slovo*

The evening began with wonderful Czech and Slovak foods offered for sale. Markéta Pálková and Míša Giancarlo Kotek helped provide the ethnic treats, which included *chlebičky* (open face sandwiches), egg and vegetable aspic on homemade sourdough or rye bread, Czech style hot dogs, *klobása*, and fresh bread, large (shareable) charcuterie cheese and meat plates, and apple strudel.

While guests ate, they watched a one-hour video presentation put together by Richard Sargent. The first eight minutes were taken from Super 8 movie film of a 1964 dance performance in Montgomery, Minnesota, for Kolacky Days. Festival of Nations performances from various years were also part of the video.

A Silent Auction with donations from a number of dancers and friends of the group was popular, with only a few items were left over after the prizes were purchased. The group appreciates the generous donations.



Cheers! Megan and R. T. Rybak, Markéta Pálková, Ludmila Maxey, and Míša Giancarlo Kotek.



## My Experience at the Summer Language School in the Czech Republic

By Steve Ernest

Like many other Sokol members who were born in this country, I remember hearing a lot of Czech spoken when I was growing up. This was mostly when we were with my grandparents, eating holiday meals that included traditional Czech foods, playing cards like the old European game *cvik*, or out at the small stores and restaurants owned by fellow Czech-Americans in Berwyn, Illinois. I learned words like *knedliky* and *pivo* and memorized phrases like to *není jenom tak*, which basically meant something was harder than it seemed at first. The Czech language was one of those things. The words and phrases I grew up with were like family traditions, things we loved even if we did not completely understand them. Czech sounded complex and enchanting, and I wanted to learn more about it.

When my father was growing up, he could speak Czech with his European-born grandparents. But now, more than 100 years since my great-grandparents left the Czech lands, I have needed to look for different possibilities to learn about the Czech language and culture.

### Summer Language Study in the Czech Republic: Programs and Scholarships Zoom Meeting Monday, February 6, at 7 p.m.

Learn about opportunities for a month of study in the Czech Republic in Summer 2023, including intensive language training, field trips, cultural activities, and more. Details will be provided regarding scholarships and application procedures.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota has been fortunate to have a number of members receive these scholarships over the years. Sokol Minnesota member Andrea Manolov and Board Member Steve Ernest will share highlights from their experiences on programs through Charles University in Poděbrady in 2022.

Read Steve's article on his 2022 experience. Additional speakers include Ondřej Pometlo, Deputy Consul General at the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Chicago; and M. L. Kucera, Honorary Consul for the Czech Republic. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting!

Visit this page for the Zoom meeting link: <https://www.sokolmn.org/czech-language-institute-in-podebrady/>

Questions? Email [education@sokolmn.org](mailto:education@sokolmn.org)

One of the best opportunities I have found is going to the Czech government/Charles University summer language program in Poděbrady.

Though the summer 2023 program may not be exactly the same as the 2022 program I participated in, it will likely be very similar. The program I attended was for people from all over the world with Czech ancestry or some other significant connection to Czechia. My group of roughly sixty scholarship awardees and a few others who paid their own costs was divided into six levels, from beginner to advanced. The program lasted four weeks, from the middle of July to the middle of August. Formal classes were held Monday through Friday mornings, with lectures and other activities most afternoons. The scholarship from the Czech government covered travel from Prague to Poděbrady (about an hour east) and back, housing in a dormitory, the cost of the classes, class materials, tours and other activities, and food vouchers that were accepted at restaurants and grocery stores throughout Czechia. Modest cooking facilities were available in the dorm but most students primarily ate at restaurants.

Classes were taught by expert teachers. I was in a more advanced level in which a significant amount of textbook material was covered, but the teachers were very conscious of the fact that students' different backgrounds required extra explanations on many occasions.

Afternoon and evening activities and weekend day trips added significant historical and modern cultural context, and fun, to the language classes. In my free time, one thing I did was rent a bicycle to ride the beautiful trails along the Labe River and the winding country roads to visit some nearby towns.

With my regular United States T-Mobile phone plan, I automatically had enough access to data that I did not need to pay for anything extra. I could communicate with my classmates (the WhatsApp phone app is the preferred messaging system in Czechia), look up information on the web, view maps as I walked through cities or biked in the countryside, and buy train, bus, and Prague metro tickets quickly and easily on specific phone apps or web pages. By using online purchases and the food vouchers provided, I only needed as much cash as I could easily get from cash machines. The only concern was to never let the cash machine convert the withdrawal into dollars or the conversion rate would be practically criminal.

Classes were held in the beautiful Poděbrady Castle where, in an older, smaller version of the castle, the Czech King George of Poděbrady was probably born in 1420. George is one of the most famous Czech Kings, known for his military successes but also for his diplomacy and his efforts to achieve peace in Europe through the establishment of common institutions.

Making my experience even more special, after the program was over, I was able to connect with many distant family members in southern Bohemia, where I also hiked and biked in the beautiful Šumava mountains and visited the source of the Vltava River. The Vltava is the "national river" because it starts and ends in Czechia, starting in the Šumava mountains, flowing north through Prague and ending by flowing into the Labe.

Attending the summer language program in Poděbrady improved my knowledge of the Czech language, Czech history, and modern Czech society. Plus, it gave me great memories that I will always treasure. I highly recommend the experience.



Steve Ernest at the Labe River with Poděbrady castle in the background



### Milan Sebek

Milan Sebek (1930-2023) passed away at age 92 on January 13, closing a long and fulfilling life. Milan escaped communism and established his family and professional life in Minnesota. In support of returning democracy to Czechoslovakia, he engaged in these Czech and Slovak organizations: Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU), Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, and the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, where he was a founding member. In 2009, he was presented the Černín Palace Award from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for promoting and leading positive Czech-American relations. He considered both countries his beloved homes.

Milan's obituary will be in the March *Slovo*.

### Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Volunteer Opportunities

- ★ Do you want to serve on the Board of Directors as Corresponding Secretary? The position acknowledges donations, reports donation activity in the *Slovo* newsletter, and works with the Sunshine committee. To apply, contact [finance@sokolmn.org](mailto:finance@sokolmn.org)
- ★ Do you want to help serve the Flavors of Slovakia Dinner on March 19? Contact [activities@sokolmn.org](mailto:activities@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)



Cultural Center of Minnesota

### From Czechs in the World to Czechs in Texas: Community History, Language, and Identity

Join us on Saturday, February 18, at 10 a.m. for a presentation and discussion on Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/CSCCCZTX>

The distinguished university presenters will review the historical waves of Czech emigration around the world and focus on the language and culture in the historically Czech communities in the United States, with the case in point being Texas, one of the long-lasting strongholds of Czech life in the New World.

They will share new publications and collaborative research initiatives including the fascinating 19th century inter-continental communication of two brothers and the Texas Czech Legacy Project.

Contact: [info@cs-center.org](mailto:info@cs-center.org) or 651-587-9621

### 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

**Under \$99:** Mary Ann Tumasmith, Carol Richter, Ronald and Colleen Tabaika, Joyce Ehmke, Joseph Gall, Kevin Hurbanis, James Zdrzil, and Silvie Nemes.

**\$100 - \$499:** Irene Thayer, Terry Shima, Marjorie Norling, Marlene Hinshaw, Ed and Arlene Hamernik, and Marshall and Gretchen Toman.

**\$500 - \$999:** George Hoffman.

**\$1,000 - \$9,999:** Don and Katie Haselbauer.

**\$15,000+:** Sokol Minnesota Gaming.

#### LEGACY FUND

**Under \$99:** Arlene Drabek.

**\$100 - \$499:** Pamela Brokaw, M. L. Kucera (new doors), Laurel Severson, and Mark Stafford (new doors).

**\$500 - \$999:** Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities.

#### TOTALS

|              |                     |
|--------------|---------------------|
| General Fund | \$ 20,154.50        |
| Legacy Fund  | \$ 1,350.00         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>\$ 21,504.50</b> |

#### IN-KIND DONATION

Joe Landsberger (framed picture of Prague).

### Renew your Sokol Minnesota Membership!

By Steve Ernest, Membership Secretary

Thank you, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota members, for being part of our community! Your membership dollars not only support our activities and the maintenance of our historic C.S.P.S. Hall, but also connect us with the national and international Sokol programs. Your participation in our events and activities, in person or in spirit, is invaluable. We are looking forward to another exciting year in 2023!

Sokol Minnesota Membership renewal/update letters were sent in December for the 2023 calendar year. Please contact us at [membership@sokolmn.org](mailto:membership@sokolmn.org) or the address below if you did not receive yours.

If you have not yet renewed for 2023, please do so now to stay connected to all our activities and events and to keep receiving the *Slovo* newsletter.

Regular membership rates are \$60 for one person, \$100 for a couple/two adults at the same address. Senior membership rates are \$50 for one person, \$90 for a couple/two seniors at the same address. (Seniors are individuals who are 65 and older.)

You may renew your membership in one of two ways.

The first way to renew is to online, where you can both update your contact information and pay your dues via PayPal. To renew online, go to [sokolmn.org/membership](http://sokolmn.org/membership)

The second way to renew is by mail. Send a check made out to "Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota" to this address: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota

4716 17th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407

Again, members, thanks for all you do for Sokol Minnesota!



## Sharon Wyberg is Sokol Minnesota's Newest Honor Member By Bryan Wyberg



Sharon Wyberg was voted a Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Honor Member at the December Board of Directors meeting. Sharon has been a Sokol Minnesota member for 40 years. She has been a creative and active leader and volunteer for many events, often working and co-chairing with her husband,

Ken Wyberg, also a Sokol Minnesota Honor Member.

Sharon's maternal grandparents immigrated from Slovakia to Minneapolis in the early 1900s, living for a time with other Slovak immigrant families in the Bohemian Flats neighborhood located on the Mississippi River under the Washington Avenue bridge. After graduating from Minneapolis North High School, Sharon lived for a time with her grandmother. Her grandmother was known for her delicious walnut and poppyseed *koláče*. Sharon cooked her grandmother's *halušky a kapusta* (Slovak dumpling-cabbage-bacon dish) recipe for the annual Flavors of Slovakia Dinner menu during the years she chaired the event. Proud of her Slovak roots, she has enjoyed collecting Czechoslovakian pottery, glassware, and dolls. She has also traveled to Slovakia and visited the villages her grandparents lived in before coming to America.

Sharon married Ken (who also had Slovak immigrant grandparents) in 1964 and they raised their one son, Bryan, in Minneapolis. In the early 1980s they began coming to Sokol Minnesota events at the urging of Sharon's aunt and uncle, longtime Sokol Minnesota members, Elsie and her late husband Jim Roepke. Sharon and Ken enjoyed the friendliness of the members and their acceptance of newcomers. They began to volunteer at many events and soon were asked to take on leadership roles for various activities. Sokol Minnesota has brought many good people into their lives, along with the good times that come through involvement in enjoyable and worthwhile activities.

### Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Neighbors: Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Poles, Russians, and Ukrainians



Please join us at the C.S.P.S. Hall on Sunday, February 5, at 1 p.m. for light refreshments and discussion with John Righetti from 1:30 - 2:30.

As a stateless people, Carpatho-Rusyns have had relationships with all of these groups, some wanting to help them, some to rule them, and some to claim them.

Come hear the incredible story of these East European groups and the role they have played in the development of the Carpatho-Rusyn community.

John Righetti is a founding member and the current President of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, [www.c-rs.org](http://www.c-rs.org)

Sharon served as chairperson of Sokol Minnesota's annual Festival of Nations Café Booth for more than 20 years. She was also the editor of the *Slovo* newsletter for 20 years. These years were prior to the availability of desktop publishing software, so she sought and edited content, typed each article, laid out the pages with tape, and helped with the mailing of the printed *Slovo* newsletters each month. Sharon, being a proud Slovak, started and then chaired the annual Flavors of Slovakia Dinner for many years. She also led the food booth/kitchen at many of the annual Czech and Slovak Day celebrations held at Saint Paul's Highland Park Pavilion. She served as Sokol Minnesota Recording Secretary, worked the kitchen at many Sokol Minnesota New Year's Eve parties and Pancake Breakfasts, and helped to organize the kitchen and food for many Sokol Minnesota dances. She volunteered at most Sokol Minnesota events for more than 25 years, helped when she was able, and continues to attend many activities and programs. Sharon has never sought the limelight but has always been proud to serve. She is and has been a wonderful volunteer and friend to her fellow Sokols.

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## Highlights of the Sokol Minnesota Annual Meeting By Denise Stibal

The Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's Annual Meeting was held live and via Zoom on November 18, 2020, at 7 p.m. A moment of silence was held for members who passed during the past year: Don Andriele, Norm Petrik, Evelyn Pavlick Holman, and Arlene Courneya.

President Dave Stepan presented the Report to the Board of Directors of actions in 2022, as described below:

- We continue to be the home of: Czech Honorary Consul, Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers, Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities, Saint Paul South Bohemian Bagpipe Band, and Literary Ventures.
- Key programming areas continue to include gymnastics, dance, and language.
- Our events included: Roast Duck Dinner, Flavors of Slovakia Dinner, Spring Bake Sale, Children's Cultural Day Camp, Trunks with Treats Harvest Fest, Czech Roast Pork Dinner, Youth Link, Youth Leadership Award, Minnesota Sokol Camp, Czech and Slovak Festival, Holiday Breakfast and Craft Sale.
- The Sokol Minnesota archives received renewed emphasis in 2022.
- Media include: *Slovo*, E-blasts, Facebook, and Instagram.

Board of Instructors Co-Chair Jason Brozovich reported there will be an American Sokol Annual Gymnastics Competition in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in April 2023.

Education Chair Pat Slaber reported language classes are online only. One of our long-time Czech Language instructors, Blanka Brichta, retired and we will offer two new on-line choices for classes: Palacký University with 6-7 students and T.J. Masaryk Czech School of Chicago for beginning and advanced students.

continued on page 12

**Annual Meeting continued from page 11**  
Membership Director Steve Ernest reported on the growth of Sokol Minnesota membership with 311 members at the end of 2022. Summary of current membership: 92 Individual Regular, 84 Couple Regular (two adults at the same address), 97 Individual Senior members, and 38 Senior Couple members.

We have 19 members with 50 years of continuous membership (Honorary Members) and/or outstanding contributions to Sokol Minnesota (Honor Members).  
Board of Finance Chair Joyce Tesarek presented the total income and expenses for 2022. Major changes from 2021 were a decrease in education income and an increase in rental income.

We have grants pending from the Czech Government and the Saint Paul Foundation.  
The review of current Board of Directors positions was presented and approved.  
The Sokol Minnesota Annual Election was held. See the separate article below "Sokol Minnesota 2022 Election Results." The new officers were installed.  
The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

## Sokol Minnesota 2022 Election Results

**By the Nominating Committee Blanka Brichta,  
Dave Stepan, Joyce Tesarek, Louise Wessinger**

Each November, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota holds its Annual Meeting, with half the Board of Directors up for election or re-election. Board positions are for two years. Some officer positions, such as president, vice president, and secretaries have term limits of (2) two-year terms. Committee chairs are on the Board. Members of the Building and Property Trustees Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, and Gaming Board are also elected, on a three-year cycle with no term limits.

The leaders elected at the Annual Meeting on November 18 are listed below. For the terms beginning in 2023, we have some returning Board members and are excited to welcome new Board or Committee members (in bold):

President: Cinnamon Whaley; Vice President: **Lucy Brudnak Rose**; Recording Secretary: **Theresa Hudachek**; Membership Director: Steve Ernest; Member at Large: Markéta Pálková; Women's Physical Director: Mary Cahill; Men's Physical Director: Jason Brozovich; Building and Property Trustees Committee Chair: Bob Kotek, Budget and Finance Committee Chair: Joyce Tesarek; Educational Director: **Sally Lieberman**; Building and Property Trustees Committee members: Dave Stepan, Lloyd Krocak, and Gary Zweber; Board of Gaming members: **Marlene Hinshaw** and **Bob Kostichka**; Budget and Finance Committee members: Richard Sargent, **Dave Stepan**; Delegates to Western District: Courtney Benson, M.L. Kucera, and Louise Wessinger.



Officers and Committee members elected at, and attending in person, the Sokol Minnesota 2022 Annual Meeting: Front Row: Dave Stepan, Mary Cahill, Joyce Tesarek. Middle Row: Theresa Hudachek, Lucy Brudnak Rose, Sally Lieberman, Richard Sargent, Ken Wyberg. Back Row: Bob Kotek, Steve Ernest.

## Highlights of the Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors November 2022 Meeting

**By Denise Stibal**

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. on November 17 by President Dave Stepan.

A request was made to host a 5K run to commemorate the Annual Celebration of the foundation of Czechoslovakia on October 28. The goal would be to promote physical fitness and be part of a shared Sokol experience. Races to celebrate this event are held throughout the world. Motion carried to schedule this event in 2023.

President Dave Stepan reported Dr. Josef Mestenhauer's book was published with an event held at the C.S.P.S. Hall on November 16. The Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers' 60th Anniversary Celebration on November 12 was a success. Fifteen people enjoyed the Friendly Friday Evening on November 11 featuring the *mariáš* card game. In 2023 we will continue to schedule additional events including Curling and the Mushroom Hunt.

Board of Finance Chair Joyce Tesarek provided a discussion of our property insurance coverage, which is up-to-date and includes coverage for replacement cost. Steve Ernest will work with Richard Sargent to automate PayPal membership payments.

Treasurer Don Haselbauer gave his monthly report. Motion was carried to approve the 2021 Tax Return.

**12 February 2023 Slovo**

Gaming Chair Ed Hamernik presented the December budget; motion carried to approve. The Gaming Committee transferred \$15,000 to the General Fund in October and will discuss another transfer at their December meeting. Bob Kostichka has joined the Gaming Committee.

Board of Instructors Co-Chair Mary Cahill attended the American Sokol National Board of Instructors meeting in Chicago along with Joan Sedlacek. The goal for the American Sokol BOI is to encourage programming at all levels to include seniors, etc.

Building and Properties Committee Chair Bob Kotek noted the C.S.P.S. sign repair on the Hall will be delayed to spring 2023. Door replacement should be done by year end and the new security system will be activated December 5.

Corresponding Secretary Mia Grignon reported on the October and November donations to the Legacy and General Funds. Donations from Give to the Max will be reported upon receipt. Arlene Hamernik from the Sunshine Committee reported on cards sent to members as well as a note of congratulations sent to Saint Stanislaus Church to commemorate its 150th anniversary; the celebration was attended by several Sokol Minnesota members.

Activities Director Jean Draheim reported on the Friendly Friday Evenings.

continued on page 13



## Board of Directors November continued from page 12

Discussion held regarding the 130th anniversary of Antonín Dvořák's visit to the C.S.P.S. Hall; it was decided to hold the event on September 17, 2023. The Annual Membership Picnic will be held this summer at the Hall on a weekday. Jean Draheim will organize the date.

The Rental Committee report was given by Denise Stibal. We are in the process of ordering new chairs for the Hall and hope to make a selection of suitable chairs soon. An upright chair storage rack was ordered which is suitable for moving and preserving the new chairs as they move between the second floor and the basement. Hall Rental inquiries for 2023 are coming in steadily and Gary Zweber, Rental Committee Chair, will call a rental committee meeting in January.

Education Chair Pat Slaber has been working with the next Education Director, Sally Lieberman, to transition the position and plan for the January semester. The schedule will be changed from two twelve-week semesters to three ten-week quarters to coincide with the T.J. Masaryk Czech School schedule and to provide six additional weeks of instruction. Registration will open December 1 for the spring session.

Nominations were read for the 2023 Board of Directors and Slate of Officers in preparation for the Annual Meeting on November 18.

Fred Simon noted the First Annual *Svatý Mikuláš* party will be held in Montgomery on December 4, 2022.

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## Highlights of the Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors December 2022 Meeting

### By Denise Stibal

The Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota December BOD meeting was called to order on December 15, 2022 at 7 p.m. by President, Dave Stepan.

*Narodil se Kristus Pán (He Was Born Christ the Lord)* was sung to celebrate the Christmas Season.

Finance Chair Joyce Tesarek stated that the committee had not yet met in December, but part of the agenda would be to update the lease for the Pajarito restaurant in January.

Membership Chair Steve Ernest noted that we had no new members this month, but four members have prepaid for 2023. One third of the memberships have renewed so far.

Gaming Chair Ed Hamernik noted Assistant Gaming Manager Steve Shimer will receive a \$600 bonus and his hourly rate increased to \$20/hour. Recommendation to move \$15,000 from Gaming to the General Fund. Motion carried. Total contributions from Gaming to the General Fund in 2022 totaled \$45,000. The January Gaming expense budget was approved.

There was not an official report from the Education Committee, but new Chair Sally Lieberman will propose that the committee hold a meeting in January.

Denise Stibal reported on behalf of the Rental Committee. A meeting will be held in January to recap 2022 and look at plans/needs for 2023. We have ordered two new "sample" chairs and will discuss their suitability and funding for the project at the committee meeting. Dawn Bulera suggested some ideas to be more environmentally responsible in use of our Rental and Event items.

Old Business: Approval of Sharon Wyberg as an Honor member of Sokol Minnesota. Addition of Robert Kostichka to the Gaming Committee; motion carried.

New Business: Joyce Tesarek will update the Leadership and Volunteer List.

Building and Properties Committee Chair Bob Kotek was extended a "Thank you" for the rollout of the new security system. A repaint and refresh of the elevator lobby is scheduled for January.

The Corresponding Secretary position needs to be filled to assist Arlene Hamernik with the Sunshine Committee cards and acknowledging and reporting the donations.

Activities Director Jean Draheim is working on the spring postcard. Discussion on Friendly Friday Evenings was held, and it was decided to continue with the card game *mariáš* for now. A curling event will be scheduled in April and a mushroom hunting event in May. A co-activity with the Rusin Association of Minnesota was mentioned; Cinnamon Whaley is willing to work on it, and Dave Stepan suggested we contact Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International as a partner.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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### Slovo Publication Information and Committee

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](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.

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](mailto:slovo@sokolmn.org)

Advertising in the *Slovo* is available. Please email [slovo@sokolmn.org](mailto:slovo@sokolmn.org) for information on due dates and rates.

Moving or temporarily away: Please notify us via email or USPS mail of your change of address to make sure you continue to receive the *Slovo*. The *Slovo* is bulk mailed and non-deliverable copies are not forwarded or held by the Post Office. Non-delivered copies are returned to Sokol Minnesota and they are billed to us at the first-class mail rate. For this reason, we will not send additional issues until we have a current, correct mailing address on record for you.

Member volunteer *Slovo* staff: Co-Managing Editors: Tom Aubrecht, Mary Cahill, and Joyce Tesarek. Copy Editor: Tom Aubrecht.

Production Layout: Mary Kucera.

Regular Contributors: Jean Draheim, Corresponding Secretary (open), Steve Ernest, Theresa Hudachek, M. L. Kucera, and Cinnamon Whaley.

Photographer: Joyce Tesarek.

Sokol Minnesota Ad Designer: Doreen McKenney (page 1).

Mailing and email Lists: Penny and Tom Tesarek.

Mailing: Mary Cahill and Joan Sedlacek.

Advisors: Christy Banks, Arlene Hamernik, M. L. Kucera, and Jitka Sebek.

Additional contributors to this issue: Mary Cahill, Steve Ernest, Karin Fisher, Mia Grignon, Gymnastics Team, Jean Keogh, Sally Lieberman, Doreen McKenney, Ryan Pulkrabek, Jitka Sebek, Denise Stibal, Joyce Tesarek, Renáta Tichá, Louise Wessinger, Cinnamon Whaley, Gwen Willems, and Bryan Wyberg.

Additional photographs, ads, or illustrations in this issue (not already noted) provided by: Steve Ernest, Karin Fisher, Jean Keogh, Doreen McKenney, Jitka Sebek, Joyce Tesarek, Louise Wessinger, and Bryan Wyberg.

**More information at [www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org)**

*Thinking about Ordinary Things: A Short Invitation to Philosophy* by Jan Sokol, translated by Markéta Pauzerová. Charles University Karolinum Press: Prague, 2013, 236 pages. Available at libraries and bookstores.

*Thinking about Ordinary Things: A Short Invitation to Philosophy* is an example of how you can find a book thought-provoking without it being one of your favorites. Jan Sokol got me productively analyzing a wide breadth of topics, though I sometimes disagreed with his perspectives and conclusions. I recommend that readers begin with the last chapters since they are the most appealing and will likely entice you to read all the rest.

Jan Sokol, who died in 2021 at the age of 84, was a Czech philosopher, writer, former dissident, software developer, translator, and occasional politician. His book is comprised of an introduction and thirty-two short chapters on particular subjects, each offering an opportunity to focus the reader's attention and to think philosophically. Drawing on a lifetime of experience, Sokol created Charles University lectures showing that philosophy can be a habit of thought, applied anywhere, and not only a specialized discipline.

This is an informative, introductory text, with questions for students at the end of each chapter. Although the book is not intended to be about famous philosophers, Sokol briefly mentions many and includes brief quotations. If a short "For Further Reading" section (and "Index") had been included, they would be helpful for readers interested in more information, especially about influential philosophers.

These are the author's perspectives on a few topics that I especially appreciated:

**Sight.** Sokol wrote that sight is the most important human sense, which got me to thinking of others. Wouldn't hearing rate highly? He argued that seeing is for the most part recognizing things that are already known. And when we encounter something new, "we instinctively try to compare it to something we know," so the results were the iron horse (train), fire water (hard drink), pumps (dispensers at gas stations), and mice (hand-held computer controllers).

**Thinking.** At times in history when everything seems to be changing and we find new questions and answers, wrote Sokol, "myth first arose, before giving rise to philosophy and philosophy in turn to science. And it is in precisely this kind of period that we find ourselves today. We do not know where we are meant to be headed. And people who do not know where they belong on this earth are easy prey for demagogues, who will tempt them with all sorts of 'answers' and who can drive them to commit the most awful acts." In the twentieth century, Sokol noted, people were so busy rushing around that they did not find time to think.

**Words and Names.** A thing can have multiple meanings. It can mean more or less the same to all of us, or vary greatly in meaning, pushing us to ask what it means in a particular context or to a certain person. We sometimes try for unambiguous terminology. Sokol's example is the importance of differentiating between kale, cabbage, cauliflower, etc., even though they are all cultivars of one plant, *Brassica oleracea*.

**Language.** Conversations take on a life of their own, and participants can be led somewhere they wouldn't get to on their own and may not know who said what. "That is

precisely what we reply on when we want to have a talk about something," wrote Sokol, "and that is what T.G. Masaryk meant when he said 'democracy is a discussion'—for it to happen, all participants must have roughly the same understanding of it ..."

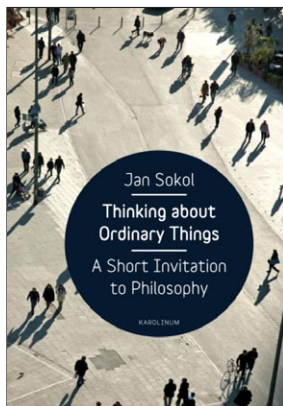
**Tolerance and Pluralism.** Sokol distinguished between the two, with tolerance as "the ability and willingness to put up with things we do not like," and pluralism saying that we should value differences. The author wondered if pluralism is possible and if it has ever been achieved.

**Time and Memory.** This chapter made me think of memoir writers, who today often refer to their work as creative nonfiction, giving themselves room to imagine and embellish. The accuracy of memory remains debatable. Sokol believed memory is not linear, and recall of boring activities can be sketchy while dramatic moments can be recalled in detail. "It is extremely difficult, nigh impossible, to reconstruct our own life as it really happened," wrote Sokol. "For our memory is neither continuous, nor dated, as a historian might put it."

Jan Sokol was born in 1936 to a Catholic family in Prague and was denied permission to attend university because of his religion. Instead, he worked as a goldsmith, precision mechanic, and software developer. Sokol later earned a B.A. (1967), M.A. (1993), and Ph.D. (1995). He translated numerous books into Czech and was one of the first signatories of the Charter 77 Manifesto. From 1990-1992 Sokol served as a member of the Czechoslovak Parliament, and in 1998 he was Minister of Education, Youth and Sports. Sokol ran for President of the Czech Republic in 2003 but lost to Václav Klaus. Since 2000 he was a full professor of philosophy.

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 the discussion of *Daughters of the Winter Queen: Four Remarkable Sisters, the Crown of Bohemia, and the Enduring Legacy of Mary, Queen of Scots* by Nancy Goldstone at 10 a.m. on Saturday, February 25.





## Czech Honorary Consul News

February 2023

The Czech Republic held the European Union Presidency in 2022 from July 1 to December 31. The agenda of the Czech Presidency was influenced significantly by the current geopolitical situation, in particular the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and the urgent need to respond adequately to it. Read the entire official statement, issued on 12/31/2022:  
<https://tinyurl.com/277k8vxx>



Watch as Miloslav Stašek, the Czech Ambassador to the United States hands over a baton to Karin Ulrika Olofsdotter, the Swedish Ambassador, in Washington, D.C. on January 1, 2023:  
<https://tinyurl.com/4j7pwhyh>



As an Honorary Consul, I was invited to the 37<sup>th</sup> Governor's International Trade Awards Luncheon on December 14, 2022. It was sponsored by the Minnesota Trade Office (MTO), which is the state agency that provides export assistance to Minnesota companies as well as attracting foreign direct investment. The luncheon provided an opportunity to meet people within the many business sectors, especially international, here in Minnesota. Among those I met were Phillip Hansen (left), the new president of Global Minnesota, to whom I was introduced by Steve Riedel (right), Corporate Relations Officer at Global Minnesota. Steve was Regional Trade Manager for Europe for the Minnesota Trade Office when I was appointed Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic in 2015. I consider Steve a mentor, especially in the first years of my serving as Czech Honorary Consul; he kept me up-to-date on Minnesota's role in the international trade scene.

Global Minnesota has an important Czech connection in its 72-year history. Global Minnesota's mission is to advance international understanding and engagement; its core values include respect, collaboration, nonpartisanship, global competency, inclusion, and courage. Founded in 1951 as a welcoming committee for international students, it has grown into a multifaceted organization with a broad mission "to advance international understanding and engagement." In 1953, the original founders joined a number of University of Minnesota professors, including Josef Mestenhauser (the Czech connection. He was Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic from 1999 to 2008), and other community leaders to formerly incorporate an independent, nonprofit organization called the International Center for Visitors and Students. In 1965 the name was officially changed to Minnesota International Center (MIC). In 2016, the name was changed to Global Minnesota, to better reflect both its growth as an organization and the dynamic, diverse state we here in Minnesota call home. <https://www.globalminnesota.org>

On January 6, the Minnesota Consular Corps held its annual Holiday Party at the American Swedish Institute (ASI), Minneapolis, also home of the Swedish Honorary Consulate; Bruce Karstad is the Honorary Consul General. The honored guests included Minnesota's Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan (center front) and Steve Grove, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development (DEED). Arranging for these special guests was Gabrielle Gerbaud, the Director of the Minnesota Trade Office (MTO) and Chief Protocol Officer for the State of Minnesota since 2017. Gabrielle also has a Czech connection; one of her grandmothers-in-law was Czech.



This picture was taken from the grand staircase of ASI's Turnblad Mansion, looking down into the foyer, filled with honorary consuls and guests.

<https://asimn.org/visit/mansion/>

It was MTO that arranged an appointment and a lunch for Vice Consul Monika Bokšová, Consulate of the Czech Republic/Chicago when she was here in Minnesota in September 2022 (see H.C. News, page 15, November 2022 Slovo).



Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic  
in Minneapolis, MN

Marit Lee Kucera, Honorary Consul  
651-238-0447  
[minneapolis@honorary.mzv.cz](mailto:minneapolis@honorary.mzv.cz)  
OR [mlkucera@outlook.com](mailto:mlkucera@outlook.com)





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

We ask for your support for maintenance and renovation to C.S.P.S. Hall as we celebrate the Hall's 136th year in 2023.

Contact Joyce Tesarek to discuss your tax-deductible donation: 612-822-6147 or email: [finance@sokolmn.org](mailto:finance@sokolmn.org) *Thank you!*



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

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

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

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

To help refinish the C.S.P.S. Hall floors, I make a tax-deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

Make checks payable to **Sokol Minnesota**

Write **Legacy Fund** in the memo line

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

**Attn: Treasurer, 383 Michigan Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102**

Or donate online: [www.sokolmn.org](http://www.sokolmn.org) *Thank You!*

CZECH AND SLOVAK



383 Michigan Street

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

651-290-0542



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Latest News!

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Send your email address to  
[publicity@sokolmn.org](mailto:publicity@sokolmn.org)

For status of events scheduled for the C.S.P.S. Hall, check our calendar at  
[www.sokolmn.org/at-our-hall/hall-calendar/](http://www.sokolmn.org/at-our-hall/hall-calendar/)

## Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* February 2023



### Spring 2023 Events at Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102 • 651-290-0542

For the most current information, go to the Sokol Minnesota website: [sokolmn.org](http://sokolmn.org)  
Instagram: [@sokolminnesota](https://www.instagram.com/sokolminnesota) or Facebook: [facebook.com/sokolminnesota](https://www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota)

#### Sokol Minnesota Friendly Friday Evenings

2nd Friday of the month, 7-10 p.m.\*\*

Family friendly cards and games. All ages and abilities welcome!  
No fee. You may bring your own beverage and/or snacks to share.

#### Flavors of Slovakia Dinner Sit-down or Curbside

Sunday, March 12, curbside pickup: 10-11 a.m.

Sit-down: doors open noon, serving: 12:30p.m.

Cabbage roll, *pirohy*, *halušky* (cabbage, bacon, and dumplings),  
dilled green beans, beets, caraway rye bread, and dessert. \$25  
Place your pre-paid\* dinner order by March 8.

#### Spring Breakfast, Craft, and Koláče Bake Sale

Sunday, April 2, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. No reservations needed.

Public welcome. \$10 adult, \$6 children under 9, \$30/family of 4  
*Koláč* (apricot, cream cheese, poppy seed, prune, raspberry) \$1.50 each  
Place your pre-paid\*\* *koláče* order by March 29.

To reserve a craft table: [activities@sokolmn.org](mailto:activities@sokolmn.org)

#### Czech-Slovak Family *Velikonoe/Velká noc* Easter Event, Saturday, April 8, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Celebrate with hands-on spring traditions (10 a.m.) and potluck  
lunch (noon). Presentation (2 p.m.) by Dr. Martin Nekola, *The Czech  
Republic, Rise of Populism and Presidential Election* (funded by  
Czech and Slovak Cultural Center).

\* To prepay and order online: [www.sokolmn.org/cc](http://www.sokolmn.org/cc) or  
text/call before mailing a check (2 weeks before deadline)

952-941-0426 or [food@sokolmn.org](mailto:food@sokolmn.org) Mail to  
Sokol Minnesota, 383 Michigan Street, St. Paul, MN 55102

\*\* Information: [sokolmn.org](http://sokolmn.org) or contact:

[activities@sokolmn.org](mailto:activities@sokolmn.org) or text/call: 651-210-0401

#### Curling at the Frogtown Curling Club

Date to be determined, 6-9 p.m.\*\*

This fun sporting event is open to all abilities. Ages 14+.  
Fee: \$45 per player. (Non-playing observers, no fee.)

#### 4th Annual Sokol Summer Mushroom Hunt

Date to be determined (subject to weather)\*\*

Expert guide. Secret metro location. Get on the list!

\$5 members (\$10 non-members)

#### 25th Annual Children's Czech and Slovak Cultural Day Camp, June 19-23

For ages 6 to 14 years. Ethnic crafts and cooking,  
Czech language, gymnastics, and more.

Early bird registration by May 1.

Final registration by June 1. Info: [sokolmn.org](http://sokolmn.org)

#### Members/Volunteers Outdoor Potluck Picnic

Sunday, July 16, 1 p.m. C.S.P.S. Hall parking lot \*\*

Members and volunteers are the heart of Sokol Minnesota.  
Join together with food, festivities, and fun.

#### Dvořák Visit Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, September 17 \*\*

Gathering and concert. 2023 marks the 130th anniversary  
of world-famous Czech composer Antonín Dvořák's visit  
to the C.S.P.S. Hall.

#### 34th Czech & Slovak Festival

Sunday, September 24, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Music, folk dancers, gymnastics, vendors, silent auction,  
ethnic food, Czech beer and wine, children's games.

Volunteer: 612-232-2993 or [events@sokolmn.org](mailto:events@sokolmn.org)

