

CZECH AND SLOVAK

SOKOL



MINNESOTA

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

SLOVO

June/July 2020
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MAYPOLE 2020



This maypole was planned to be part of the Sokol Minnesota cultural exhibit for the cancelled 88th Festival of Nations, originally scheduled for April 29 to May 2. The theme for the Festival's cultural exhibits this year was "Real Stories, Real People, our Minnesota Community." Doreen McKenney designed and constructed the maypole. See the color video of the maypole on Instagram @sokolminnesota and www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota. See Doreen's posters on the theme on the back page.

Prezidentův komentář/President's Notes by Dave Stepan

Dear Friends,

The phrases might be overused, but I sincerely pray all of you are in good health and are staying strong both mentally and physically. I wonder how many of these president's letters will you read while we are separated. I am thankful I have my wife Darnell and daughter Brittany at home with me. I am apprehensive about my daughters Michelle and Nicole being away from home, but I have to trust their decisions and actions. I hope all of you have the support and love you all need and deserve. There is not much else we can do but be patient and hold each other tight during this pandemic. Wear your masks when you go out, keep your distance, and wash your hands frequently. If you need help, please do not hesitate to reach out to me; I can be reached at president@sokolmn.org

The Board of Directors, Board of Trustees, and other volunteer staff are the current stewards of our C.S.P.S. Hall. Like the officers and members before us, we are working to make sure you remain proud to be a member.

There is now a new code-compliant stairway with new structural support posts from the basement to the first floor. A structural support beam has been installed under the main staircase to the second floor. The first-floor gift shop space was downsized to create a new multi-purpose office space. Floors will be refinished throughout the Hall. When we are reunited, I hope you will appreciate the changes. My thanks go to many, but especially to Ed Hamernik and Bob Kotek, who have helped move these projects along. I am a novice at all of this even in my second year of office.

I'm always happily surprised when someone suggests we do something. Last week it was Miša Giancarlo

Kotek, who asked if she and Markéta Palková could cook a takeout fundraiser dinner. I hope that, by the time you read this, you took the opportunity to enjoy their takeout dinner. Maybe they'll do it again!

Our renter Pajarito, although not open for sit down service, has started doing takeout, so we wish them success.

Under the guidance of our Education Chair Pat Slaber, our Czech and Slovak language classes are continuing on Zoom. If you want to join a session, contact Pat at education@sokolmn.org

Lastly, because of this pandemic, our parent organization, American Sokol (ASO), has significantly reduced their annual per member dues and has waived new member fees. If you were on the fence to join our group, the reduction in membership charges that we pass on to ASO makes this a great time for you to join us.

I wish you all the very best in life.
Nazdar!



New stairway from the basement to the first floor



New structural support beam under the main stairs to the second floor

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

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

Bublanina or Czech/Slovak Coffee Cake

Mary Jo Chlebecek joined Sokol Minnesota in 1953. She was very involved with the gymnastics program as a girl and later volunteered as a gymnastics coach. She is a Sokol Minnesota Honor member, which means she has been a Sokol member for more than 50 years. When she was a young girl, Mary Jo watched and helped her mother and grandmother as they baked on a wood stove. Traditional, ethnic baking was done for the family each week and often included making loaves of bread, dumplings, strudel, *koláč*, *rohlíčky*, and desserts, like *bublanina*. Egg whites and whipping cream were whipped with a hand whisk, which required a strong arm to get stiff peaks for the ingredients. Fresh fruits were used when they were in season and the family also canned fruits to use when fresh fruits were not available. Mary Jo practiced her skills and became an accomplished baker and cook.

Beginning at the first Sokol Minnesota Czech and Slovak Children's Cultural Day Camp in 1996, Mary Jo taught the campers how to make one of her signature dishes: *bublanina*. "Everyone likes *bublanina*, including boys." The word *bublanina* comes from the Czech word for bubble and might suggest that the cake batter bubbles up almost over the fruit. Blueberries are in season during the week of camp in June, but Mary Jo's family especially liked making the *bublanina* with fresh Italian plums/prunes. Italian plums/prunes were also canned for future use. "These fresh plums were only available for a few, short weeks in the early fall, just as school was starting. *Bublanina* with plums was sooo good!"

By Mary Jo Chlebecek and Judy Aubrecht

Bublanina/Borůvkový kávový dort or Blueberry Coffee Cake

Recipe from *Favorite Recipes of Sokol Minnesota: Czech-American 1979*, Out of print

- 1 ¼ cup flour
- ¾ cup butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- 3 egg whites, stiffly beaten
- ¼ of a lemon zested/grated
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 pound/pint blueberries

Rinse and dry the blueberries. Cream butter and sugar together. Add grated lemon zest, vanilla, and egg yolks, one at a time. In a separate two-quart bowl, whip egg whites to form stiff peaks. Gently add small amounts of the flour and salt mixture to the egg whites. Then, spoon by spoon, add the flour and egg white mixture to blend into the creamed mixture. Butter or spray a 9 x 10-inch baking pan. Dust well with flour. Place the dough in the pan and top with blueberries. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes, until golden brown. Cool and sprinkle with powdered sugar when serving.

Substitutions: Fresh split in half and pitted Italian plums/prunes, peeled and sliced peaches, apples, apricots, or pears, pitted fresh cherries, red currants, blackberries, or raspberries can also be used.

31st annual CZECH & SLOVAK FESTIVAL

The 31st Annual Czech and Slovak Fall Festival is currently scheduled to take place on Sunday, September 27, 2020, in the afternoon. This modified event, which has free admission and is open to the public, will be held at the historic C.S.P.S. Hall on West 7th Street in Saint Paul, **if people can safely meet outdoors by that time.** Protective masks and distancing from others will be strongly encouraged. Let us hope to celebrate our heritage with ethnic music, delicious food, Czech beer, games and information about upcoming events by enjoying a beautiful fall day in the open air.

Watch the Sokol Minnesota website for updates: sokolmn.org

Sokol Minnesota Children's Cultural Day Camp Cancelled

By Judy Aubrecht
and Louise Wessinger

With regret, and after much deliberation, the Sokol Minnesota 23rd Annual Children's Czech and Slovak Cultural Day Camp has been cancelled for 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The camp was originally scheduled for June 15 to 19. Other camp options may be planned when it is again safe to gather in groups outside our homes.

Watch the Sokol Minnesota website for updates: sokolmn.org



75th Anniversary *Slavnosti svobody* 2020 Plzeň Liberation Festival 2020 in Pilsen by M. L. Kucera

A special seven-hour online program for the 75th Anniversary of the liberation of western Czechoslovakia by the U.S. and Belgian troops, under Allied Commander General George S. Patton in early May 1945, was aired on Sunday, May 3, starting at 4 a.m. CDT in Minnesota. The Liberation Festival in Pilsen has been held annually since 1990, the year after the fall of communism. Czech citizens in western Bohemia have never forgotten, especially, the American soldiers who liberated them from the tyranny of the Nazis. This year's Festival was online.

I was to have attended this year's celebration in Pilsen, but could not due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The trip was planned

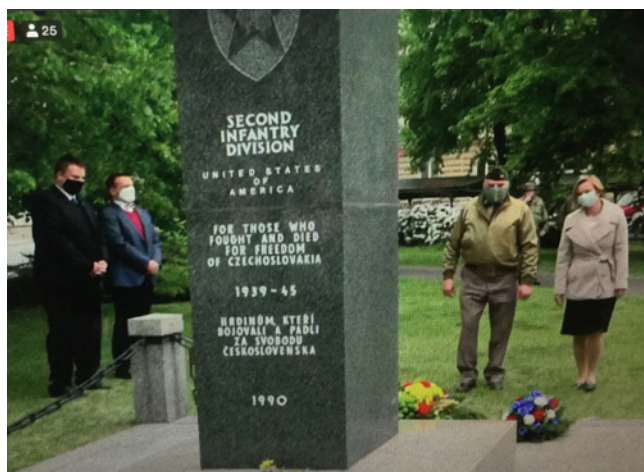
in January, put on wait-and-see in February, then totally cancelled in March. The online commemoration was a special opportunity for me to be there, despite the pandemic. The entire program had simultaneous translations into English and French, plus on-site interpreters for the deaf in the lower right of the screen throughout the entire program.

The 2020 Festival included online interviews, laying of wreaths, music, archival footage from 1945 and previous Liberation parades, re-enactments, a fly-over salute, a fashion show, new books, greetings from ambassadors, and much more. Miroslav Konvalina, Director of Czech Center in New York, invites you to go online to view the entire 2020 Liberation Festival, available in English (EN), French (FR), and Czech: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/slavnostisvobody>



Left: Pilsen Mayor Martin Baxa (left) joined program moderator Vladimír Štoviček several times. All participants wore masks and observed social distancing at all times. Authentic WWII equipment was part of the set, with changing photos and videos on the huge back screen.

75/76th Anniversary of Liberation by the US Army LIBERATION FESTIVAL PILSEN 6-9 May 2021



Right: Wreaths were solemnly laid at the memorials to both the Allied and the Czech soldiers.



Above: Authors presented their new 2020 book *Svoboda nebyla zadarmo/Freedom was not free* (in both Czech and English).

Right: Military Car Club Plzeň has been an instrumental part of the Festival since its beginning in 1990. The 95 members of the club consider their Jeeps to be symbols of freedom. The Convoy of Remembrance with WWII era Jeeps, tanks, and other military equipment has visited over 130 Bohemian villages in the last 30 years.





Left: Between the interviews, the Pilsen Jazz Band played popular 1940s swing band music. Also performing was popular Czech folk vocalist/guitarist Jaroslav "Samson" Lenk.

In the background are the Belgian, Czech, and American flags.

Even the musicians, except vocalists, brass and reed musicians, wore face masks. The grand piano was a Petrof, from the renowned Czech piano company, founded in 1864, a leading European piano manufacturer.

Right: Stephen B. King, U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic, stood with WWII American veterans in 2019. He is quoted here indicating that he was looking forward to welcoming American war veterans to the ambassador's residence.

Both U.S. Ambassador King and Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium Grégoire Cuvelier gave warm greetings for the online 75th Festival commemoration.

As part of the online 75th commemoration on Friday, May 8, on Zoom, Sokol Minnesota member Patrick Dewane discussed and performed part of his *The Accidental Hero* tribute to his grandfather's role in liberating his ancestral village of Domažlice on May 5, 1945. As a fundraiser for our Sokol Minnesota, Patrick comes to the C.S.P.S. Hall on October 11 for a stage performance. Ticket info: www.sokolmn.org



Above: The Thank You American Memorial, renovated in May 2018, consists of two stone columns with inscriptions in both Czech and English:

THANK YOU
AMERICA!
ON MAY 6TH 1945
THE CITY OF PLZEŇ
WAS LIBERATED
BY THE US ARMY

Right: In 2001 a helmet from a Plzeň fire brigade rested on this memorial:

6 V 1945
TO THE MEN OF THE
SIXTEENTH
ARMORED
DIVISION
WE'LL NEVER FORGET
NIKDY NEZAPOMENEME
6 V 1990

Pilsners Grieved with Americans in 2001

These two pictures are from the rainy Wednesday morning of October 3, 2001, in Plzeň/Pilsen. It was three weeks (plus one day) after the 9/11 air attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C., and rural Pennsylvania; but Pilsners were still expressing their sympathy by leaving flowers and votive candles for those who had died during the terrorist attacks. This scene was very meaningful to my Kucera cousins and to me when we visited Pilsen that day. Our tour leader was Hana Matousek (1942-2019), long-time Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota member and volunteer *par excellence*.

During the communist era (1948-1989), the official line was that the Soviets had liberated Pilsen, but many people vividly remembered otherwise. The truth was the Americans had rid western Bohemia of the Nazis in early May 1945. Since 1990, Plzeň has gone back in time each year to that first weekend in May 1945 to honor those who brought freedom.



For excellent coverage of the 2017 Festival: www.tresbohemes.com/2017/07/memorial-day-czech-style-liberation-festival-pilsen/

Mushroom Hunting

By Pat Slaber

Join us on July 19 at 1 p.m., coronavirus or not, for a lecture on mushrooms, with the potential to go mushroom hunting afterward.

Dan Kirkpatrick, www.mojomushroom.com, will share his knowledge of mushrooms and then, if COVID-19 social distancing restrictions permit, we will forage in the woods.

According to Dan, in July we will likely be on the hunt for chanterelles, black trumpets, hedgehogs, oysters, chicken of the woods, and hopefully lobster and coral club mushrooms.

For updates, check out the Sokol website: sokolmn.org
In the event that we cannot be together in person, we will have the lecture portion on Zoom.

Member News



Happy 90th Birthday to Milan Sebek!

Milan Sebek picked these chanterelle mushrooms Up North at his place. He serves them the same delicious way each time: sauté onions in butter, then sauté chanterelles. Add eggs and caraway seeds, stirring slowly. Served over spaetzle with tomato salad on the side.

Congratulations on 50th Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to long-time Sokol Minnesota member Linda Nicoli and her husband Rich Nicoli on their 50th Anniversary! The couple now lives in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

6 June/July 2020 *Slovo*



Mushroom Sauce for Czech Dumplings or Rice

By Dagmar Beckel Machyckova

This family recipe for mushroom sauce is from my grandmother (born 1907).

1 Tbs butter (for roux)

2 Tbs flour (for roux)

Lots of butter for frying the mushrooms and onions

1 package of fresh mushrooms sliced

(I buy the whole white button mushrooms and cut them at home, they last longer that way)

1 medium onion - cut up really small

2 cups milk

2 cups heavy whipping cream

1-2 garlic cloves sliced

salt

- Start by making the roux. Melt 1 Tbs butter in a larger saucepan, add 2 Tbs flour and stir, makes a dry roux, turn off the burner, set the roux pan aside and let it cool off.
- In a separate frying pan, melt 1 Tbs butter (add more as needed) and quickly fry the mushrooms, set aside.
- Melt 1 Tbs butter (add more as needed) and fry the onions.
- Pour the milk into the cooled-off roux pan, stirring thoroughly. Then turn on the heat and bring to a boil for 10 minutes.
- Add the fried mushrooms, fried onions, sliced fresh garlic, and salt. Bring to a boil and let cook for 10 minutes. Keep the burner low and do not put a lid on it. Milk tends to thicken slowly, so keep stirring until it thickens.
- Finally, pour in heavy whipping cream and let it come to a boiling point. Turn heat off.
Serve poured over bread dumplings or rice.

Dill and sour cream are flavors that epitomize certain parts of my childhood. They remind me of time spent cooking and eating at the Czech and Slovak Minnesota Children's Cultural Day Camp, while bearing the heat of the un-airconditioned kitchen on hot summer days.

We put dill on our open-faced sandwiches, *chlebičky*, and were glad to not have to turn the ovens on while making tasty Czech food and learning about our cultural heritage. I also grew up making dill pickles with my Grandma Mary, and have fond memories of going to the farmer's market to buy a three-foot long bunch of dill, its stems wrapped in newspaper. The dill then sometimes joined sour cream to make a dip, and we would dunk our ridged potato chips, making heaping mounds of creamy fresh sauce on salty chips. It tasted like summer at the lake.

I learned to love mushrooms later in life, long after my Mom tried to convince me they were delicious. I was only familiar with them as weird, brown things that no one else in the family besides her wanted to eat, so I approached them with skepticism.

More adventurous friends in my early twenties encouraged me to give them a try, and now I am a wholehearted mushroom convert. They are at their best when fried in oil, in the company of leeks that caramelize and almost collapse, which creates a flavorful pile that sits perfectly on a bed of grains.

Decorate it with sour cream and chives, plop some lemony radishes on top for a fresh, salty crunch, and you're in early summer heaven.

I love this recipe because of its simple ingredients, straightforward cooking methods, and easy substitutions.

If you do not have leeks, yellow onions will do. Farro substitutions include other grains like barley, bulgur, or brown rice; just make sure you adjust the liquid levels per the instructions on your package.

As long as you have mushrooms, dill, and sour cream, something delicious will come together.

Dobrou chuť!

Crispy Mushrooms, Leeks, and Sour Cream with Farro

1 pound mix of mushrooms, such as cremini, maitake, oyster, or chanterelle, torn into bite-size pieces (about 5 cups)

4 medium leeks, white and light green parts, thinly sliced

¼ cup olive oil, plus more as needed

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 ¾ cups pearled or semi-pearled farro or barley

4 cups vegetable broth or chicken broth

½ cup finely chopped chives (from about 1 bunch)

1 cup fresh dill leaves, coarsely chopped

1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest,
plus lemon wedges for squeezing

Sliced radishes, for serving

Sour cream, for serving

1. Heat olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Add half the leeks and half the mushrooms, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms are browned and crisped, 12 to 15 minutes. (They will start giving off moisture and steaming a little before this happens, so be patient.)
2. Using a slotted spoon, transfer them to a medium bowl leaving any olive oil behind. (They will have absorbed the oil as they cook, and released it back as they crisp.) Add a bit more olive oil so there is another 1/4 cup or so in the pot. Cook the remaining leeks and mushrooms, adding them to the bowl with the other mushrooms.
3. Without wiping the pot, add farro and season with salt and pepper. Cook over that same medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until farro is toasted on the outside (it will go from pale golden brown to a toastier golden brown), about 5 minutes. Add vegetable broth and 2 cups water; season with salt and pepper.
4. Bring to a strong simmer and reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer gently, stirring occasionally, until farro is fully cooked and most (but not all) of the liquid has been absorbed, 20 to 25 minutes. It should still look a bit loose, like risotto or a porridge. Remove from heat and add half the chives.
5. Toss radishes, dill, remaining chives, 1 tsp. kosher salt, and lemon zest together in a small bowl and set aside.
6. To serve, season farro with salt and pepper and ladle into bowls. Top with mushrooms and leeks, sour cream, and radish-dill mixture. Serve lemon wedges alongside for squeezing.

Adapted from Alison Roman's recipe in NYT Cooking:

<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020774-creamy-farro-with-crispy-mushrooms-and-sour-cream?action=click&module=Global%20Search%20Recipe%20Card&pgType=search&rank=3>

**Join us on July 19 at 1 p.m. for a lecture
on *houby* / mushrooms**
with the potential to go mushroom hunting afterward
Updates on Sokol website: sokolmn.org

Černý Houbový Kuba or Black Mushroom Barley Casserole

By Mary Jo Chlebecek and Judy Aubrecht

Longtime Sokol Minnesota member Mary Jo (Liska) Chlebecek shared in an interview her experiences mushroom hunting in the Twin Cities metropolitan area when she was a girl.

Mary Jo explained “In the fall, Dad would take the family mushroom hunting. We each had a knife for cutting mushrooms and a small paper bag in which the mushrooms were placed. Dad knew where the best places to hunt for mushrooms were. He took us to the thick woods near Como Park or in Mendota Heights, near Minnesota Highway 13. We would ask “Is this one good?” and luckily we gathered no poisonous mushrooms.”

The best part was when we returned home and got to eat the freshly picked mushrooms. Mother would wash the mushrooms, and then cook scrambled eggs with fresh mushroom, which was sooo good!” The majority of the mushrooms were laid out on a screen with wooden sides. On sunny dry days, the screen was placed on the clothesline to dry the mushrooms. The fully dehydrated mushrooms were placed in a cloth bag, which was then stored in the attic.

Like in many Czech or Slovak households, mushrooms were considered a vital staple for the family pantry and were used for main course meals such as soups, chow mein, and *černý houbový kuba*, at Christmastime. *Černý* means black, *houbový* means mushroom, and *kuba* (barley) is a nickname for Jakub/Jacob. This was a hearty main course prepared during the Advent days before Christmas, when meat was traditionally not eaten, and during the Christmas season. “We would get the mushroom bag from the attic, take what we needed, and return the bag to its storage place until we used it again.”

In the Czech and Slovak Republics, foraging is considered a national pastime, and takes place from spring into the late fall. As in many European countries, people have a right to hike and forage together for food to use for personal use, or to sell. Popular things to hunt for include berries and mushrooms. Foraging is regarded as a healthy, recreational activity and as a way to obtain special, free foods.

The Czech Agricultural Ministry reported that an average of 10,000 tons of wild blueberries and more than 20,000 tons of wild mushrooms are collected annually.

Černý Houbový Kuba

Barley and Mushroom Casserole

Recipe submitted by Bea Pavoucek

from Favorite Recipes of Sokol Minnesota:
Czech-American, November 1972
(Out of Print)

1 cup dried, dark mushrooms

2 cups water

1 cup barley or pearl barley for faster cooking

1 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon butter or oil

1 clove garlic, crushed

2 tablespoons minced onion

¼ teaspoon black pepper

¼ teaspoon marjoram

¼ teaspoon caraway seed (optional)

- Wash dried mushrooms. Soak in 2 cups of water for about two hours, or overnight.
- Drain mushrooms, reserving the water for flavor.
- Combine barley, mushrooms, and reserved water, adding extra water to make 2 cups.
- Add salt and cook at medium low heat until the barley is tender. Stir occasionally, until most of the water is absorbed.
- Crush the garlic. Add butter or oil and minced onion. Sauté the garlic, onion, and oil mixture in a frying pan until golden brown.
- Blend the sautéed mixture into the barley and mushroom mixture. If the mixture looks too dry, add extra butter, or oil and water.
- Bake in a large, covered, greased casserole dish at 350 degrees for about one hour.

90th Annual Sokol Camp Booya Picnic

The 90th annual Sokol Camp Booya Picnic is scheduled to be held on Sunday, August 9, 2020, from 12 p.m. until 5 p.m., rain or shine.

Sokol Camp is located at 19201 Woodland Acres South, Pine City, Minnesota 55063. It is the perfect country setting to gather with Sokol friends or family to enjoy a bowl of *booya* (stew), *jitrnice* (sausage), or a homemade cabbage roll! Remember to stay for the live music and entertainment provided by the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers later in the afternoon.

Built in 1926, the Camp has a rich tradition of hosting gymnastics, cultural, and children's camps. The proceeds

from the picnic go directly to the operations and upkeep of the Camp for future generations to enjoy!

Anyone interested in volunteering with the picnic, please feel free to contact Kari or Scott Muires at 763-226-0313. There are opportunities to assist in set-up, serving, or clean-up. In advance, thank you for saving the date for the Sokol Camp Booya Picnic.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Check the August *Slovo* for event status in connection with Minnesota Department of Health social distancing restrictions to reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Sokol Receives Grants By Joyce Tesarek

Once again, Sokol Minnesota is the grateful recipient of grants from the American Sokol Foundation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Our parent organization, American Sokol, provides Sokol units from around the country the opportunity to apply for an Internal Grant from the Unit Growth fund. Our unit's award of \$2,500 was approved by the Foundation Executive Board at its April 28 meeting. Funds are designated for the 2020 Czech and Slovak Fall Festival, or if needed, a future Festival.

The Czech government funded a grant of 110,000 Kc, or \$4,438, to help with the remodeling and furniture for the first-floor classroom of our C.S.P.S. Hall. The classroom is used by the Education Committee for Czech and Slovak language classes, the Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities (*Česká a slovenská škola Twin Cities*), and for other classes and meetings.

Sokol Minnesota is very thankful for the support shown to us and for this generous financial support for our Hall and programs.

Highlights of the April Sokol Board of Directors Meeting

By Denise Stibal

The "virtual" meeting was called to order on April 16 at 7:10 p.m. by President Dave Stepan.

Minutes of the March meeting were approved.

Joyce Tesarek reported for the Board of Budget and Finance. Motion carried to also waive the May rent for the Pajarito restaurant. Earlier email vote was approved to approve up to \$45,000 for Hall repair projects as recommended by the Board of Trustees. We have applied for the Federal Paycheck Protection Program with \$7,700 expected to be received soon. A grant was requested from American Sokol for \$2,500. The Czech Government awarded a grant of \$4,500 which will be used for floors, blinds, and classroom needs. Event coordinator Dawn Bulera will continue to be on staff as an employee for 90 days, per the rules of the government assistance program. Ed Hamernik reported that charitable gaming is currently shut down and all funds have been removed from Keenan's Bar. Ed reported for the Planning Committee that the contractor will begin work on April 20 on the first-floor structural repair and basement door replacement. Also, a new stairway to the basement will be installed. The structural repair work on the second floor will be the week of May 11.

Bob Kotek reported for the Board of Trustees. Alliance Mechanical has proposed a Maintenance contract for the boiler to include preventative maintenance twice a year at a cost of \$1,050. Motion approved. Bob is working on procuring an AED unit, approximate cost of \$1,400. Separate water meters will be installed to enable splitting the water usage bills between Sokol and our renter, the Parijto restaurant.

Mary Cahill and Jason Brozovich reported for the Board of Instructors. Classes have been cancelled for the rest of the

Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors

By Glynis Grostephan

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

LEGACY FUND:

Under \$99: Ann and Ken Janda in memory of **Hana Matousek. Marit Lee Kucera** in honor of the birth of **Edmond Brozovich** on March 9.

GENERAL FUND:

Under \$99: Maryann Tumasmith.

Judy and Tom Aubrecht, Katie and Don Haselbauer, and Pamela Langworthy in memory of Judy Aubrecht's father, **Dean Lent.**

\$100 - \$499: Gary and Mary Ann Novak Foundation, a Donor Advised Fund of the U.S. Charitable Gift Trust; Grant to be used for the purchase of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Unit.

Legacy Fund: \$ 126

General Fund: \$ 561

TOTAL: \$ 687

year and no requests have been received from students for a refund; the funds will be used for equipment. The Western District competition is cancelled and dues will be waived. Steve Ernest reported that the current membership is 272, with 39 regular members moved to Senior status and nine new members so far this year.

Education Director Pat Slaber reported that all language classes are done except for Advanced Czech; the other classes were finished online. Virtual conversation classes will be held on Wednesday evening. An online Easter celebration was held on April 11. Mushroom hunting class is pending for July.

Glynis Grostephan reported on donations. General month-to-date-funds: \$526 plus a grant from Gary and Mary Ann Novak for \$400 for an AED Unit.

Publicity Director Judy Aubrecht reported that three e-blasts were sent: COVID-19 Cancellations, Easter Celebration, and the Film Festival. *Czech that Film* will be online. She also reported for the rental committee. Some rental events are postponed or lost because of COVID-19. The Eventective Lead Service Contract was extended from July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021. Dawn Bulera is doing video showings of the Hall for rental inquiries.

Tom Aubrecht reported on the *Slovo* transition on the Layout team. Thank you expressed to Amanda Tesarek, assisted by Lucas DeBono. Mary Kucera re-joined the *Slovo* staff for the April edition.

Additional Business:

Jean Draheim and Doreen McKenney postponed the Flea Market to sometime in the Fall. The Czech and Slovak Cultural Day Camp scheduled for mid-June may have to be rescheduled; will wait until May 1 on a decision.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Saturnin by Zdeněk Jirotko, translated by Mark Corner.
 Karolinum Press: Prague, 2016.
 First published in Czech in 1942. 256 pages.
 Available at libraries and bookstores.

While COVID-19 raged and I was sheltering at home, *Saturnin* was an excellent read—light, humorous, and instructive about Czech identity. The book was immediately popular when it first hit the market in 1942 in Czechoslovakia. The country was under German occupation and the book offered escapism through silliness, wit, and reminiscences of the First Republic.

The main, unnamed character is a laid back, idle, 30-year-old man who lives in a flat in Prague. He decides to hire a gentleman's gentleman, Saturnin, and the escapades begin. Saturnin injects adventure into his employer's life, fends off money-grubbing relatives, and helps him attain love. First Saturnin moves him onto a houseboat, builds up a totally fictitious reputation for his master as a big-game hunter, and works his magic on an extended stay at Grandpa's remote cabin. Other characters include the widowed Aunt Catherine, her foppish son Bertie, family friend Dr. Witherspoon, and the modern Miss Barbara Basnett.

It is refreshing to see the attractive Barbara portrayed as a competent woman. She plays tennis, drives a fancy car, builds outdoor cooking fires, and hunts mushrooms. She is also bright and goal-oriented. When "Grandpa proposed that we divide up into at least two groups, which would enable us to find more mushrooms than if we hunted as a single pack.... Miss Barbara pointed out that she had matches. She turned her back to us and we could hear a sound like breaking twigs.... those who chose the matches with their heads intact would hunt together, as would those who selected the broken matches.... Dear, sweet Barbara. She had broken off the heads of all the matches, giving Grandpa and Dr. Witherspoon no chance. We were bound to be drawn together.... So Miss Barbara had wanted to be my mushrooming partner. Ye Gods! Ye Humans! Is life not beautiful!"

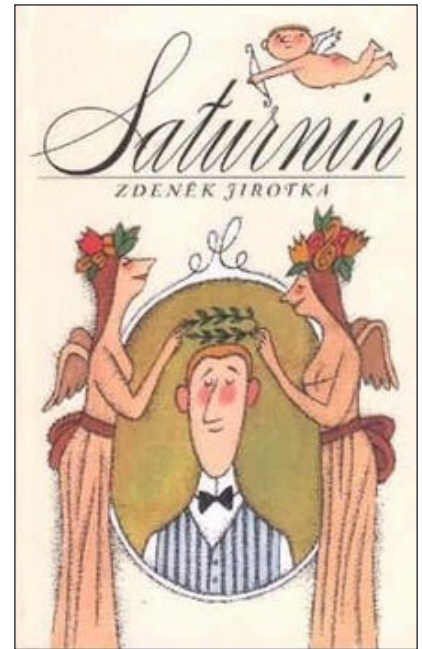
Saturnin is composed of short chapters with many tangential mini-essays about topics such as how to conduct oneself at a funeral and the ridiculousness of the common sayings that Aunt Catherine likes to spout. The book was not translated into English for 60 years, which leads me to believe it was especially difficult to translate. Kudos to the translator, Mark Corner, for giving English readers such an amusing, insightful romp that shares traits of Czech identity. As Corner wrote, "the book was intended to encapsulate a national character ... It was not simply a work of escapism, written to make people forget occupation. It was a reminder of what must be preserved, even under an occupying power.... They were trying to maintain themselves as Czechs, initially through German occupation and later communism."

The book is often referred to as the Czech version of P.G. Wodehouse's Wooster and Jeeves stories, but Corner spends most of his seven-page afterword rightly down-playing that idea. Jeeves is mostly a proper manservant who also protects his master from intrusive relatives, but gets Wooster *out* of relationships with young women rather than *into* one, as Saturnin does. While Jeeves is concerned with Wooster being impeccably dressed, Saturnin is a mischievous, nearly dangerous, man of action.

One famous scene in the book has Dr. Witherspoon telling of three types of people who react differently to a plate of donuts in a café. There are those who would just gaze on the donuts but never consider throwing them, those who would reflect on bombarding other customers with the donuts but not do it, and those who would actually do it. Saturnin is a donut thrower. When I was introduced to the beautiful Café Imperial in Prague two decades ago, they were still carrying on the donut-throwing tradition inspired by the book. All that was needed was a culprit willing to pay for the resulting clean-up of old donuts thrown at customers.

Zdeněk Jirotko (1911-2003) was born in Ostrava, served in the Army from 1933-1940, and during Nazi occupation worked in the Ministry of Public Works. In 1942, he became a full-time writer. Jirotko is best known for *Saturnin*, which became a classic of Czech literature, was translated into more than a dozen other languages, and made into a film in 1994.

Gwen is coordinator of the Literary Ventures: Czech and Slovak 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 for the Czech Republic. For more information, go to www.cs-center.org or contact gwen@cs-center.org



Book cover by Adolf Born for Czech edition of *Saturnin*

Czech and Slovak Literary Ventures is on summer break. Check our website, www.cs-center.org, for updates to scheduling and the impact of COVID-19.

**Czech
Honorary
Consul
News**

June 2020

My best greetings to all who read *Slovo*. I hope you are well and safe. With few actual events to feature due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to let you know about several **web sites to visit** and even revisit. In early April, one of the best appeals for **wearing face masks** came from the Czech Republic: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhNo_IOPoTU

Since 2001, the American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR) and Friends of Slovakia (FOS) have co-sponsored the prestigious **Annual Czech**

and Slovak Freedom Lecture every fall at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.

The Freedom Lecture on November 13 commemorated the Velvet Revolution with a special double-lecture featuring both a Czech and a Slovak lecturer. Šimon Pánek, the Czech speaker, was a key leader in the 1989 student movement, who subsequently went on to found the important NGO, *People in Need*.

Katarína Cséfalvayová, the Slovak speaker, is the Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Slovak National Council. I was fortunate to attend this impressive lecture when I was in Washington, D.C., for the annual Consular Corps College.

The Wilson Center has posted a video of the full lecture event: www.wilsoncenter.org/event/2019-czech-and-slovak-freedom-lecture-30-years-czech-and-slovak-freedom

The newly **renovated historic fountain of the National Museum** in Wenceslas Square, Prague, lights up in shades of the tricolor Czech flag every evening at 8 p.m. (1 p.m. CDT) through the end of October. The fountain now has 37 waterproof lights, which can create up to 20,000 different color combinations. Above the fountain on the balustrade, statues represent the lands of the Czech Kingdom: the throne of Bohemia has a sword and a scepter sits; a resting old man represents the Elbe River; the Vltava River has a reclining nude young woman; an allegorical figure stands for Moravia; a young man personifies Silesia.

www.praguemonitor.com/2020/05/01/national-museum-fountain-light-colors-czech-flag

While you are there (in spirit) in Prague, take a **virtual tour of the National Museum**: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/national-museum-prague?hl=en>

Minnesota Orchestra brings warmth to Minnesota winter 2021 with the three-week **Antonín Dvořák festival** next January, including three of his symphonies, plus his cello, violin and piano concertos: tickets@mnorch.org

Czech Radio on April 29 ran a story about the **600th anniversary** of the birth of the 15th century King of Bohemia George of Poděbrady (Jiří z Poděbrad), April 23, 1420, to March 22, 1471, who was one of the first political figures to propose the idea of European unity: www.radio.cz/en/section/czech-history/george-of-podebrady-diplomat-king-who-dreamed-of-a-united-europe



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

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

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

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

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May mailing: Mary Cahill and Joan Sedlacek.

More information at: www.sokolmn.org

C.S.P.S. HALL LEGACY FUND

To keep us all safe from COVID-19, all our income-generating events are on hold.

While the hall is vacant, we hope to resurface the wood floors for \$9,825. If you can help, we would greatly appreciate a donation to Sokol.

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

Name: _____

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Or donate online: www.sokolmn.org *Thank You!*



CZECH AND SLOVAK



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651-290-0542

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* June/July 2020

Sokol Minnesota's cultural exhibit for the cancelled 88th Festival of Nations featured a maypole. The theme for the Festival's cultural exhibits this year was "Real Stories, Real People, our Minnesota Community." Doreen McKenney designed and constructed the maypole and these posters. See the maypole on the front cover.

