



Who are these people, and why are they looking at you? See page 7.

Upcoming Events

Mar 28,
6:30 p.m.
Membership Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Bláha Guitar Concert

Mar 30,
12:30 p.m.
Flavors of Slovakia

Apr 6, 2 p.m.
Sokol/C.S.P.S. 125 Celebration

Apr 11-12
Garage Sale

Apr 17
Presentation My Literary Life with Václav Havel

Apr 17 & 20
MN Opera Rusalka

Apr 19
Literary Ventures

Apr 25,
7 p.m.
Membership Meeting

Apr 26
Czech Poetry Reading

Czech, Slovak & West End Jeopardy!

By Steve Shimer and Joe Landsberger

With our 125th anniversary, we're testing your Sokol knowledge! Below are "answers" to questions about the history of our Sokol West End community in St. Paul. Remember to phrase your solutions in the form of a question.

1. Tomáš Mareš, Jošef Trnka, Tomáš Herauf, František Filipek, Karel Kopřiva, Vojta Handl, Michal Karták
2. Jan Gerga, Florian Halcin, George Berosik, Matt Hudacek

3. Bohemian Hill
4. Slovanská Lipá
5. Václav Picha, Jan Rynda
6. Sokol, C.S.P.S., and Z.C.B.J.
7. William Dawson, Emil Ulrici, W. J. Gronewold, Raymond Paul Pavlecka, Henry Jansen, Marlene Harold, Marlin Heise
8. Tomáš G. Masaryk, Václav Havel
9. Blanche Yurka, Antonín Dvořák
10. Norm Sladek, Joyce Tesarek, Libby Imbrone

see p. 8 for answers

*Every six years Prague hosts an All-Sokol Slet. In 2006 Sokol Minnesota sent five representatives:
Doreen McKenney, Joyce Tesarek, Norm Petrik, Carolyn Cahill and Dennis Cahill.*



**Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota
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From the archives



1908 photo of women's gym class on the second floor. Note an original backdrop of the stage which was located in the southeast corner, and the entrance to the second level in the opposite corner.

Below
Circa 1910
First class of women officially allowed to join Sokol.

These gymnastic photos were taken in the C.S.P.S. Hall before the third level addition in 1917. Aside from their genealogical importance, they provide interesting clues to how the rooms looked, and document the antique furnishings, some now found in our 3rd level meeting room. Space prevents us from listing family members of those found in the images, though the original in many cases details those photographed.

Photos from the archive of Georgiana Dolesji



Circa 1916 Mens Sokol Gymnasts, taken in the original meeting room.

President Komentář/President's Note

Pozdrav bratří a sestry/Greetings brothers and sisters

Accomplishments.

I have been awed by what we have been doing these past years! Each year, Sokol Minnesota presents a broad range of cultural and educational activities. Joyce Tesarek and I have been writing grants for funds to restore the Hall. In order to document our organizational viability we developed the following list. As you read, keep in mind that April 6 we celebrate not only our accomplishments but also our partners such as Honorary Consul Joe Mestenhauer, the Czech-Slovak Culture Center, the West End Federation (our neighborhood council), as well as those Sokols who have gone before us.

Gymnastics: Three levels of youth gymnastics; participation in regional Slets; participation in international Slets including sending six participants to Prague in 2006.

Theater: Patrick Dewane's performance *The Mushroom Picker*; Lex-Ham Community Theatre's annual production of a Czech and Slovak play, this year Vaclav Havel's *Vyrozumění/ The Memorandum*; Literary Ventures discussions on Slavic literature each Saturday.

Music/performance/festivals: Our April 6, 2008 125th Sokol Anniversary celebration (see page 7 for details); Senior Singers singing/documenting/recording folk songs for over thirty years; Vladislav Blaha, guitarist; Taneční Mládež, Czech and Slovak children's dance group; practice space for St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers; annual Czech-Slovak Fall Festival; 2006 Czech film series; Spring/Mardi Gras dance, Šibřinky, since

Letters...

Congratulations to Sokol Minnesota for 125 years of representing the active physical fitness, educational and cultural heritage of Czechs and Slovaks in Minnesota. While other ethnic and fraternal service organizations are declining in membership and activities we Sokols continue to soar "higher and higher" in our goals. This is occurring because the social stability and hospitality, the physical activity and educational opportunities we offer are enticing to families and individuals in our community seeking a family-friendly environment. People continue to seek a comforting place in the community and we are happy when they find that place at Sokol Minnesota.

Sokol Minnesota is unique among Sokol units because we have made ourselves a vibrant player in the community through our participation in the community. Congratulations to all who throughout the years have worked so hard to keep our C.S.P.S. Hall in good condition, and who have contributed so much of their own personal attributes and selflessness to making Sokol Minnesota a successful organization that anyone would desire to join.

One Hundred Twenty-five years! Just imagine the honor roll of persons who have gone before us! As we go forward It is a good time to say "thank you" to all past and present Sokol Minnesota members.

Libby Imbrone

1908, and the fall Harvest Dance; participation in the Festival of Nations since its inception in 1932.

Art/print: Traveling exhibit of drawings and poems by the children in the Terezin Concentration Camp; exhibitions by artists Gera Pobuda and Simona Nemcova; partnered with the West 7th/Fort Road Federation/District 9 Community Council in the installation of a sculpture in the North High Bridge Park commemorating contributions of Czech and Slovak immigrants in the building of neighborhoods and businesses in the West End; construction of the 15-foot puppets Jarda and Jitka, sponsor their participation in regional parades and festivals, including 2007 exhibit of Czech puppetry at the National Czech & Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; publication of *Gateway to a New World, Building Czech and Slovak Communities in the West End, a history of Czech/Slovak immigration into the City of St. Paul since the mid-1850's*; monthly newsletter "Slovo"

Education: Czech language classes, cooking classes, tours, crafts; nine-year Czech and Slovak day camp for children; sponsor participants in the Czech language school in Dobruska since 2000; inventory, documentation, and display of the unit's historic artifacts, 1860's forward; the Havel Civil Society Symposium; three Cernin Palace Bronze Memorial Medal awardees.

Other: Fully subsidized and secured office for the Czech Honorary Consul, for the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, and for the Czechoslovak Society of America (CSA); gift shop including glassware, ornaments, and products made in the Czech Republic and Slovakia; discounted rentals to compatible non-profit organizations *Nazdar, Joe Landsberger*

I attend quite a number of Czech & Slovak events, conferences, festivals, and places all across the country, and offer these thoughts. Many groups, festivals, and organizations are slowly going under. Many groups are still living in the past, and will not accept change. However we are the exception mostly due to the fantastic dedication of just a handful of volunteers, these are the people you always see at the hall. We owe them our endless gratitude. Not many Sokol units can compete with the huge gymnastic centers springing up all over. A focus on anything cultural works best, people are interested in where they came from, and preserving their ethnic heritage. This is where we excel in Sokol Minnesota. We are on the right track, we just need more help and interest from you. Getting involved is a great experience, you learn so much, meet wonderful people. Your time and talents are really needed. The time is now, the future is now. Our community depends on every one of you for it's next 125 years!

Mark Bigaouette



A Rich Calendar of Events

March Membership meeting: March 28, 6:30 p.m.
Simple potluck; short business meeting; guitar concert (at 7:30 p.m.)

On Friday, March 28 the Sokol membership meeting will convene at 6:30 p.m. for a quick potluck and short meeting. At 7:30 we will adjourn for a guitar concert *Dedications* by Vladislav Bláha of the Brno Conservatory.

The concert is co-sponsored by the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota. In 2004 Blaha received the Doctor of Arts degree after study at the Academy of Music in Bratislava, Slovakia, and achieved international recognition as winner in four international guitar competitions. Bláha has given concerts in around the world. His richness of expression, together with his brilliant virtuosity and stylish interpretation give cause for much critical acclaim throughout the musical world. He is Professor of guitar at Conservatoire and on Janáček Academy of Music, Music College in Brno. In the future, all Sokol membership meetings convene at 7 p.m.



Vladislav Bláha of the Brno Conservatory.
Concert Fri., Mar. 28 at 7:30 p.m. C.S.P.S. Theatre.

Paul Wilson: Presentation *My Literary Life with Václav Havel*

Translator and author Paul Wilson will give a presentation on his work, *My Literary Life with Václav Havel* Thursday, April 17 at the University of Minnesota, Andersen Library*

Meet Paul Wilson: Friday, April 18, University of St. Thomas, John R. Roach Center for Liberal Arts, Room 126, 2115 Summit Ave*.

An interest in George Orwell drew Paul Wilson to Czechoslovakia where he stayed ten years before being expelled. His translation work included Václav Havel's *Power of the Powerless* which led to his status as Havel's "official translator". Wilson will read a few passages, talk about his career, and give some insights about a new autobiographical book by Havel *Taking Leave* that is being made into a film.

*Times not yet available For current information, please see www.cs-center.org

Sponsored by: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech Honorary Consulate, Minnesota International Center, University of St. Thomas, House of Hope Presbyterian Church

Czech and Slovak Literary Ventures

Czech & Slovak Literary Ventures invites readers to join monthly book discussions scheduled throughout the year. The group meets on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon, 1st floor, CSPA Hall, 383 Michigan Ave. Saturday, Apr. 19 - *I am Snowing: The Confessions of a Woman of Prague* by Pavel Kohout. For more information, email gwen@cs-center.org

Czech Poetry Reading

Saturday, April 26, 2008 , 7 p.m. at Nina's Café, 165 Western Ave N. St. Paul.

Poems from *Czech Love Collection* will be read in both Czech and English by readers including Jarda Cervenka, Jitka Sebek and Ava Grover. Admission is free and members and friends are invited to attend!

Sponsored by Sokol and CSCC Literary Ventures Club.

Miloš Forman's Retrospective at the Walker

Walker Art Center's retrospective of Miloš Forman's films celebrates the "Formanesque" vision he has sustained over 45 years. It is a testament to the uniqueness of his blend of passionate, personal interpretation, a remarkable ability to capture the zeitgeist, and a healthy dose of black humor. Films include *Loves of a Blonde* and *The Firemen's Ball*, which helped jump-start the fabled Czech New Wave in the mid-1960s, and in his renegade Hollywood films from the 1970s to today (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The People vs. Larry Flynt*).

International Film Festival in April

Minnesota Film Arts (MFA) will present a series of Czech and Slovak films at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival, April 17–May 3. MFA is dedicated to presenting the best of new and historical independent and international cinema to Twin Cities and greater Minnesotan audiences. The schedule is not available at this time: please see the website at www.mnfilmarts.org or call the hotline at 612-331-3134





Friday, April 11: 9 – 5
Saturday, April 12: 9 – 1
C.S.P.S. Hall, 383
Michigan St.,
2nd floor theatre
Public & donations welcome




Serving at the delicious roast duck dinner in January were Jan Knudtson, Joe Landsberger, Jeff Martinka, Kat Nelson, and Marit Lee Kucera. Not pictured is Doreen McKenney who chaired, cooked, and organized!

Minnesota Opera Dvořák's *Rusalka*

Sokol's Education Committee invites you to join us for performances of Antonín Dvořák's opera *Rusalka* at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. In Slavic folk tales across many cultures including Czech, Russian, and Polish, Rusalki were either water nymphs or forest dwellers who enticed young men with their singing and beauty, then drowned them. Dvořák based his opera upon these tales, using Czech folk customs and dances. *Rusalka* debuted in Prague in 1901. Opera soprano Renee Fleming made its aria *Mesicku na nebi hlubokem* (*Ode to the Moon*) one of her signature pieces. The opera will be sung in Czech with English subtitles above the stage. Sokols and their friends can qualify for 25 percent group discounts for two dates: Thursday, April 17, 7:30 p.m. performance are \$57.50, and the Sunday April 20 matinee performance, 2:00 p.m. \$65.50. Both are for balcony seating. The Ordway, 345 Washington Street, is located across from downtown St. Paul's historic Rice Park. Call 651-452-6240 for payment and for details. Reserve (and pay) early as we have a limited number of tickets!



Thank you!

Sokol Minnesota would like to thank the producers and cast of the Lex-Ham Community Theater not only for their engaging performance of Václav Havel's *The Memorandum*, but also for their work clearing and cleaning the stage area. The company will also present a scene at our April 6 benefit! Continuing Sokol's tradition of theater was also the result of many volunteers, including our own fine cooks and concessionaires, as well the those of the Czech Slovak Culture Center.

2008 Festival of Nations

May 1–4, RiverCentre, 175 West Kellogg Blvd

Sokol Minnesota has participated in the Festival of Nations as a charter participant since 1932. At the 2008 festival, 97 different ethnic groups from around the world will share their cuisine, crafts and traditions that form the mosaic of Minnesota's communities. Shop at our Czech and Slovak imports sales booth in the International Bazaar, dine at our café along with 35 others, enjoy continuous entertainment including the St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers, Sokol Minnesota children's and teen group, and Lipa Slovak Dancers. All have brilliant costumes and authentic ethnic choreography. The theme of this year's cultural exhibits focus on Arts and Architecture.

Ladies Tea Party Social

Saturday, May 17
 1–3 p.m. C.S.P.S.
 Hall, 383 Michigan
 St, 2nd floor theatre

Ages 6 and up,
 public welcome,
 bring your favorite
 tea cup. Prizes for
 the most unique
 hats, serving tea
 and sandwiches. Reservations required
 by May 14: 763-753-4101 or 952-941-
 0426



Sokol Minnesota News

By Marlene Hinshaw

Ahoj! It's spring!! Our hall is alive with activity. Except for Easter, there's a Sokol event every weekend through April 6. Joe Landsberger, Joan Sedlacek, Louise Wessinger and others are cleaning out the third floor storage rooms looking for Sokol artifacts to display at the 125th celebration of Sokol Minnesota, April 6. Seeing the piles of items they found makes me realize that Czechs and Slovaks are masterful pack rats. (See Kent! I come by it naturally.)

I'm happy to announce that Jerabek's century old Bohemian Bakery and Coffeehouse, was purchased by two local couples who say they'll keep the traditions of Jerabek's. Tom, the baker who's been there for 32 years will stay on. The sale included the old crumbling handwritten recipe book from Ed Jerabek. I'm so happy 'cause I love their kolace and poppy seed coffee cakes. They're a short distance over the high bridge on the West Side at 63 West Winifred St., St. Paul.

Marie Grover, found Jim Felger, baker and candy maker extraordinaire. Many of us remember his fine store in Hinckley. Due to poor health he sold his store in 2002 and now works as a baker at Chris' Food Center in downtown Sandstone, Minnesota. He also bakes and makes candy from his home, filling customer requests and sells at the farmers market in summer. I have Jim's address and phone number for anyone interested in contacting him.

Do you remember Betty and George Pokorny? George worked for years in the wonderful Ben Franklin store in Grand Marais. Whenever we got that far north, we had to see George and check out the store. He is now living at 12940 First Ave. North, Apt. 101 in Lindstrom, Minnesota. Betty is in a care center in Stillwater. He would love to connect again with his Sokol friends.

John Cicha, a member of The Greatest Generation, will celebrate his 90th birthday on April 9. During WWII he served in the Navy. The U.S. Navy was trying to defend the Philippines. After the fall of Bataan, the navy evacuated to Corregidor. About a month later, in 1942, U. S. General Wainwright surrendered the remainder of the American forces on Corregidor. Those in command of John's ship did not want the Japanese to get their ship so they scuttled it. John was in charge of one of the motorboats ferrying sailors to land as their ship was sunk. He and his shipmates were captured and a prisoner of the Japanese for three and one-half years.

Wouldn't you just know that in the prison camp John would meet up with Czechs? Because of the war in Europe, a group of Czechs (some Jews) left and went to Manila to start a shoe factory. Because they were civilians the Japanese allowed them to go about their business. They even offered their expertise to the U.S. military. Later, they were rounded up and placed in the same prison camp as John. John said, "having them to talk to helped keep me sane."

Over the years, John has kept in touch with some of the other prisoners. In fact, John has been invited by a Czech prison mate to spend a week at his home in Florida. He'll be leaving this week. John, you are a true hero! Thank you for your service to our country. Have a great reunion and a smashing birthday.

Old Man Winter did his dirty work to one of our finest, Dennis Saliny. Dennis, who was our very able Gaming Chairman, fell outdoors and broke four vertebrae. Surgery is behind him, but it appears he's in for a long recovery. I'm sure it would please him to hear from you. His address: North Memorial Hospital, 2300 Oakdale Ave. No. Robbinsdale, Minnesota 55422.

Old Man Winter got Bev Clancy too. She fell and has a conical fracture of the leg. That sounds nasty!

Little Kyler Clancy (18 mo. old with Guillain-Barr syndrome) came home from the hospital on Feb. 26. He's making progress but will need therapy 3 times a week for many weeks. Mom Julie is finally back at her teaching job. A benefit is planned to help with their astronomical medical bills. It will be Sunday, April 20, starting at 6 p.m. at the Time Out Restaurant & Sports Bar, 105th St. and Highway 65 (Central Ave. N.E.) Blaine. The cost is \$10. There will be a free hors-d'oeuvre buffet, a DJ, silent auction and a chance to grab money inside a money machine. For directions or more info. please call Ann Andrlle at 763-571-5327.

Congratulations to Former Sokol President, Jay Fonkert. Jay is now the 1st Vice-President of the Minnesota Genealogical Society. He is also a board certified CG (Certified Genealogist). Jay does genealogy lecturing around Minnesota. In August he was a special guest lecturer in Dutch genealogy at a conference in Toronto. Jay, a Dutchman, became Czech when his daughter Deb joined the Sokol Venture Scouts. He is one of those rare people who follow their bliss: geography and genealogy.

I'm going to the opera! Dvorak's *Rusalka* is playing at the Ordway April 12-20. It will be sung in Czech with English translations projected above the stage. I'm thinking it's the only Czech opera I'll see in my lifetime and it's here in my own city. Happy Easter!

A big thank you to all who donated to Sokol Minnesota

In Memory of Stan Vosejпка

Sokol Town of Lake (Chicago),
George Chlebecek, James & MaryJo Chlebecek,
Wallace Oliva, Donald & Florence Haselbauer,
Norm Petrik & Joyce Tesarek

Slovo Fund

Doreen McKenney, Minnesota
Sokol Camp Assoc.

General Fund

Joanne Parvy, Romelle Vanek,
Catherine Warnecke

Thank You!

Sokol 125

Join us for a benefit to celebrate Sokol
Minnesota's 125th Anniversary on Sunday,
April 6. 2 - 7 p.m. \$25

Reception from 2-3 pm and 5-7 pm

- Sokol archivists' display of 125 years of photos and memorabilia
- Antonin Dvořák artifacts by the Schubert Club and private collector
- Sokol cooks' complimentary Czech and Slovak appetizers

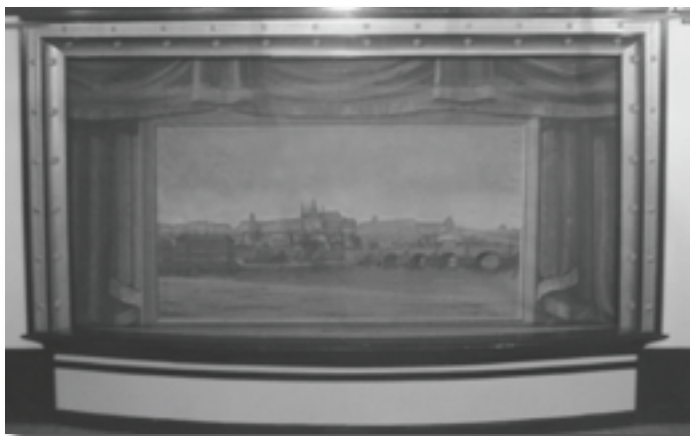
Program from 3-5 pm

- President Joe Landsberger: Emcee and historical narrative
- Lex-Ham Low Brass Ensemble: Czech and Slovak folk songs
- Karin Wolverton, Minnesota Opera: recital, Anton Dvořák selections
- Senator Sandy Pappas: Blanche Yurka, reading
- Patrick Dewane: *The Mushroom Picker*, reading

INTERMISSION

- Overture
- Lex-Ham Community Theatre: Václav Havel *The Memorandum*, scene
- Elisabeth Bieber: recital, Czech and Slovak folk songs

Ticketing/information: 651.297.9000 www.sokolmn.org



C.S.P.S. Hall Stage with historic painted backdrop

The Council of Higher Education provides scholarships to American and Canadian students of Czech, Slovak and/or Ruthenian ancestry. More information about the Council and the scholarships can be obtained at the Council's website: www.cheonline.org

Cover picture:

On the occasion of Sokol's 100th anniversary in 1987, these members gathered to greet you and celebrate (left to right, back to front):

Clarence Fischbach, Hattie (Fisher) Fischbach, Frank Haselbauer, Karleen (Chott) Sheppard, Hana Matousek, Carole (Bulera) Gonsowski, Donald Haselbauer, Al Dvorak, Robert Vanyo, James Poepke, Cecilia (Babe Bulera) Vanyo, Jaroslav Verner, Mildred Rasmussen, John Dolejsi, Judy (Kalash) Benton, Lucille Pavlicek, Helen Kalash. 4th row: Florence Haselbauer, Patricia Carlson-Rukavina, Dorothy Sladek, Florence Mann, Catherine Haselbauer, Emma Pallo, Lorraine (Vanyo) Olson, Gloria Pallo, Helen Peterson, Lida Verner, Verna Verner. 3rd row: Ralph Halbert, Mary Halbert, Eleanor Reider, George Snajd, Albert "Cody" Hanzel, Elsie Roepke, Sharon Wyberg, Geraldine Dooley, Lillian Kodada, Lillian Rehak, Vlasta Hanover, Anna Pallo. 2nd Row: Frank Loss, Henry Jansen, Joyce Tesarek, Norm Sladek, Georgiana Dolejsi, Beverly Clancy, Laura Jansen, Joyce Sladek, Kenneth Wyberg. Front: Marcella Bigouette, Mark Bigouette, James Kohout, Allen Sladek, Roberta (Vanyo) Chandler, Robert Marabella, Thomas Pallo.

Sokol Memories

In preparation for Sokol Minnesota's 100-year anniversary, Henry Jansen, Chair of the Board of Trustees, stated in 1987 in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch* "Some things need to be done when you have a building of this vintage, but we've been working away to return it to prime condition... Jansen is quick to take a visitor to the basement of the building at 381 Michigan to show off the thick limestone bearing walls and the quaint brick flooring. We've added a lot of pillars and companion joists to stabilize the structure... We also did a lot of dancing, and in 1932 we were part of the first Festival of Nations."

Georgiana Dolejsi continued "My grandfather, Joseph Walla, was the first gymnast instructor here, going back to the last century... We wear these (folk) costumes very proudly, and this building has been a second home for us."



Czech, Slovak & West End Jeopardy!

By Steve Shimer and Joe Landsberger

Below are “answers” to questions about the history of our Sokol West End community. How did you do?

1. *Who were our first Czech immigrant West End neighbors?*

Tomáš Mareš arrived in 1858, but then moved to LeSueur County. Jošef Trnka and Tomáš Herauf arrived in 1859. František Filipek, Karel Kopřiva, and Vojta Handl, and Michal Karták followed in 1860. By 1885, Karták wrote that there were about 300 Čech families living in the West End.

2. *Who were our first Slovak immigrant West End neighbors?*

One early Slovak, Jan Gerga, traveled back and forth to Slovakia in the 1880's until his son, Jan, married Mary Stodola and settled permanently. Florian Halcin, George Berosik, and Matt Hudacek soon joined them from the village of Lendak, Slovakia at the foothills of the Tatra Mountains.

3. *What neighborhoods did early Czech and Slovaks settle?*

Early Czech and Slovak immigrants built their shacks along the banks or flats of the Mississippi River in an area later known as Little Italy. Many worked in McMillan's Slaughter House below the High Bridge. As they became more prosperous, they moved up the bluff to neighborhoods of Cliff, Duke, and West 7th Streets. For a short while, the Uppertown Triangle neighborhood was known as Bohemian Hill. Karleen Chott Sheppard's research indicated that 257 names in the 1880



Fr. Jan Rynda, pastor at St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Church.

St. Paul directory were probably of Czech/Moravian/Silesian/Slovak origin.

4. *What was the first Czech/Slovak immigrant organization?*

Bohemian, Moravian, Silesian and Slovak immigrants began their journeys to St. Paul without a country but with a strong sense of culture. In 1870 they first founded Slovanská Lipá (Linden Tree) as a reading society in St. Paul. Generally, the community was organized into three philosophical groupings: free-thinkers/religious liberals, Catholics, and a small group of Congregationalists.

5. *Who were early Czech personalities?*

Vaclav Picha operated the first saloon in the CSPA Hall in 1890 until his death in 1914. Picha was a jokester and pals with Father Jan Rynda, priest at Saint Stanislaus Church (1886-1924) next door. Father Rynda would become irritated with Picha when his parishioners stopped for beer on their way home from church, and some of Father Rynda's parishioners were unhappy over their priest's association with the non-believer. The two, however, spent many hours in conversation (drinking beer?) in Picha's living quarters back of the saloon.

6. *What Czech and Slovak organizations followed Slovanská Lipá?*

Free thinkers founded several organizations in St. Paul,

including Sokol, CSPA, and ZCJB and shared common goals, membership and socializing within the Č.S.P.S. Hall.

Dr. Miroslav Tyrš founded Sokol in 1862 in Prague in the area of Bohemia. Shortly thereafter, in 1865, Sokol was begun in the U.S., and our unit was founded in St. Paul in 1882.

On March 4, 1854, twenty-nine Czech immigrant men met in St. Louis, Missouri and founded the first American fraternal insurance organization, Česko-Slovanský Podporující Spolek (Č.S.P.S.), in the United States. Since Social Security did not exist, they felt a need for mutual support in hard times, as well as a venue to discuss problems. In 1876, Čech Rad, the twelfth lodge of the Č.S.P.S., was formed in St Paul.

Západní Česká Bratrská Jednota (Z.C.B.J.), or Western Bohemian Fraternal was founded in 1897 as another fraternal organization. In 1971 Z.C.B.J. renamed itself the Western Fraternal Life Association network of lodges.

7. *Who were early “constructors” of the CSPA Hall?*

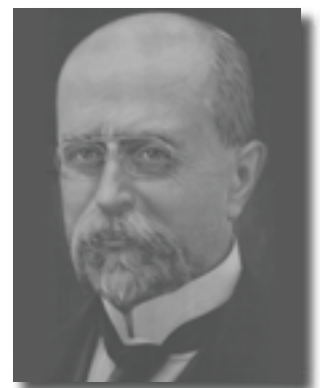
In 1879 the current site of the CSPA Hall was purchased for \$600 from William and Mary Dawson. Mr. Dawson was the St. Paul mayor (1878–81) and a banker. A school was purchased from the City and relocated onto the property. A 16-foot stage was added, but burned down in 1886.

Architect Emil Ulrici designed its two-story replacement, and W. J. Gronewold was hired to build it for about \$10,000. Local architect and engineer Raymond Paul Pavlecka designed the third, mezzanine/balcony level in 1917.

Sokol President Henry Jansen, President Marlene Harold of the West 7th Federation, and researcher Marlin Heise worked to nominate and successfully place the hall on the National Register of Historic Places.

8. *What Czechoslovakian presidents visited the Czech community in St. Paul?*

Tomáš G. Masaryk visited St. Paul in 1918 shortly before meeting with President Woodrow Wilson and becoming the first President of Czechoslovakia at the end of World War I. President Václav Havel attended a reception in 1999 at the inauguration of the Havel Civil Society Symposium, developed jointly with the University of St. Thomas, Macalester College, and House of Hope Presbyterian Church.



Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, “Father of Czechoslovakia” 1850 - 1937. From a print in the Sokol Minnesota archives.

9. *Who were famous artists associated with the hall?*

Blanche Yurka was a famous author and actress of film and theatre who had her early start at the CSPA Hall. She was the daughter of Antonin Jurka, who produced many plays at the hall between 1870 and 1900 when he

relocated his family to New York City.

Composer/Maestro Antonin Dvorak spent a summer in Spillville, Iowa with his family, and visited St. Paul on September 5, 1893. His secretary, Jošef Kovařík, was the brother-in-law of Jon Pešek, 529 Michigan Street.



Antonín Dvořák visited the CSPS Hall in 1893

10. Who were Sokol recipients of the Czech Government's Czernin Palace Award?

The Cernin Palace Bronze Memorial Medal is an honor conferred by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague., to an individual or entity that has made significant contributions to fostering Czech-U.S. relations.



Dr. Josef Mestenhauser with award winners Libby Imbrone 2007, Dr. Joyce Tesarek 2006 and Dr. Norm Sladek 2005

Song of the Month
by Georgiana Dolejši

When I was asked to submit my favorite Sokol song for the Slovo 125th Anniversary Edition, my decision was a difficult one as there are numerous great Sokol marches that are very meaningful to me. Having been very active in the gymnastic program of Sokol throughout my many years of membership plus childhood involvement, I have marched in many, many parades, opening and closing of Slet Programs, Soldiers Field in Chicago, and probably the most thrilling and impressionable at the 1938 10th Slet in Prague. I can honestly and sincerely say that when the band would play and the marching began, "shivers would run down my spine" and without any embarrassment, tears would flow as I swelled with pride being a Sokol. I can attest to that this day.



Jdou Sokolské Šisky Jdou Fr. Knoch

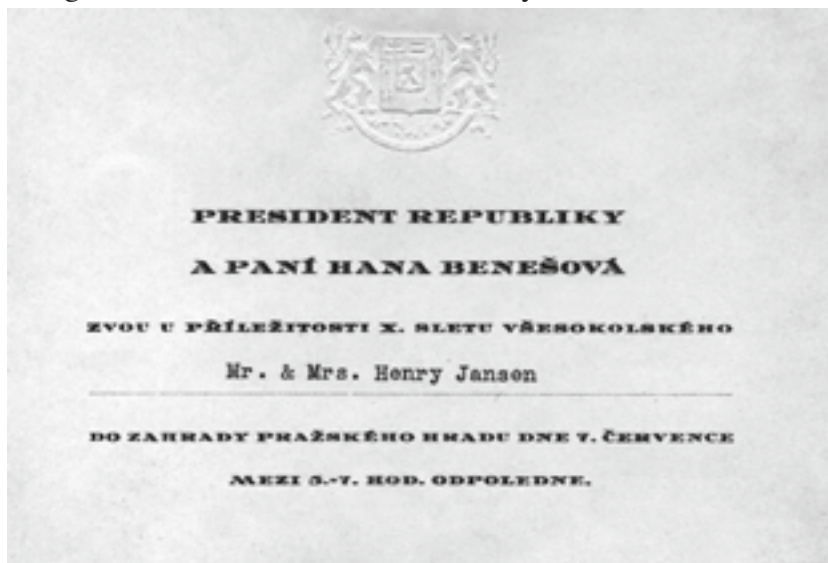
Pochodem

Jdou so- kol- ské ši- ky Jdou, pra- por jim
vlá nad hla- vou. Ru- do bí- lý pra- po- re
náš, že- skou sí- lu ty zna- ne- náš, vlaj a
duj, vlaj a duj! Do- ne- se- me svor- ně k'ef
lí pra- por svůj, svůj

From the archives:

Souvenir of the 1938 Slet in Czechoslovakia

The Second World War was near when Czechs and Slovaks gathered for the International Slet in July 1938. In September of that year the British and French signed a pact with Nazi Germany and part of Czechoslovakia, and Sudety/Sudetenland was absorbed by Germany. The invitation reads "The President of the Republic and Mrs. Hana Beneš, on the occasion of the Tenth All Sokol Slet, invite Mr. and Mrs. Henry Jansen to a garden reception at the Prague parliamentary buildings on July 7 between 5 and 7 o'clock in the afternoon." Five gymnasts of the St. Paul Sokols attended from the northern district of the American Sokol union: Henry Jansen, physical director, Anna Delastrada, Georgiana Smolik, Emily Cikanek, and Mildred Posavad.





Josef Mestenhauser

An idea they could not kill

By Honorary Czech Consul, Dr. Josef Mestenhauser

It is hard to believe that Sokol Minnesota is 125 years old. It is more than an organization, more than physical fitness and more than brotherhood of people. Above all it is an idea that has survived all the dramatic changes of this and the past century, despite the fact that it was subjected to three different efforts to annihilate it. As we celebrate this special anniversary, it is indeed time for a personal reflection as well as reflection on the times past.

I have been member of Sokol since the age of six, and remained Sokol – even if at times in spirit only – all these years. I joined as “žák” (pupils) and then moved to becoming a “dorostenec” (adolescents). Of all the memories I have about growing up in the then Czechoslovakia, being a Sokol and participating in all its activities is the highlight of my early life. We were very active with gymnastics all year long, and in winter there was a special “ski section” of Sokol to which I belonged. We went all over the country to compete in various athletic events and competitions. I was pretty good at it in several disciplines, and in fact won several national titles for the age group, one of which was a 100 meter sprint that I managed in 9.9 seconds, and once I was a member of a winning three-member relay cross-country 10 kilometers race. But Sokol was not just an organization for physical fitness – though many people mistook it for that.

In reflecting on this anniversary, I urge people to think about Sokol as being several different things so that we use several frames of reference, all of which combined create a picture larger than the sum total of individual members. One frame, especially dear to me, is a deep conviction in democracy that has compelled me to escape from the communist rule and settle in this country where we can practice what Tyrš has taught us. In fact, as Sokol members, we often started our “cvičení” (exercises) with brief lectures and discussions about the intellectual foundations of this organization. This was one of the few organized efforts to teach people critical thinking. I recall to this date the idea that I adopted for myself and that Tyrš advocated, namely an open and critical perspective, a doubting spirit, and never ending process of thinking. He advocated constant renewal; never to be satisfied with things we have and do, but to keep going forward. Without that we would stand still while others around us keep going.

My father was Sokol possibly from the time when he returned from World War I. In fact we have just recently discovered an obscure piece of luggage that he hid in somebody’s barn under the hay. Apparently that was the same luggage that he hid from the Nazis as well. In it were books by Masaryk, Čapek, Medek (the famous five volume novel about the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia) – and his Sokol identification card showing that his membership dues were paid.



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We welcome your contributions to the Slovo. We especially invite news about upcoming events, articles about Sokol members, essays about Czech and Slovak cultural heritage, and accounts of travel in the Homeland, as well as photos and artwork to illustrate your stories.

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Inquiries:

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota SLOVO

5604 Morgan Ave So.

Minneapolis, MN 55419

or email inquiries to publicrelations@sokolmn.org



Another frame of reference is the context in which Sokol started, functioned, and suffered: some of the most severe test of survival. Returning to the title I chose for this reflection, Sokol was subjected to efforts at complete elimination three times, the last time the worst and most intensive effort by the communists. It is fitting then – as we celebrate Sokol Minnesota’s birth, to relate it to two other anniversaries: One is the birthday of Tomáš G. Masaryk, and the other is the infamous communist coup in February 25th 1948. These are related in both positive and negative ways. Sokol is completely identified with Masaryk and his ideals. Sokol became a leading force of resistance to the Hapsburg rule, and Sokol was the leading spirit of the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia. Sokol played a leading role in the events immediately following World War I when it, in effect, assured a peaceful transition for the newly created Czechoslovak Republic. And Sokol was the leading spirit opposing the Nazis. Sokol was also the idea that constantly troubled the communist regime, until they finally dismembered the organization, nationalized its properties, arrested many of its leaders and in fact sabotaged for several years its effort to resume functioning after 1989.



On March 15, 1939, a group of Sokols led a small troop of dorestenců (young adolescents) to a large mass demonstration opposing the Nazi annexation of what was left of Czechoslovakia, installing the “Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia”. As a sign of these times, the group was reported to the German authorities. Josef Mestenhauer is second from the left.

When we think of the many dramatic and traumatic changes that occurred during these 125 years, it is indeed a wonder that the organization and its spiritual and intellectual tradition survived. It is because Sokol is more than physical fitness – so we should re-commit ourselves to the entire idea and make it grow even more and more deeply.

What was said:

“Through the physical culture and with the development of the body, we are laying the foundations to the education of mind.” Dr. Miroslav Tyrš , Our Task, Aim and Goal, p. 53.



An undated print of Dr. Miroslav Tyrš from the Sokol archives. Photo credit: Tiskem a Nařkladem J. Otty v. Praze. Veřkerá Práva vyhrazena. Vyňato ze “Zlaté Prahy”

“Vestigia null retrosum –No footsteps backward!... The word “Sokol” literally translated means falcon, the bird, symbol of swiftness, activity and freedom!“ Dr. J Rudiř Jiřinský, translation, *Our Task, Aim and Goal*, Preface, p. 9)

Oliver Towne wrote (October 22, 1959, *St. Paul Pioneer Press/Dispatch*: “There at the triangle of Western and W. Seventh, the men and women who go by Czechoslovakian names will gather again to salute their ancestry in that stretch of the city from Smith Avenue west beyond Randolph—called Bohemia until it began to fade with the second and third generations... The first settlers came just after 1858... Laborers, carpenters, sailors... the bulk divided their labors between the Schmidt brewery and the Omaha railroad shops.. They built two room cottages with summer kitchens at the back and white picket fences... and on Sundays gathered in Schade’s park, marching from the C.S.P.S. hall, St. Stanislaus Catholic Church... and the Protestant church...in sedate fashion. But by nightfall on those hot afternoons the scene was one of gaiety and many a viertel of beer had been tapped... And feet were worn from dancing and voices harsh from singing and fingers weary from playing the music.”

“The large room on the third floor, added in 1917, contains a meeting room, museum and library. Formerly, during business meetings, Sokol officers presided from the heavy carved chairs and marble-topped tables which are museum pieces today. A peephole in the door attests to the close fraternity for the early years. Sokol, which means falcon, began as a sort of underground society during the 400-year Hapsburg reign of Czechoslovakia that threatened not only civil liberties, but the country’s heritage, traditions and language. Sokol’s original purpose was to promote physical fitness while looking forward to the day of deliverance. We still emphasize physical fitness, but the focus has been enlarged to the mental and cultural advancement of our members.” President Norm Sladek, *St. Paul Pioneer Press/Dispatch*, December 3, 1982, page 2B.



Sokol 125

One hundred
and twenty
five years
of joy!

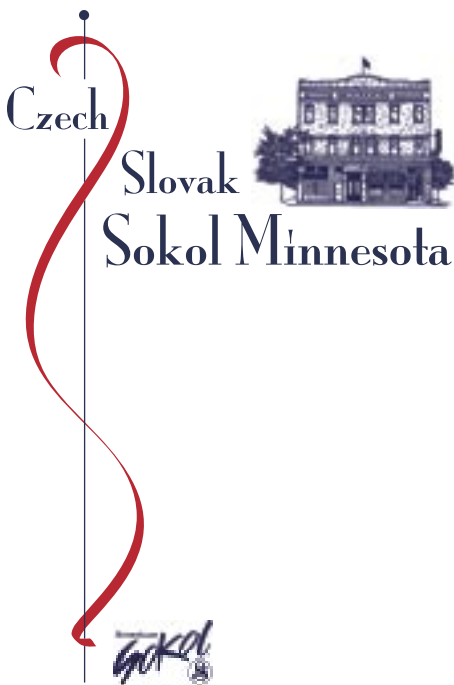
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See page 7 for details



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