

Czech

Slovak

Sokol Minnesota



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

SLOVO

April 2009 vol. 32 no. 4

Upcoming Events

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Spring Breakfast, Bake & Craft Sale Sunday, April 5

Our Spring Breakfast on Palm Sunday, April 5, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., serves French toast and all-you-can-eat pancakes, plus a fruit cup, sausage, juice, milk, and coffee. \$6, adults; \$4, child under 9; \$15, family of four. Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join you. No reservations are needed.

The Bake Sale features lamb cakes and *Paska*, the traditional Czech Easter bread, as well as other favorite breads, koláče, cakes, and pastries for your Easter table. Filled Easter Baskets for children and adults, as well as potted plants, are available. New this spring is the Craft Sale, with a wide array of handmade items for sale.

Please see Spring Breakfast, page 11

Garage Sale Huge Treasure Hunt Thursday & Friday, April 16-17

The best thing about a garage sale is that treasures abound and a few must-haves call your name, all at bargain prices. What is someone else's castoff easily becomes your newest prized possession. Go Green by re-purposing your unused things at the Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Garage Sale, April 16–17. Stay Green by giving new life to someone else's discards. Supporting our Sokol unit is definitely Green.

At past Sokol garage sales, novel, practical, and sentimental items have been acquired by excited new owners. These have included a leather-bound copy of *1892 Complete Pronouncing Dictionary of the English and Bohemian Languages*, a voodoo doll that became a great office conversation piece (as well as very therapeutic).

Please see Garage Sale, page 11

THURSDAY
12Noon - 7pm

FRIDAY
10am - 5pm

Second floor of the
Historic CSPS
Sokol Hall
383 Michigan St.
St Paul MN

To volunteer
or drop off
donations
Wed. April 15
10am-5pm
Call: Doris
952.881.6715

**PUBLIC
WELCOME**



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Sokol Minnesota
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President Komentář/President's Note

By Joe Landsberger

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings brothers and sisters

This month we review the work of the Finance Committee.

Under the expertise of Joyce Tesarek, its Chair, along with Steve Shimer, Treasurer; Jeanette Pafko, Recording Secretary; Charitable Gambling Manager Ken Wyberg, and Dennis Cahill, Assistant Treasurer our financial health and stewardship has greatly benefitted from their work. At both the February Board of Directors and Membership meetings, in collaboration with our treasurer Steve, Joyce presented a beautifully illustrated summary of 2008, a very productive year in these challenging times.

Income is keeping pace with our expenses! We received donations of about \$23,000 (one third to general fund and two thirds to the building fund) and \$13,000 from grants. Special recognition goes to the leadership and example of the 2008 Board of Directors who donated over \$8,000 to the building fund last year! Thank you all! Another 20%-plus of income is from our event rentals, thanks to Ken Wyberg, as well as from our Glockenspiel lease. Tuition and fees from education and gymnastics classes bring in another 10%, and our dinners, dances and other sales total almost 33% of needed income. You see, when we ask if you can help serve a dinner, we are really asking if you can support Sokol!

Where does all the money go? Our annual expenses are about \$150,000. The largest expense, 58% of our annual budget is for 383 Michigan! Our three story building is not just historic; it is also old, dating from 1887. This means that the historic boilers, pipes, bricks etc. need constant attention. Repairs and maintenance account for 24%, and utilities, 17%. Our property taxes are over \$22,000 alone, or 14% of the annual budget.

Staffing, whether for gymnastic instructors, education teachers or professional services, amounts to 13.5% of our budget. These also include our custodian, Tom Murphy, who has served us for twenty years! Copying and mailing our newsletter, the *Slovo*, and other promotional publications and communications totals about 14%. Income from membership goes directly to our dues to American Sokol and the Western District, and is at about 8%, with miscellaneous expenses the rest.

The Fund Raising Task Force of the Finance Committee has been busy! Joyce Tesarek chairs, with a supporting cast of Jeanette Pafko, Mary Cahill, Marit Lee Kucera, Judy Aubrecht, Jay Fonkert, Cheryl Nelson, Joe Mestenhauser, and myself. 2008 realized grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, City of St. Paul Cultural STAR Program, Minnesota Historical Society, and the Czech Government.

The Charitable Gambling Board follows special rules established by the State of Minnesota. Recently income has dramatically decreased for a variety of economic reasons, but the diligent work continues: Ken Wyberg, Gambling Manager; Kent Hinshaw, Corresponding Secretary; Miro Verner, Financial Secretary, Al Imbrone, Bob Vanyo, and Lloyd Krochak.

We cannot thank enough all those mentioned above. So also, we must you, our brothers and sisters, who volunteer and contribute to making Sokol a viable organization, providing fitness and community for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural, and social programs. – *Nazdar!*



Finance and fund raising are critical to Sokol Minnesota.

If you would like more information on the work of the above committee and task forces, please contact Joyce Tesarek, Finance Committee Chair, joycedvm@aol.com or 612 - 822 - 6147. She can also advise on donation strategies, including legacy bequests to continue the work of Sokol Minnesota.



Ryan Beck-Buysse

Sokol April Membership Meeting Beer sampling/discussion



Join us for our monthly membership meeting Friday, April 24 at 7:00 p.m. Meeting begins with the anthems, new member voting/welcoming, and a discussion on Czech, German, and Belgian beers! We'll talk about the characteristics of these different styles and how each is made. Bring your tasting glass as we will be sampling beer from each region! Hosted by Ryan Beck-Buysse - home brewer, certified beer judge, and friend of Sokol. We'll even learn a Czech beer-drinking song led by Georgiana Dolejsi!

Membership Committee

by Norm Petrik, Membership Director

At the February 27 Membership Meeting, five new members were accepted: Margarita Mac and Anthony Vanghese from Minneapolis expressed interest in gymnastics, dances and festivals and have three children ages 8, 11 and 14. Jenny Thompson of St. Paul expressed interest in gymnastics, cooking classes, dances and dinners, and has one child, age 9. Zoe St Mane is interested in gymnastics and has a 5 year old child. Kathryn Richardson, daughter of long time member Frank Loss, expressed interest in cooking and history. Kathryn was present at the meeting and was inducted into Sokol, and after installation was given the welcome hug by Georgiana Dolejsi. Welcome all you new Sokol members, you are welcome to come to our monthly membership meetings at 7 p.m. on the 4th Friday of the month.

Finance Committee (Thank you for your donations!)

by Jeanette Pafko, Finance Recording Secretary

Sokol acknowledges all donations as they are received. They are listed in two categories, Building Fund and General Operating Fund although programs within each are not listed. Amounts are now grouped in five categories: under \$100, \$100-\$499, \$500-999, \$1000-\$4999, and \$5000+.

Building Fund (Matching our grant requirements): **General Fund (for general operations and programming)**

\$100-\$499: Gerald & Gillian Mashek;
To \$100: Frank Petruska, Joann Parvey

To \$100: Georgiana Dolejsi, Joann Parvey

Trustee Committee

by Terry Shima, Trustee Recording Secretary

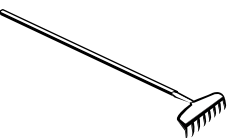
A fire inspection of the hall was conducted by the City of St. Paul in early January. Sokol only had some minor issues. The biggest of these was installing a type K fire extinguisher in the kitchen and replacing the existing fire extinguishers in the hall with ABC extinguishers when they come due for inspection. Bids are being taken by the trustees on removing the remaining asbestos in the basement. A search for a permanent solution to the condensation problem in the second floor storage area continues as water problems have appeared again. The BOT has scheduled a Spring cleanup day at the hall for Saturday, April 18th, at 9 AM. All Sokol members are welcome!

It's Spring! It's time to clean our home!

Our Sokol Board of Trustees has planned a productive morning for Saturday, April 18, 2009.

All members, family and friends are invited to meet at the hall from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon for the annual Spring Clean Up Day. With many areas to care for, we'll polish and organize throughout the hall. If the weather is pleasant, outdoor activities, including raking, will also take place.

This is a great chance to interact with Sokol members and to help get the hall ready for spring. We hope that you will join in the fun! (and enjoy the treats for workers!)



Recipes from the Czech and Slovak Cookbook

by Phyllis Vosejпка and Cinnamon Whaley

Černá Kuba

1 lb box pearl barley	1 large onion, sliced or diced	1 rounded tbsp dry leaf marjoram (or as desired)
1 tsp salt	3 garlic buds, minced	1/4 to 1/2 lb butter
1 large handful dry mushrooms according to taste (fresh or canned can be used)	Salt and pepper to taste	



Cook barley with salt until soft, not mushy. Rinse with hot water. In sauce pan, combine mushrooms, onion, and garlic with 1 to 1 1/2 cups water. Bring to boil, and simmer about 10 minutes, covered. Strain but reserve broth. Combine mushroom mixture, barley, marjoram, pepper and just enough broth so mixture is thin but not watery. Pour over the melted butter. Place into two two-quart casserole dishes. Bake at 350 for about 1 hour, uncovered.

Černá Kuba – A Great Mushroom Lovers Sidedish

At the last membership meeting it was suggested that I try making Kuba. Kuba is a dish usually found at Christmas time but Chuck Draheim said that his family serves it at most holidays. With Easter coming up I thought I'd try making this side dish and possibly add it to my Easter line up. The recipe can be found on Page 192 of the Sokol Cookbook (second edition).

I called Lund's to be sure they had pearl barley before going out and was surprised to find it was Quaker brand! Having not cooked with barley before, I thought it would be more exotic! Everything in this recipe is very straight forward. I added fresh thyme rather than marjoram and halved the recipe. After reading that I'd need two casserole dishes, I knew that the original recipe would be too much for my two person household. A whole onion is too much for Ryan and myself, so I halved that as well. I do love mushrooms though and opted to keep the "large handful" the recipe calls for, and purchased one ounce of dried Portabella and one ounce of dried Shiitake mushrooms. Both rehydrate to eight ounces.

Due to the size of the dried mushrooms, I needed to add additional water to my mushroom mixture along the way and only had an ounce of left over broth at the end. When combining the barley and the mushroom mixture I also added a few ounces of beef broth that I had on hand. I couldn't bring myself to use the required amount of butter and reduced this to a half stick.

The barley and the mushrooms create a strong earthy flavor and the amount of butter I used complements it just perfectly. Georgiana and Chuck were telling me about the presence of the garlic in their experiences but I added an extra clove and the garlic still doesn't come through as strongly as I expected. Also, I could not detect the onion at all; the barley and mushrooms really steal the show. I was surprised by the simplicity of the ingredients as I started cooking but the flavors really come together and I will be serving this at Easter! Any mushroom lover should give this recipe a try!

Cooking opportunities: If you're interested in purchasing the Sokol Cookbook, they are \$15 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling. We ship twice per month: Check to Sokol Minnesota, memo cookbook. Addressed Sokol Minnesota attention gift shop, 383 Michigan Street, St. Paul MN 55102.

Czech Crystal Bracelet Class

Instructor Jules Mohr will offer a class on creating Czech Crystal Bracelets on Tuesday, May 5 7:00-8:30, p.m. in the first floor classroom of the CSPPS Sokol Hall, 383 Michigan Street. Class registration and fee is \$10.00 (Sokol Members); \$15.00 (Non-Members) payable by check to Sokol Minnesota. Materials fee: \$35.00 per bracelet that includes jewelry-grade silver wire and Czech crystal beads. Crystal color choices are blue, purple, green or red. The materials fee is paid to the instructor at class. If you have a non-grooved flat, chain or round-nosed jewelry pliers, please bring them.

You will leave class with a quality piece of jewelry, and Jules may also have extra kits, companion kits and some of her designs for purchase. To register for this exciting class you may pick-up registration at the hall or at our Web site sokolmn.org. Please register as soon as possible so you won't miss your chance! Maximum of 10 students per class. Questions please call Jean Verner @651-210-0401

At the (Czech-Slovak) Movies

by Cinnamon Whaley

Divided We Fall (2001) Rated PG-13

Divided We Fall won 15 awards and was nominated for an additional three, including an Oscar. The movie opens by giving us glimpses into Czechoslovakia in 1937, 1939, 1941 and is told through 1943 through 1945. These glimpses introduce a Jewish family, a couple who cannot have children, Josef and Marie, and Horst, a man who while friendly with these folk in the beginning clips, we see taking the Nazi side from 1939 forward. The Jewish family is sent to a camp in 1943 but the son, David, escapes and returns to his home town and Josef and Marie take him in, knowing it could mean their own death. They get a fright from a child knocking on the door but it reminds them how serious the situation is. Horst offers Josef a job with the Nazis and he accepts in order to keep them out of his house and to keep himself outside their suspicion. Horst is overly attentive of Marie and out of vengeance when she rejects him, Horst tries to move a Nazi collaborator in to Josef and Marie's house. Marie announces she is pregnant in order to keep this from happening. The problem is that they've never been able to conceive but if the Nazis find out she's lying, they will be killed.

Through the film there are many close calls and even hints of comedy - to put David in the hidden pantry they must figure out what to do with the salt-cured pig they'd been hiding, as hoarding meat is not allowed. Humanity and lack thereof is found again and again, sometimes in surprising places.



Refrain

Song of the Month *Balalajko, zpívej*
Georgiana Dolejsi

Balalajko, zpívej

Balalajko, zpívej,
Tu melodii ze všech nejsladší
Tu kterou na světě mám nejradší
Kterou si dávám hrát

Balalajko, spívej,
At' smutek můj se v radost promění
At' moje srdce žije v domnění
Že někdo má mě rád
Že jednou přijde čas
Když štěstí me se vrátí zas
A přivede me někoho
kdo snad chce lásku svou mi dát

Balalajko, spívej,
At' smutek můj se v radost promění
At' moje srdce žije v domnění
Že někdo má mě rád

At the Balalaika
Where there is magic in the sparkling wine
And mellow music in the candles shine
I have a rendezvous

At the Balalaika
Who knows what ecstasy
tonight may bring,
What lovely melody my heart
may sing
Before the night is through
I hear a violin
A haunting gypsy violin
And when it sighs its strangely
tender song
I know that I belong

At the Balalaika
Oh let me linger there till break
of day, Where hearts are young
and Balalaikas play
I have a rendezvous!



The Sokol Czech Language Classes by Pam Langworthy and Richard Sargent

Pam Langworthy: My first trip to the Czech Republic in 2002 left me wanting to learn the language my grandparents had spoken but had never taught me. In fact, I remember that as a child I heard my family members having a great time telling stories in Czech and laughing and myself not having any idea what all the fun was. I remember my thrill in 2002 reading the word *pečivo* (baked goods) on a stop at a train station in Plzeň and suddenly being transported in my mind back to my grandparents' kitchen and my grandmother giving us *pečivo*, homemade *švestkový koláč* (plum coffee cake) to take home. Hearing our tour guides speak Czech was like going back to my childhood.

After I returned, my friend Louise Cameron, told me about Sokol and suggested I call Louise Wessinger about taking the language classes. This is my seventh year of classes at Sokol, and I love it. It is so much fun to get to know people who also had grandparents who spoke Czech and made the same delicious food, but didn't teach their grandchildren the language. I've met lots of interesting folks with other connections to our culture as well, who enjoy tackling a challenging language. In seven years, I have had six different native speaking teachers, all of whom have been excellent. Now we are so fortunate to have Jitka Sebek for our second year as she brings so much knowledge and enthusiasm. Attending the summer language program in Dobruška this year was a fantastic culmination to my years of study. There were 72 students, aged 18 to 76, from 26 countries all over the world who were part Czech or who were involved in the Czech culture and wanted to improve their Czech. We were treated royally and were taken on excursions all over the area when we weren't in class. What a fabulous experience making friends, learning more about our culture, and taking pride in our shared heritage.

Additional benefits to learning Czech include being able to pass down to my grandchildren their Czech culture through conversation, books, and songs. As a psychologist, I know that children learn language easily and doing so enhances their brain development and promotes flexibility in thinking. Learning new things, such as a language, is also good for older people to help the brain reduce the effects of aging, as described by Norman Soidge, M.D. in his book *The Brain that Changes Itself*. I've been having such a great time in Sokol's Czech language program that my partner Richard Sargent decided to start in the beginners' class this year.

Richard Sargent: I started the beginning Czech language class this year taught by Jakub Dajc. I wanted to learn the words to the great songs we dance to in Czech dancing, and I wanted to understand what Pam was saying to her friends at Sokol. But most of all, I find learning a language challenging and fun. Even though I am not Czech in heritage, I find the culture and history of the Czech Republic fascinating, and learning the language is an important part of coming to understanding the Czech People. Jakub brings skill and enthusiasm to teaching. He balances the hard parts such as grammar with the fun parts such as learning the words for food and expressions that reveal the Czech attitude toward life. Several of my fellow students have visited the Czech Republic this year and used the expressions we have been learning in class, inspiring me to want to do the same.



The Wednesday evening Beginning Czech class, l-r, Christy Banks, Pam Snopl, Lori Vosejпка, Jakob Dajc (the teacher), and Richard Sargent. Jakob also teaches the Monday's class.

Dobruška by Paula Pojar Vukonich

Editor's note: For the past several years, Sokol Minnesota members have attended this program.

Last summer, 2008, I was one of 70 persons from 29 nations attending the Czech Language Course in Dobruška--created by Charles University after the fall of communism for people of Czech descent living in other countries. I enjoyed many classes, outings, and activities during my month-long stay, also attended by Pam Langworthy of our unit.

After a 3½ hour ride from Prague, past small red-tile roofed villages bursting with flowers, and up into the gentle foothills of the Orlické hory Mountains, we arrived in the town of Dobruška. There was an old town hall and tower in the center of a cobbled square surrounded by colorful shops. A couple blocks away was the three-story university building. Our accommodations were very nice, luxurious even. We were divided into seven classes according to ability. I was in *Žlutý* (yellow), the beginner class. The first night we had a formal introductory dinner, and I learned that in the entire school, only one teacher, one secretary, and about half the students spoke English. All of the notices and most lectures were in Czech. We were immersed!

Please see Dobruška, page 9

A Day in the Life of a Sokol Slovak Language Student

by Cheryl Michalko Nelson

Ahoj! Moja volam je Cheryl, a studujem slovincinu. I was asked to write an article describing the day in a life of a Slovak language student at Sokol. Sokol has a great Slovak language class that is available on Thursday evenings. It is a relatively new addition to the education program, and it's fabulous!

My experiences as a Slovak student are not that different from the others in the class. You'll find that all of the students are balancing time with their family and friends, involved in work and/or retiree volunteer commitments and other life events while studying a language. I think that I can speak for our entire class in saying that we all do the best we can to learn a little more each week. The class is tailored to the busy student's life thanks to the efforts of our teacher, Barbora Carlson.

Barbora (or Barborka) is originally from Banska Bystrica, Slovakia. She met and married an American, and now lives in the metro area with her young family. Barbora is a teacher by profession, speaks Slovak, English and Italian, and leads a very enjoyable and organized class. She gives us a great structure and curriculum to learn the language, but also understands that her students are balancing other commitments. The class is a lot of fun, and by the end of each session, the students feel like they are moving forward in the learning process.

So, what's it like learning Slovak? We have several books as our basis for the lessons. There are also CDs - which help you learn Slovak pronunciation. Each week Barbara assigns a lesson. The lesson usually includes some vocabulary, dialogue and a little homework. We meet as a class to learn and review the lesson.

In terms of a typical day as a Slovak student, I have found that trying to integrate the language into my busy day does help the process. At work, I will listen to my Slovak CDs as background. (The CDs can be digitized on your MP3 player or IPOD for easier transport). Having the lessons playing over and over seems to help me retain the vocabulary. I also try to say (or think about saying) sentences in Slovak. While I don't always succeed, it keeps the language fresh in my mind.

It's easy to feel that there's not enough time or it's too hard to learn a language; but in reality, if you focus on the lesson, and carve out a little time each day or part of your week, the effort pays off! The homework is challenging, but not too time-consuming - so it will easily fit into those few quiet times that exist in the week. The other students in my class speak of similar experiences. Slovak language can fit nicely as a part of the daily or weekly activities.

If you join us on Thursday nights, you'll find a small but dedicated class that shares your interest and passion for Slovak language and culture. The students are in different life stages, have some connection with the country, and juggle various commitments - but we all share an enthusiasm and commitment to learning the Slovak language. We hope to see you in Slovak class on Thursday evening.



Don Pafko to present on Minneapolis Bohemian Flats Slovak community.

The Bohemian Flats Slovak Community

by Ginger Simek, President, Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International

Don Pafko, past Sokol President, will present on the Bohemian Flats Slovak Community on Saturday, April 25 as part of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) Quarterly Meeting. This Slovak ethnic community had its beginnings in the 1870's in Minneapolis, just below the present day site of the West Bank of the University of Minnesota. Originally known as the "Swedish Flats", the area extended from the Washington Avenue Bridge upstream to the Great Northern Railroad Bridge and changed its name to the "Bohemian Flats" in 1918. The Flats remained the major concentration of Slovaks in the Twin Cities until approximately 1930.

Katarina Vilimova will also be presenting 36 student essays written by Slovak upper school students on themes as *Struggles to Survive*, *Ravages of War*, and *Under Communism for 40 Years*. Katarina has translated some in their entirety, and summarized the rest. Slovak Essays booklets will be distributed to attendees while supplies last.

CGSI is located at 1185 N. Concord Street, South St. Paul (first floor auditorium), and accessible by the 71B Bus Line. Free parking available. Registration starts at 12:30 and the program begins at 1:00. Suggested donation \$5 for members, \$8 for non-members. Genealogical resources will also be available for sale.



Slovak Class: Cheryl Michalko Nelson, Jason Abram, Jerry Parupsky, Richard Guttman with teacher, Barbora Carlson



Don and Jeanette Pafko honored.

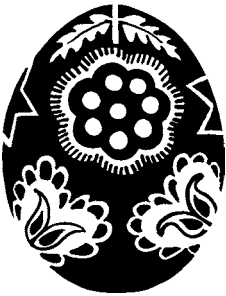
News of our Sokol Unit

Pafkos honored for service to the IHRC

Don and Jeanette Pafko received the Keystone Award from the Immigration History Research Center for their long-time support of the Center. The Keystone Award is the highest recognition for the IHRC and is reserved for supporters whose work has been a foundation in the IHRC's work to preserve and promote immigration history. In 2009, Don and Jeannette were among four people singled out elevating their commitment to their own communities into a broad support for preserving and creating access to the historical materials of diverse immigrant groups.

Dolejsi sings through 91

Our Senior Singers gathered as usual Tuesday morning March 10 to sing Czech and Slovak folk songs with an added English addition: Happy Birthday! They celebrated Georgiana Dolejsi's 91st birthday. l-r: Kent Hinshaw, Bob Kostichka, Marlene Hinshaw, Georgiana, Norm Petrik, Val Kuisle, Bob Vanyo, John Cicha, Charlotte Januschka, Rudy Schovanec, and Phyllis Vosejпка.



Vosejпка visits the Czech Egg Lady

Phyllis Vosejпка writes that on a recent visit to her Michigan family she had the pleasure of meeting Kepka Belton, the "Czech Egg Lady". Belton is the creator of Czech-style Easter eggs or *kraslice*, and the time spent with her was too brief. *Kraslice* are multi-colored with intricate patterns that each relate a story through its symbols: rake interprets spring, a butterfly reincarnation or resurrection. Red stands for pride, yellow prosperity. Blue is favored by Moravians. Eggs are not painted, but rather the product of a wax and dye method, a process similar to that of dying *batik* cloth.

As a child in Kansas, Belton was left in the care of her maternal grandmother, who taught her the rudiments of Czech traditional artistic design, including needlework and decorative painting. She also makes dolls from branches, and dresses them in a lovely manner. She related how as a child they picked feathers from the quills for quilts. They would put the feathers under a bowl and when it lifted it was full, they were deposited in a cloth sack. When Phyllis shared the story with fellow singer John Cicha, he related how his seven siblings similarly picked feathers, and each then received a featherstick from their mother.

SOKOL Event Volunteer Opportunities

Please call chairs to volunteer and join in supporting our hall and programs

Spring Breakfast, Bake and Craft Sale

Chairs: Louise Wessinger (651-452-6240), Doreen McKenney (952-941-0426), Ed Hamernik (763-571-6091) April 4, Saturday from 9 a.m. – noon: Drop off for bake sale, baking koláče and Easter lamb cakes; afternoon: set up tables. April 5, Sunday 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.: Serve spring breakfast, assist with bake sale; afternoon: clean up

Garage Sale

Chairs: Doris McKenney (952-881-6715), Dorothy Sladek (507-645-4793) April 14, Tuesday evening: Set up tables; April 15, Wednesday 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.: garage sale set-up; April 16, Thursday, 9 – noon: set up; staff sale: noon – 7 p.m.; April 17, Friday staff sale: 10 – 5; Clean up from 3:30.

Festival of Nations, April 30-May 3 (free entry provided!)

General Chair: Jean Hall (763-753-4104); Café Chairs: Joyce Tesarek (612-822-6147) and Mary Cahill (651-738-9470); Bazaar Chair: Doreen McKenney (952-941-0426); Culture Exhibit Chair: Jakub Dajc (612-703-1240). Call for the opportunity that suits you!



Dobruška continued from page 6

The next day we hiked through Adršpašské skalní, a park with fascinating sandstone rock formations, and visited a monastery in Broumov with a library of ancient hand-scribed books. Sunday, after six hours of class, we took a walking tour of Dobruška, climbed the town hall tower, saw a local museum, and attended a rock concert on the town square--plus ate a lot of dumplings. Over the next three days we had ten more hours of class, and went on a 14-hour sightseeing tour to a UNESCO historic site, Kunětická hora, with 13th century castle ruins undergoing restoration and archeological exploration. Then we stopped at the *pernický* (gingerbread) museum, and the Litomyšl Castle, famous for the faux stone plaster relief work that simulates decorative stone blocks. No two are the same! From there we went to the home of Czech composer, Smetana. On July 31, the mayor, two senators, and officials from the Ministry of Education and Charles University came for a formal reception. They welcomed us with speeches and a nice musical program, and in turn we sang two Czech songs for them. Everyone welcomed us like returning family.



Dobruška Town Square

Saturday we went up in the Orlické hory or Eagle Mountains. We stopped at a craft fair in Deštné, a village famous for its glass blowing and special green glass. It was like a postcard, with Heidi-like houses tucked into the valleys and flowers everywhere. We saw Masaryk's mountain cottage and hiked on a mountain trail. Blueberry bushes were thick along the trail, so my roommate and I gobbled berries as we walked, returning with blue hands and mouths. After Sunday morning class, we went to a large fair in Opočno where we enjoyed many local artisans in native dress making and selling traditional crafts.



Grandmother's house, in *Babiččino údolí*

The high point of a trip to Prague was our visit to the Karolinum, the inner sanctum of Charles University where private rooms were opened especially for our class--even though they are never open to the public. At Grandmother's Valley, *Babiččino údolí*, the setting of the beloved Czech book *Babička*, we hiked along a clear stream, toured an old mill, saw grandmother's house, and continued to the village of Žernov. Along the way were fields of poppies drying in the sun, and fruit trees--apples, pears, and purple plums. In Žernov we had an outdoor BBQ at Capek's restaurant, then sang and danced until dark. No rest for the revelers; we were up early for classes, and later we walked to the ribbon factory outside town, to practice our Czech buying beautiful embroidered ribbon. We seemed to be spending half the time studying Czech and the other half traveling around the country.

At Janské Lázně, a spa town and ski area in the Krkonoše mountains, we rode a gondola to the mountain top for fabulous views of the Czech Republic. The next point of interest was Josefov, a military town near the Polish border where we walked through a 250-year-old underground brick fortress. One day, Prague TV came to do a story on the Dobruška class--in my classroom. I was on TV speaking Czech! The next day we went to Liberec to see the Botanical Gardens. At an outdoor café, I ordered coffee in what I thought was flawless Czech. The lady smiled and asked if I was from Dobruška. How did she know? Either because my Czech was so bad, or she saw me on TV. Everyone had quite a laugh. After three weeks of Czech lessons, I went to the kitchen one morning to ask for a bowl and almost asked for a mouse. In Podbřezí, we attended an Opočenka Koncert; it was wonderful listening to traditional Czech music beside a swiftly flowing river, underneath a castle on a cliff. One afternoon we visited the Náhod Pivovar (brewery) for a tour and free beer--all you could drink.

On Language Independence Day we had to use what we'd learned. We were divided into groups, given 20 questions in Czech and the name of a small town nearby. This involved translating the questions, finding bus schedules, interpreting them, getting to the town, asking questions, finding the mayor and taking photos, plus getting back. Then we had to present a program on our town--in Czech, of course. Our final outing was to Nové Město, the most beautiful and opulent castle so far, with spectacular formal gardens. On our last day of class, we had morning lessons then a graduation reception with officials from Prague and Dobruška. The next morning, we said sad good byes. We were given sack lunches and many hugs from the staff before we set off for our homes all over the world, forever bonded in our common heritage.



Spring Breakfast, continued from page 1

Sokol members and friends can help on Saturday, April 4, starting at 9 a.m., to bake and to decorate lamb cakes and other Easter treats. Sokol members who have baked goods, filled baskets, and potted plants for the Bake Sale should bring them to the hall on Saturday morning, 9 a.m.- noon. You also can help on Palm Sunday with the breakfast or in the sales booths.

To volunteer, call Chairs Louise Wessinger (651-452-6240), Doreen McKenney (952-941-0426), or Ed Hamernik (763-571-6091). To reserve a craft table for \$25, call Louise or contact: events@sokolmn.org

Garage Sale, continued from page 1

Past buyers have found Czech music records from the old country, vintage shot glasses from Slovakia, home-made aprons from the '40's, and a brand new winter wool coat in the right size and favorite color (aubergine).

Members and neighbors alike come for the huge selection of gently-used clothing, especially for babies and children, plus toys and household items, from flower vases to linens and crockpots. There are always stacks of great books, just right for your summer reading. You will find the better pieces of jewelry, collectibles, and antiques arranged on a special table.

Take this opportunity to do some early spring-cleaning of your closets and basement; donate your old, but good stuff to Sokol Minnesota. We will take it all, except large furniture, mattresses, electronics, skis, and bicycles.

Drop off early at CSPS hall or bring the things from your house that need new homes on Wednesday, April 15, 10-5. Sale is Thursday, April 16, noon to 7 p.m.; Friday, April 17, 10-5. The \$3/bag sale starts at 1 p.m. on Friday. Everything that can be shoved into a grocery bag is only Three Dollars!! Such a deal!

Questions or to volunteer, call Doris at 952-881-6715 or Dorothy at 507-645-4793.

Sokol MN Hosts Western District Semi Annual Meeting March 7 and 8, 2009

by Mary Cahill

Representatives from sister Sokol Units Cedar Rapids, Omaha and South Omaha met at the CSPS Hall to discuss business related to the upcoming Western District gymnastics competition, April 25, at Sokol Cedar Rapids, as well as at the American Sokol International Sport and Cultural Festival, June 23-28 at Fort Worth.

Western District Financial Director, Jolene Dalton, also provided an update on American Sokol's (AS) Strategic Plan Task Force and their efforts to revitalize Sokol. The first phase of this task force's work has been sent to Units on a DVD and contains the four core programs: fitness, cultural, educational, and social programming. Jolene stressed the importance of bringing this information to the Unit's membership, and working with the ideas and guidance provided by AS to promote the visibility of Sokol, build Unit membership, and increase the variety and quality of programming offered by each Unit. The next two topical areas will be organizational development and communication. Watch for updates in the Slovo on how AS's Strategic Plan is being implemented by Sokol MN.

Sokol Cedar Rapids has purchased a building and plans to start gym classes at the location March 10. The long term status of their old building, severely damaged by last summer's flooding, is still unknown. They are very enthusiastic about their new quarters and expanding their Sokol programs and hosting the April competition.

A Look Back - Notes from the Junior Sokol Minutes

Between 1926 and 1933 the Junior Sokol young women's group met and recorded their minutes in a small black notebook with beautiful scrolling handwriting. Their minutes have been passed into the Sokol Historical Files. This window into their dedication and desire to discover new things is a gentle reminder of our Sokol roots and purpose.

We suggested that we would have a skating party which will be held at the St Clair Playgrounds on Jan 15 at 5:30. After Skating we are to go to the C.S.P.S. hall to have lunch. We will decide the next week what to bring. After lunch we are all to pitch in and get to work. Catherine G and Mary H wash dishes, Mary G, Mildred B and Lucille wipe dishes, Georgiana and Florence - kitchen help, Martha and Marcella set the table, and Beatrice and Mary M fix chairs and tables.

January, 1930 President, Marcella Numberg

Our president explained to us that Mr. Verner had spoken to her about our club singing and learning Bohemian songs. Motion made and seconded that someone be appointed to get some songs together for our club to learn. We decided to ask Mrs. Verner for songs to sing. The secretary volunteered to bring the words to the next meeting of the Sokol song *Do Sokolahe siki do*.

December 21, 1932 President, Georgiana Smolik



Dr. Josef Mestenhauser

Focus on Slovakia

By Dr. Josef A. Mestenhauser

When I started writing this column I considered it my responsibility to focus primarily on the Czech Republic. Now that I retired from being the Honorary Consul I will focus on both Republics not only because they are in the heart of our two closely related organizations, the Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota and the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center, but also because we should have been doing that all along. I was reminded of this gap recently during a repeat visit to the Twin Cities of a Minnesotan who plays an important role in the economic and social life of Slovakia, Jake Sleger, the

Executive Director of an exceptionally active organization, the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia. With a very small staff, he works not only with 310 member businesses, but is reaching out to other sectors of private and public life. These Chamber-related businesses represent 20% of total Slovak GNP; they employ 130,000 people, and their volume of business accounts for 380 billion SKK of Slovak GNP. Two Minnesota companies are strongly represented in the work of the Chamber, the Radisson and the Medtronic Companies.

When Slovakia gained admission to the European Union, it gained a seat in its important “Commission” now held by a prominent public figure Jan Figel who became Commissioner of Education. To stress the importance of this sector, Jake has given us an opportunity to host another Slovak educator, the Minister of Education, several members of his top staff, and several key Rectors of Slovak Universities. This delegation will visit Minnesota for just a single day during the first week of April, to promote educational relations with the United States, to contribute to sharing best practices in education on all levels, (especially in research and knowledge production), to discover American practices in innovative and transforming schools, and to cooperate in the area of Universities-Government-business relationships. The Minister Jan Mikolaj is also the Deputy Prime Minister, and thus the highest ranking official of Slovakia to visit Minnesota.

During its very brief period of independence, Slovakia has developed a highly sophisticated civic culture that will be soon tested during the April Presidential elections. Unlike the Czech elections, Slovaks elect their President by universal vote. There are seven candidates, with the present President Ivan Gasparovic in apparent lead with his Smer-sociálna demokracia (SMER-SD, Direction-Social Democracy) Party in coalition with the Slovak Nationalist Party. His leading opponent is Iveta Radicova from the Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia- demokratická strana (SDKÚ-DS, Slovak Democratic and Christian Union) Party.

There is much more to mention about Slovakia, but I want to return to her interest in education. The Chamber publishes a monthly magazine Connection whose October 2008 issue was devoted to talent mobility, brain drain, Human Resource management, ethical corporate governance and responsibility and “life-long learning”; the last issue is taken more seriously in the European Union than in the US. It means not only that it is never too late to learn new knowledge, but that we all must, “collectively and individually, develop the capacity to learn comprehensively and conceptually in every stage of life, in different forms and places, and in different scopes and subjects”.

The Slovaks have developed an extraordinary structure for such non-formal learning, as is evident from the maturing political and social culture, and from the exceptionally successful transition to the Euro financial system. The message for us is that we have much more in common with Slovakia if we, too, are serious about re-examining not only the formal education but also the non-formal education that can and should be provided by civic not-for-profit organizations. Can we, too, rejuvenate our civic life with more emphasis on learning and knowledge?

Corrections:

The title of last month’s song was missing its “r”:

Tam Na Strány

We regret the error!

May/June Slovo deadline: April 10

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