



**Czech
Slovak
Sokol Minnesota**

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

SLOVO
April 2010 vol. 33 no. 4

- Upcoming Events**
- Slovo Deadline: April 1
 - Slovo committee: April 1
 - Family Night: April 3
 - Board of Directors: April 8
 - Baking for FON: April 10
 - Clean up Day / BOT Meeting: April 10
 - Garage Sale: April 15
 - Šibřinky Dance: April 17
 - Membership Meeting: April 23
 - Festival of Nations: April 30 - May 2
 - Children's Dancers Reunion: May 16

Sokol's Very Own! Very Famous! Very Special!

2010 Annual GARAGE SALE

Thursday, April 15, noon to 7 p.m.
Friday, April 16, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

\$3 Bag Sale starts at noon Friday

**Drop-Off and Set-Up Wednesday, April 14,
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

Donate your gently-used surplus to Sokol!

- ◇ clean clothing in good condition for women, men, children, babies ◇
- ◇ garden tools ◇ toys ◇ jewelry ◇ books ◇ dishes ◇ yard implements ◇
- ◇ flower pots ◇ Christmas and other seasonal decorations ◇ baskets ◇
- ◇ candle holders ◇ craft supplies ◇ shop tools ◇ bed sheets and other linens ◇
- ◇ shoes and boots ◇ towels ◇ framed art ◇ pots and pans ◇ silverware ◇
- ◇ small furniture ◇ once-upon-a-time treasures ◇ records, CDs, videos ◇
- ◇ re-gifts ◇ antiques ◇ collectibles ◇

Due to space limitations, we are not able to take large furniture, mattresses, electronics, bicycles, skis.

If it delighted you once; let someone else enjoy it now!

Support our Sokol Garage Sale!

Donate your old treasures! Buy new treasures!

Have some time? We need YOU to staff the garage sale.

Contact Doreen: 952-941-0426 Doreenlouise@aol.com
or Marit: 651-222-2483 maritleekucera@comcast.net

Volunteer to help set up on Wednesday,
staff the sale on Thursday and Friday, or take down on Friday afternoon.
Choose your 4-hour shift. Join the fun!



**Czech and Slovak
Sokol Minnesota
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Directors**

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Past issues of *Slovo*
and Sokol Minnesota's
calendar of events are
available online at
www.sokolmn.org

President Komentář/President's Note

By Joe Landsberger

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings brothers and sisters

How do we support local businesses and organizations?

As Sokol's liaison with the West 7th Business Association and as a historian with a middle school video history project, I was brought to reflect on this topic. West Seventh Street/Fort Road is the oldest neighborhood commercial strip in Minnesota. Its history began with the expulsion of civilians from Fort Snelling in the 1830s, which led Pierre Pig's Eye Parrant to take up residency in Fountain Cave, the birth place of the City of St. Paul. His distilling and selling liquor was actually the first business along Fort Road, and the subsequent expansion of the Fort Snelling's territory led to the founding downriver of St. Paul's city center.

Fast forward to the 1870's and the arrival of the Czech and Slovak immigrants. Soon, through the 1900s, West Seventh Street was lined with many "Bohemian" businesses and trades. Immigrants tended to both patronize, and work together in businesses, founded by their families, and of course shared language as a common denominator. Many of these were West End institutions. Karl Zalesky established his West End Bakery in 1910 at 451 Bay. Wenzel Novorka had his drug store at 1026-28 (West 7th Street). The Garden Movie Theater at 927 West 7th Street sponsored Czech film series through the 1930s and 1940s. Frantisek J. Pilney established his meat market in 1904, and although both Pilney's and Machovec's have since disappeared, I have special memories of getting oxtails and poppy seed from them.

Why do we support local businesses? First, the recession has hit them especially hard, as well as the neighborhoods that contain them. Secondly, according to the Metro Independent Business Association, supporting locally owned, independent businesses keeps more of your money in your community. "When you spend \$1 at a local independent, an average of 68 cents is re-circulated into the local economy. In contrast, when you spend \$1 at a national chain, only about 43 cents stays at home. If Twin Cities consumers shift even 10% of their spending from chains to locals for one day, the Twin Cities economy gains some \$2 million." (*Source: Andersonville Study of Retail Economics, by Civic Economics, October 2004 and Minnesota Department of Revenue, Gross Retail Sales for 2003.)

What are these local businesses? We recognize that those old Czech institutions of West Seventh have passed, but in the context of Sokol, we have interesting commercially-affiliated demographics. Many organizations publish listings of the skills and professions of their membership, and this is one strategy for supporting a "local" business. Pick up the historic promotional and event documents of Sokol and C.S.P.S. for the past century and you'll find a multitude of these local ads. A directory could also feature these skills.

In Minnesota and neighboring states we also have businesses that retain their cultural identity - bakers, meat markets, crafts etc. We ought not to forget the local festivals that feature these specialty items and are deserving of our support. Our immediate city neighborhood also is deserving! The owner of the Glockenspiel has a specialty meat processing plant, caters, and provides services within our building. Trade with our neighborhood grocer, Cooper SuperValue, could be negotiated (as well as parking access for events!), and our charitable gambling committee is developing a pull tab venue at Keenan's Bar across West Seventh from the C.S.P.S Hall.

The recession has hit neighborhood businesses very hard. As you participate in Sokol and your local neighborhood, please consider patronizing them for the benefit of your community and culture.

Nazdar.

Czech Surnames and Their Meaning – Part I

By Ginger Simek, President, Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International - www.cgsi.org

We may not always think of or question the meaning behind a surname, but a surname can lead to some interesting discoveries. Some meanings or origins may be self-evident while others are not.

You may be very familiar with the name Novák. It is a common family name widely found in the Czech and Slovak lands. It means “new man” or “newcomer to the community.” In a settled village or community, someone new was noteworthy; he stood out. Related Czech surnames are Novotný and Nový. Nováček is the diminutive form of Novák or Nový.

The physical features or disposition of a person were factors in the origin of some surnames if a particular feature or personality trait stood out. The majority of people were fair-haired, and someone with black or dark hair was the exception: thus, the name Černý or Černík, meaning “black”. In areas with a German influence, this name would be Schwarz.

Kučera comes from the adjective meaning curly. The name Veselý comes from the adjective meaning cheerful, and Kyselý comes from the adjective meaning “sour” or “bitter”. There was no guarantee a surname would be a complimentary reflection of the person. Other examples of surnames either standing on their own or being part of the name are Brada meaning “chin,” Huba meaning “mouth,” and Růžička meaning a “small rose” or “nice man”.

Surnames also resulted from associations with town or city names, regions, or foreign countries. Examples in this category, usually formed by adding the suffix –ky or –sky, are Pražský (from Praha), Mohelnický (from Mohelnice), Kolínský (from Kolín), and Bílovský (from Bílov or Bílovec). Pražan and Pražák are examples of names referring to people who lived or came from Praha. Someone with Němec as their name had a German connection. Slezák referred to someone from Silesia, Moravec someone from Moravia, and Slovák someone from south Moravia or Slovakia.

Part II of this article will follow in an upcoming issue of *Slovo*. Information for this article was taken from the book, *Naše Příjmení*, by Dobrava Moldanová, Agentura Pankrác s.r.o., 2004, and the website <http://zlimpkk.tripod.com/Genealogy/czechsurnames.html>. This Czech-language book is part of the C.G.S.I. library collection and is housed at the Minnesota Genealogical Society in South St. Paul.



Publications Committee

The *Slovo* is published by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, a non-profit organization, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102. The deadline for the May 2010 issue is April 1. Cinnamon Whaley, copy editor; Julie Tomáška, layout editor; J. H. Fonkert and Marit Lee Kucera, interim managing editors; Joyce Tesarek, photographer; Sharon Wyberg, production manager; Ken Wyberg, business manager.

The *Slovo* Publications Committee welcomes submissions. Send suggestions, articles, and pictures digitally to: slovo@sokolmn.org. For problems with subscriptions, e-mail slovo@sokolmn.org or call 651-290-0542. Sokol Minnesota members receive the *Slovo* with their membership. *Slovo* gift subscriptions and non-membership renewals are \$12; send to:

Sokol Minnesota Slovo
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Visit us at: www.sokolmn.org

Board of Trustees News and Notes

By Chuck Draheim, BOT Chair

HVAC Study

The HVAC (Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning) Study announced in last month's Slovo is well underway! Upon completion of the study, Sokol Minnesota will have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to upgrade the aging, costly heating system and add air conditioning to the entire building.

Work Day

Saturday, April 10, 2010, will be a busy day at the C.S.P.S. hall. Sokol cooks will be hard at work in the kitchen preparing goodies for the Festival of Nations, the children's dance group will be rehearsing, and the BOT will be having a spring clean-up day. All Sokol members are welcomed and encouraged to come help us spruce up the Hall. We have a long list of projects, and there are jobs for people of all ages and abilities. Work days are not just about work but also about fellowship and getting better acquainted with our Sokol brothers and sisters. The workday begins at 8:30 a.m. We plan to wrap up around noon.

Energy Conservation

We need your help to conserve energy and save Sokol Minnesota money. On a recent tour of the Hall, most of the second and third floor windows were unlocked and several of them open as much as half an inch. If you open a window, please make sure that you close and lock it at the end of your event or meeting. Mark Black, owner of Discount Windows & Wares and our window supplier, showed us how to ensure that the windows are completely closed and properly locked. If you have problems closing or locking a window please contact a BOT member so we can show you the "trick" to the procedure.

Building Security

On numerous occasions, members of the BOT and others have arrived at the Hall and found the doors unlocked, lights on, and the building unoccupied. Please make sure that you lock the door, and double-check all the interior and exterior doors at the end of your event or meeting. As an added safety precaution, if you are working in the Hall alone, you may wish to lock yourself in. This will prevent you from having surprise and perhaps unwelcome visitors.

Sokol Says "Thank You" to Donors

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota thanks members and friends who have made contributions to support our programs and our historic C.S.P.S. Hall. All donations are credited to the general fund, unless otherwise noted.

Mir and Shirley Verner

Slovo

J. R. Pokorny

Slovo

Sokol Town of Lake

Slovo

Minnesota Sokol Camp Association

Slovo

James A. Kohout

Building Fund

Dennis and Mary Cahill

\$250, Capital Campaign

Irene Seashore

Minnesota State Band, \$225

Star of the North Concert Band, \$250

Kent and Marlene Hinshaw

Doreen McKenney

Membership Report

By Norm Petrik, Membership Director

Sokol Minnesota accepted two new members at the February membership meeting.

The new individual members are:

Jiri Hruska of Eagan expressed interest in language, music, ethnic dinners and history.

Cindy Chvosta Fortune of Apple Valley expressed interests in cooking, language, genealogy, history, films, music, dances, ethnic dinners and festivals, as well as volunteer opportunities.

Welcome to Sokol Minnesota! You will receive the Slovo newsletter, and you are invited to our monthly membership meetings at 7 p.m. on the fourth Friday of each month and to other Sokol Minnesota events!

Sokol Member Marcy Bigaouette Remembered

Contributed by Mark Bigaouette



Marcy Bigaouette

Marcy (Vasko) Bigaouette passed away February 17, 2010, in Mesa, Arizona. She and son Mark joined Sokol Minnesota in 1987. She was born in Lonsdale, Minnesota in 1931 and could only speak Czech as a child; she learned English in school. She was very proud of her Czech (Bohemian) heritage.

She was a very hard worker and had to keep busy all the time. Marcy loved to go, and go she did, traveling all over the place, and attending many Czech/Slovak festivals and events. She went with son Mark many times to Europe, mostly to her beloved Czech Republic. As she spoke Czech fluently, she was really in her element. She deeply loved the old country, finding many relatives, and making loads of friends. Her first trip was in 1980 because her mother Mary Vasko, (who was in a nursing home at the time) told Marcy she never saw her own mother after she left Bohemia for America in 1929, and that she would give anything to see a picture of her mother's grave. Marcy said, "I will get that for you," and did. It was a hard trip to do as it was a communist country at that time.

She was the inspiration for her son Mark to start the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society in our historic Sokol building in 1988. Marcy led a full life, and was always right in middle of everything - she was Mark's Czech rock. She was our Czech fruit dumpling teacher at the hall, and helped at many events through the years. Most of all she loved people. She would go over to a bunch of strangers, and soon everyone was laughing. She loved being with people, around people, learning about them, and from them.

She was curious about life, living every day. Enjoying every living thing. That was her greatest gift to us. Marcy touched the lives of a great many people around the world, and will live on in those people's hearts that she touched. Please leave a memory on her Legacy web page at: legacy.com/obituaries/twincities - then search for Marcy Bigaouette.

Her funeral to be held in May in St. Paul; watch for the notice in the Sunday St. Paul *Pioneer Press* Obituary notices. Marcy will be greatly missed for her zest for life, and passion for her Czech heritage.

Festival of Nations: April 29 – May 2



Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota needs many volunteers to staff its participation in Festival of Nations. This year's FON event will be held April 29 to May 2 at The St. Paul River Center. Volunteers receive an admission ticket, kroj (ethnic costume) to wear while volunteering, on-the-job instructions, and the fun of working with a great group of people. Shifts are 3 - 4 hours in length.

Baking days for FON are slated for Friday and Saturday, April 9 and 10, starting at 9 a.m. at the C.S.P.S. Hall. This is a great opportunity to help

make the hundreds of koláče we sell in the cafe. Doreen McKenney and Joyce Tesarek are in charge of baking prep. Join the fun!

Volunteers are needed for both pre-FON baking and for working in and in the café, culture booth, and bazaar. For more information, or to sign up for a shift, please call Mary Cahill, 651-738-9470 (café); Jakub Dajc, 952-294-8032 (culture booth); or Doreen Mc Kenney, 952-941-0426 (baking & bazaar).

Education Committee Information

Contributed by Jean Verner

Members learn from Sokol Minnesota, and Sokol Minnesota is constantly learning from its members. Take advantage of non-class learning opportunities. Much knowledge can be shared as a volunteer group prepares food for the Festival of Nations or one of the dinners held at the C.S.P.S. Hall. Helping set-up tables and chairs for an event gives members new perspectives on the history and structure of the Hall. Don't be shy about volunteering to serve on a committee or at an event.

Language classes (Session 3) will continue into early May. Information regarding fall language, cooking, genealogy, culture, and craft classes will be available in July. Watch the Sokol Minnesota web site or contact the Education Committee directly at education@sokolmn.org. Suggestions for classes or volunteers for instructing are always welcome.

Sokol Singing will continue to be held at 6:30 p.m., immediately preceding the monthly fourth Friday membership meetings. Georgiana Dolejsi will lead us in singing Czech and Slovak folk songs. This is a wonderful way to learn more about Sokol traditions and culture.

The April 23 membership meeting will be a relaxing event before the hustle and bustle of the Festival of Nations, preparations for Culture Camp, and the Booya Picnic. Brother Chuck Draheim will be presenting information about Sokol's ongoing genealogy/family history project. There is something for everyone in the remembering and sharing of family stories.

The April meeting will be followed by a much-requested Social Time and Dessert Potluck. Bring your favorite dessert to share while meeting new members and re-connecting with old friends. If you have any questions about the presentation or the social, contact Jean at education@sokolmn.org.

Family History Project

Contributed by Jean Verner and Chuck Draheim

Do you have a famous, or infamous, relative? Even if you don't, we would like to know about your ancestors.

Patterned after a successful program at the Synnøve-Nordkap Lodge of Sons of Norway, and under the auspices of the Education Committee, Brother Chuck Draheim is leading a project to collect stories about your ancestors. The Sons of Norway project yielded interesting stories about shyster ministers, the world's longest beard, and a Norwegian prophetess. No doubt there are many such interesting family stories amongst our membership.

At future Sokol meetings we will be asking members to present their stories to the group. As an introduction to the program, Chuck Draheim will be sharing a story about one of his Norwegian ancestors at the April Sokol meeting.

As articles are collected they will be compiled into a book that will be added to the Sokol Minnesota archives. Our Czech and Slovak ancestors have a rich history that, if not preserved and shared, will be lost forever.

Czech and Slovak Films at the International Film Festival - April 15-30, 2010

Contributed by Tomas Pieter

Minnesota Film Arts will present a series of Czech and Slovak films at the Minneapolis - St. Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF), April 15-30. Films expected to be screened include: *An Earthly Paradise for the Eyes* (Zemsky raj to na pohled), *Cooking History* (Ako sa varia dejiny), *Baluty Ghetto*, *Osadne*, *El Paso*, *Kawasaki's Rose* (Kawasakiho ruze), and others. Special guests may include director Irena Pavlaskova, introducing her film *An Earthly Paradise for the Eyes*.

The schedule is not available at this time, please see the website at www.mnfilmarts.org or call the hotline at 612-331-3134 for updates. Nationally recognized, MSPIFF is the largest film event in the upper Midwest exhibiting cutting-edge film from around the globe to a broad Minnesota audience. The Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota is a co-sponsor of the Czech and Slovak film presentations.

Dětský koutek / Children's Corner

Contributed by Joe Landsberger & Denis Novak



Many thanks to RNDr. Jan Kralik, CSc., organizer of the Czech and Moravian Festival of Sokol Theatre Groups for his assistance in rendering the translation into English.

Lepší skokani nežli klokani

Hurá, kluci, za human
Pojdme vztekat se!
Franta nese mičudu,
Bude legrace!

Better Jumpers than Kangaroos

Hurrah, boys, let's leave the backyard
Let's enjoy the thrill!
Frank has a football
We'll have a good time!

Bramborovik Knedliky / Dumpling Feedback

Contributed by Rose Vesely

I have never made Silesian dumplings, but my mother did teach me how to make bramborovi Knedliky. When reading the recipe for Salski, my first thoughts were, "not enough flour and too many eggs." After reading the fiasco the two cooks went through, I had to send this message. What my Mother taught me: After cooking the potatoes you need to mash them so that there are no lumps. I use my electric mixer. Then you need to let the potatoes get cold before mixing anything. The farina is not cooked. I use only one or two eggs, depending on how many potatoes I have. I also add a little salt. Flour approximately 3 cups. It's like making bread, it takes practice. Too little flour, and the dumplings will be too soft and fall apart -- too much they get hard.

Practice and feel makes perfect, and even though I have been making dumplings for more than fifty years, I still sometimes don't get it right. I mix and knead the dough on my countertop. Make a roll about 3 inches round and cut into 6 to 8 pieces. Drop into boiling water and cook about 20 minutes. After lifting the cooked dumplings out of the water, I again cut them into three or four pieces for serving. I serve them with pork roast, roasted goose or duck, and sauerkraut. Leftovers can be frozen and then steamed, or you can cut them up and fry like potatoes.

Save
the
Date



For Sibirinky

SATURDAY • APRIL 17 • 6-11 P.M.

Czech Potato Salad

Contributed by Kathy Jorgensen

This is the recipe for potato salad that I used when I did a party for my nephew with all Czech food. The recipe is from the *Czech National Cookbook*, by Hana Gajdostinkova. It is very much like what I have had in the Czech Republic at my cousin's house. Of course I changed it a little and added diced, cooked carrot like she did, and I did not use the pickles. The ham could also be eliminated, but it is good in the potato salad. Yukon Gold or another yellow potato is most likely what they use in the Czech Republic. The original recipe serves about 10.

Czech Potato Salad (for 50 or 200 serving recipe please email slovo@sokolmn.org)

1 kilo (2 lbs.) potatoes

200 grams (7 oz.) ham

1 onion

3 sweet/sour gherkins

4 hard-cooked eggs

100 grams (4 oz.) frozen peas

3 Tablespoons pickle juice

250 grams (8 oz.) mayonnaise

Salt, pepper, Worcestershire sauce, finely chopped parsley to taste

Cook potatoes in skin, peel when cooled. Dice potatoes, ham gherkins and hard cooked eggs. Finely chop onions, add cooked peas and parsley. Add salt, pepper, pickle juice and a couple of drops of Worcestershire sauce. Add mayonnaise and stir lightly.

Song of the Month

Contributed by Georgiana Dolejsi

A point of Interest: the word "Sokol" is the Czech word for "Falcon." This song is from the book *The American Sokol Sings* – American Sokol Educational and Physical Cultural Organization, Berwyn, Illinois 1974.

LETÍ SOKOL (Fly You Sokol)

The musical score is written on three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and lyrics. The third staff concludes the piece with a double bar line. The lyrics are: "Le- tí So-kol pě- kný pták, le- tí vzhů- ru do o- blak. Fly you So-kol fly on high, fly up in the deep blue sky, le- tí nad ma- ti-čku Pra- hu přes Mo- ra- vu le- tí k Vá- hu for-ward let us go to- ge- ther in sun- shine or stor- my wea- ther, Le- tí So- kol pě- kný ptá- k Le- tí vzhu- ru do o- blak. Fly you So- kol fly on hi- gh Fly up in the deep blue sky."

Letí sokol pěkný pták,
Letí vzhůru do oblak
Letí nad matičku Prahu
přes Moravu letí k Váhu
Letí sokol pěkný pták,
Letí vzhůru do oblak.

Letí sokol po vlastní,
přes hory a propasti,
od Šumavy nad Karpaty,
nese lásky plamen svatý,
přes hory a propasti,
Letí sokol po vlastní.

Sokolíků, dej se v let,
obleť široširý svět,
zalet do všech světa dílů
všude ukaž svojí sílu
Sokolíků, dej se v let,
obleť široširý svět.

Fly you Sokol fly on high,
Fly up in the deep blue sky,
Forward let us go together,
In sunshine or stormy weather,
Fly you Sokol fly on high,
Fly up in the deep blue sky.

Fly you Sokol, over hills,
Over dells and rivers still,
Spread your wings over great
forests,
Let all nations know our progress.
Fly you Sokol, over hills,
Over dells and rivers still

Fly over the U.S.A.
Let nothing stop you on your way,
Greet our sisters and our brothers,
Show our friendship to all others,
Fly over the U.S.A

Sokol Camp: Upcoming Important Dates and Events

Sokol Camp opens Saturday, April 24. To reserve a room for that evening, call Jean soon.

Sunday, August 15, is the 80th Annual Sokol Camp Booya Picnic from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. The picnic features great food, bingo, cultural dance performances by the St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers, kiddy games, and old time music. Come and spend the day with friends, old and new.

Sokol Camp closes Sunday, September 26, for the 2010 season.

Rental Information

- Rental is open to all Sokol members. Use is by reservation only.
- To make a reservation or request more information, call Jean at 651-426-2826 or 651-210-0401.

Rental Rates

<u>Weekly (seven nights)</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-members</u>
Rooms 1-8 (one full bed)	\$160	\$195/week
Room 9 (one queen bed)	\$175	\$210/week
Room 10 (one queen bed and one full bed)	\$195	\$230/week

Nightly

Rooms 1-8	\$25	\$30/night
Room 9	\$27	\$32/night
Room 10	\$30	\$35/night

Campgrounds

- RV hook-ups are not permitted.
- Overnight campers, trailers or tents: \$5 per person per night. Children under 10 are free.
- Grounds use: Members \$10 per family per day. Non-members \$15 per family per day.
- Persons using the grounds for the day have bathroom and kitchen privileges.

Family Day Easter Fun at Sokol Hall

Contributed by Louise Wessinger

Find out how Easter is celebrated in the Czech and Slovak Republics with a special Family Day on Saturday, April 3, 2010. Families are invited to come to the C.S.P.S Hall from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to learn how to make pomlaska (spring whips), decorate eggs, and enjoy traditional games and foods.

This event is co-sponsored by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center, the West 7th Neighbors, and the Mom's Club, which will share their wonderful Easter and spring traditions with attending families.

Each family is asked to register by Tuesday, March 30, by calling one of the chairpersons: Olga and Mario Splichal-Espinosa at 651-293-3999 (email: mnscsc@yahoo.com) or Louise Wessinger at 651-452-6240 (email: louisewessinger@msn.com). When you register, please leave your name, phone number, number of persons attending, children's ages, and what you will bring for the potluck lunch (appetizer, entrée, salad, side dish or dessert). Paper products, lemonade, water and coffee, and craft supplies will be provided.

Sokol or Czech and Slovak Cultural Center members are asked to make a \$5 donation per family at the door; Non-member families are asked to make a \$10 donation. Volunteers are needed to help set up and clean up a half hour before or after the event. Also, please let the leaders know if you have newly green willow branches you can bring ---they are needed for pomlaski.

Olympic Gold Medalist with Czech Roots in Naperville, Illinois - Contributed by Deborah Zeman

Did anyone wonder if Olympic gold-medal figure skater Evan Lysecek of Naperville, Illinois, has any connection to the Czech community there? Well, he does!

Evan's Grandmother Eleanor was a member of Sokol Berwyn (Illinois) and was a "powerhouse" for their volleyball team. There are plans for a parade in Naperville when Evan gets to come back to the area, and there will be a contingent of Sokol women present to cheer him.

A big "thank you" to Paul Lebloch for passing this information along to me.

Taneční Mládež 20 Year Reunion

Contributed by Louise Wessinger

In 1989, I decided that I wanted to do something to get younger families involved in Sokol, especially those who were interested in passing our Czech and Slovak Heritage on to their children. I also wanted to “give back” to Sokol for all of the wonderful times my family had at the C.S.P.S. Hall.

With a background of dance lessons as a youngster and having been a member of the St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers for many years, I thought I would like to do something with folk dance. I had been a second- and third-grade teacher for a number of years, so to work with kids was a natural choice for me. After getting a green light from Sokol and those who had worked with Sokol children for the Festival of Nations in the past, we began the Sokol Youth Dancers in January 1990. With the help of John and Georgiana Dolejsi, we adopted the name Taneční Mládež, or “young dancers.” It took me many years to pronounce it correctly.

The group started with 12 dancers, and we learned just two dances that year! In the fall, we were asked to perform for the Czech and Slovak Festival in Highland Park, and so we began practicing year-round to prepare for a growing list of events and

trips. The group grew and changed many times over the years. This year we have three groups: Mlada Skupina (3-4-5 year olds, 15 dancers), Taneční Mládež (K-6th graders, 22 dancers), and Taneční Teens (6th -12th grade, 10 dancers). All together we have 47 dancers! Of course, I still have the practices on Saturdays, but now with three groups, they go from 9:15 to noon. Believe me: at my age, I am exhausted at the end of the practice day!

This spring we will be celebrating our 20th Anniversary. Sokol Minnesota has set aside the weekend of May 14, 15, and 16 to honor our group and all the past alumni. The only thing already planned is a concert on Sunday afternoon, May 16, featuring the present groups. Other ideas include a 20-month calendar with photos from all 20 years, a huge party or dance to celebrate the 200 plus dancers who have been part of the group over the years, and special t-shirts to commemorate this milestone. If you would like to help plan the event or want further information, please call, Louise Wessinger 651-452-6240, or send an email to louisewessinger@msn.com. We are looking forward to renewing many friendships and reliving many fun memories! Please join us!

Šibřinky Dance to be celebrated Saturday, April 17, 2010

Contributed by Louise Wessinger

In 1865, Sokol Prague held the first Šibřinky, a real Sokol costume ball. The name Šibřinky was taken from the verb šibřiti, the imitation of the sparrows’ song. Later the name stood for practical joking and clowning. Though it is sometimes thought of as a Czech/Slovak Mardi Gras, Šibřinky is truly a Sokol innovation. (Adapted from an article by Šechtľ and Voseček entitled “Šibřinky of Tábor Sokol.”)

The 2010 Šibřinky Celebration is scheduled for April 17 at the C.S.P.S. Hall. A traditional costume ball, this year’s event was postponed from its usual February date to make room for the concert by the Podkrokonosse Band from the Czech Republic. Ethnic food will be served beginning at 6 p.m., with dancing to the six-piece Dale Pexa Band of New Market Minnesota, from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. The ethnic children’s dance group Taneční Mládež will perform during the dinner hour, and the St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers will preview their Festival of Nations performance during intermission.

Everyone is encouraged (but not required) to wear folk dress. Admission is \$10 at the door and \$ 8 in advance if sent by April 10 to Sokol Minnesota, Attention: Louise Wessinger, 383 Michigan Street, St. Paul MN 55102. For questions or volunteer signup, please call Louise Wessinger at 651-452-6240 or Ed Hamernik at 763-571-6091.

Who Are We?

By Josef A. Mestenhauser



Josef Mestenhauser

Have you ever thought about who we are? Americans? Slovaks? Czechs? Hybrids of all three? Or just two? If hybrids, what parts of each culture have we ended up with? And, what is it that ties us together? How can you tell?

These questions of cultural identity were very popular when I started doing my degree work in the 1950s. The scholarly “fad” was to describe the so-called “national character” by the values and behavior of the whole population. There was something to it because all nations have common internal traits that distinguish them from others. Contemporary research does confirm that there are features by which one can characterize the character of a given society, with the understanding that there is a tremendous amount of internal variation. On the other hand, the ideas represented by the scholarship of these years were

too simple, and permitted people to make gross generalizations that did not take into account cultural differences within each country.

So the idea of the national character fell into oblivion – until recently when it appears to be experiencing a rebirth. Curiously, many books have been devoted to the idea of cultural differences, and – surprise – most of them come from the field of business and management, which is beginning to pay attention to the fact that we must understand local cultures in order to do business elsewhere.

I am confronted with this issue each time I give lectures in the Czech Republic, when students and occasionally professors question what I am presenting on the ground that the Czechs are unique and that what I am proposing may be true of the United States, but not of the Czechs. When I then ask them what is unique about the Czechs, I don’t get very good answers. It is obvious that these mindsets are often held sub-consciously. That is true probably of us as well. I was reminded of this matter again very recently when one of the top Czech psychologists, Slavomil Hubalek, gave an interview to *Mlada Fronta Dnes* (reprinted in the *Americke Listy* on December 3, 2009). His perspective is neither new nor unique, as many people, including Masaryk, Capek, Patocka, Herben and others have devoted a great deal of attention to the Czech national character.

His interview is not too complimentary to the Czech national character. For example, he focuses on the “doubting Thomas” syndrome, the tendency not to believe anything. He traces this syndrome to the 300 years of the Hapsburg rule (add to it the Nazi occupation and the 40 some years of communist totalitarianism) and relates it to the contemporary attitudes of people toward freedom and democracy. He claims that many people do not need freedom or democracy because they look only for things the previous regime provided: assurance of employment, no need for thinking individually, and security in the street. He estimates that about twenty percent of the population fits into this category, and that among them are people who are literally “stupid” (meaning of very low IQ). The other features of the Czech character he cites are smallness, jealousy, and envy, extreme carefulness not to offend officialdom, not to provoke, to get along with superior powers, to bend easily, and rejection of dissidents and other heroes who did not bend.

Professor Hubalek cites many examples of these characteristics – but the most important consideration is his assertion that they persist over centuries. What I am wondering about, then, is whether people who left the “old countries” and migrated elsewhere, especially to the United States, have some of the same cultural genes in their cultural DNA. What do you think about this national character thing? If you have thoughts about this matter and want to discuss it with others, keep an eye on future announcements for a new lecture/seminar series we plan to initiate on this and other topics beginning this fall and into next year.

Šibřínky

Traditional Sokol Costume Ball

Saturday • April 17 • 6-11p.m.

\$10.00 Entry Fee

\$8 advance sale tickets are available by sending check payable to
Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota

C.S.P.S. Sokol Hall, 383 Michigan Street, St. Paul, MN 55102 (attn: Louise)

Checks must be postmarked by April 10 to receive the discount

Dance to live music by Dale Pexa Band

Ethnic food available starting at 6 p.m. • Cash bar

Folkdance performances by Taneční mládež, children's group

and adult St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folkdancers

Info: Louise 651-452-6240 • Ed 763-571-6091 • www.sokolmn.org

Dance is hosted by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota
383 Michigan at West 7th Street, St. Paul



383 Michigan Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota
55102



Slovak
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Czech

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