



Svaty Mikulas Coming in December

By Don Andrlé

In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the tradition of Svaty Mikulas (Saint Nicholas) has always played an important role. Legend has it that St. Nicholas visits children on December 5, accompanied by an angel dressed in pure white and the devil dressed in black.

The devil carries a switch and rattles a chain, while the angel consults a large book which lists the names of all good children.

The children who have been good receive apples, nuts, gingerbread and candy from Svaty Mikulas, while the mischievous children get coal and onions from the devil. It pays to be good!



Don Andrlé and his wife Pat play the roles of Svaty Mikulas and his angel. They will appear December 7 at the Sokol Childrens' Christmas Party

Svaty Mikulas will visit the Sokol Minnesota Childrens' Holiday Party at 7 p.m., Friday, December 7, at the C.S.P.S. Hall. Before he appears, Tanečni Mládež and the Sokol gymnasts will perform, and Czech songs and stories will be told. Children can the angel's book, sit on Svaty Mikulas' lap and receive a bag of treats. Refreshments served. All are welcome.

If you look closely, you might think that Sokol Minnesota members Don Andrlé, Pat Andrlé and Dave Stepan are standing in as St. Mikulas, the angel and the devil. Indeed, they have enjoyed playing their roles at the Childrens' Holiday Party for many years.

Upcoming Events

Dec 5
Zazvorniky
Slovak Ginger
Cookie Class

Dec 1
Holiday Tea
and Dessert

Dec 7
Sokol
Children's
Holiday Party

Dec 9
Sokol
Member's
Holiday Party

Dec 12
Vánočka
Christmas
Bread Class

Dec 13
The
Mushroom
Picker
Performance

Dec 16
Holiday Tea
and Dessert

Jan 11
Sokol Camp
Assoc Annual
Meeting

Jan 26
Duck Dinner

The Mushroom Picker on CSPA Stage

By Patrick Dewane

Being Czech - and being American - is at the heart of my one-man show about Lt. Colonel Matt Konop, my grandfather and a WWII war hero.

In *The Mushroom Picker*, I will share his incredible journey as a Czech-American soldier fighting in Czechoslovakia, and how that untold story came to me years after his death.

Konop grew up in a Czech farming hamlet in the Upper Midwest, speaking only Czech until he was sent to school at age six. He soon learned assimilation was the quickest route to the American dream and that his Czech background was something to overcome as he made his way in the world. Like countless Americans before him, the military would be his means of upward mobility.

Editor's note: Patrick Dewane's one-man show, The Mushroom Picker, will be presented 7 p.m., December 13 at the CSPA Hall.

continued on page 7.

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President Komentář/President's Note

By Joe Landsberger

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings brothers and sisters!

October was a very interesting Sokol month for me, engaged as I was by the creativity of our members! First, I started a long-distance conversation with Wally Schovanec of Idaho about his family's history in our hall. Wally is a brother of Senior Singer Rudy, Jr. His father was very active in CSPA theater, and that serendipitously connected with this issue's announcement of the staging of Vaclav Havel's play, the *Memorandum*, February 29 and March 1-2 in our hall.

Then, I attended the dramatic presentation of the *Mushroom Picker*, Sokol member Patrick Dewane's story about his grandfather, Matt Konop, who led American troops who liberated Domažlice, the ancestral village of Konop's father's. This same story will be presented in our hall December 13! Patrick is also the Vice-President of the Minnesota Opera, which will perform Antonín Dvořák's *Rusalka* April 12-April 20. Our Education Director Louise Wessinger is working to arrange a group rate for Sokol members, and also perhaps a benefit at our hall!

Doreen McKenney got us making potato dumplings for our Pork Dinner. I helped on Friday, but really I was there to learn how to make them so I could skip the class and save a dollar! Doreen combines efficiency with creativity in organizing these events, and I went home and promptly made a batch for that night's dinner. mmm, mmm!

Off to Chicago via the Internet. Czech-out the imaginative imaging down there, and see what valuable features Czech-TV and website bring!

More Sokol art ties. Sokol member Jordan Šrámek is founder and Artistic Director of The Rose Ensemble, a highly touted Twin Cities vocal group. I recently enjoyed their newest program at Assumption Church just down the street from our Hall. In preparation for their Spanish tour, the Ensemble has a new program, *Slavic Wonders, Feasts and Saints in Ancient Moscow, Krakow, and Prague*, features early/medieval vocal music. Half of the program is of Czech origin. The soaring music took my heart along; I especially was taken by *Bogoroditse Devo, Raduysia*, an Ave Maria by Russian-Minnesotan composer Sergey Khvoshchinskiy. This piece was commissioned by the Rose Ensemble. Perhaps one evening the Rose Ensemble will return to the CSPA Hall?

As I write this, it appears Sokol will receive a small Star Grant from the City of St. Paul. I want to thank our City Council member Dave Thune for speaking up on our behalf. I will be working to make city officials more aware what Sokol Minnesota and the CSPA Hall offer to St. Paul, in hopes of improving our chances for future support.

That was quite a list! Of course, I am over-looking many other efforts. At our November membership meeting we will creatively decorate the hall for the holidays, helping us get in the spirit for our Sokol Members' Holiday Party on December 9. Let me take this opportunity to also wish you the best for the Holiday, in whatever way you observe them.

With a hearty holiday Nazdar!

Joe Landsberger



Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota SLOVO

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Bake and Take for the Holidays

A special two-part holiday baking series will feature traditional ginger cookies and the famous Czech Christmas bread. Students can register for one or both classes by calling Louise at 651-452-6240, or see the Sokol Minnesota website www.sokolmn.org Each class has a limit of 10 students.

Zazvorniky/Slovak Ginger Cookies

Instructor: Kevin Hurbanis
Wednesday Dec. 5, 6:00-8:30 PM
Fee: \$12 for Sokol Members;
\$15 for non-members)
Cooks should bring their own aprons,
rolling pins, and containers for their cookies.

Vánočka/Christmas Bread with raisins and nuts

Instructors: Hana Matousek
Wednesday Dec. 12, 6:00 to 8:30 PM
Fee: \$18 for Sokol Members; \$20 for non-members)
Cooks should bring their own apron, mixing bowl,
large spoon, bread board or baking sheet.(you will
take Vánočka to bake at home)

Sokol Members' Holiday Party



Sokol Minnesota members are invited to a festive afternoon of Holiday Cheer Sunday, 1 p.m., December 9, at the C.S.P.S. Hall

The afternoon will commence with hors d'oeuvres and a social hour, followed by a catered meal of beef goulash over spatzel dumplings, with vegetable and rolls. Following the meal, newly elected officers and directors will be installed. The meeting will close with dessert, coffee and a Holiday carol sing-along.

Members should check their mail for a postcard announcing the menu, cost, and reservation instructions. If you have not received the postcard, call Nancy at 651-481-7949.

Roast Duck Dinner

Saturday • January • 26th • 2008

5th Annual
candle light
Dinner

Soup
Roast Duck
Potato Dumplings and Gravy
Sweet and Sour Red Cabbage
Apple Sauce
Caraway Rye Bread
Coffee and Dessert

Tap beer and pop will be available for sale

5pm - \$22.⁰⁰ per person

Questions
Reservations
Call Co-Chairs
Doreen 952.941.0426
Joan 651.699.8773

Limited Seating RESERVATIONS ONLY

Make check payable in advance to Sokol Minnesota

Please send check no later than January 21st 2008

To: Doreen McKenney
7301 West 101st Street Unit 211
Bloomington, MN 55438

Historic CSPS Sokol Hall 383 Michigan Street - St. Paul, Minnesota www.sokolmn.org

PUBLIC WELCOME



Sokol Minnesota
Camp Association
Annual Meeting
7 p.m., January 11
CSPS Hall
Sokol Members Invited

Sokol's annual Šibřinky celebration is slated for February 9 at the CSPS Hall. Guests will dance to live music by the popular Dale Pexa band starting at 6:30 p.m. Šibřinky is a Czech Mardi Gras-style festival. The evening will feature Czech beer and eats. For more information, call Tim at 651-274-5486 or visit www.sokolmn.org

Song of the Month

Submitted by
Georgiana Dolejsi
From *Pisne Vanocni,*
A Collection of 19 Czech
Christmas Songs, Hymns
and Carols S. Anita Smisek,
O.P., ed., (Minneapolis; self-
published, 1975)

We will be going to
Bethlehem together,
Duj, daj, duj, daj, duj,
daj, da!

Tiny Jesus, little lad!
I will be rocking You.
Tiny Jesus, little lad!
I will be rocking You.

Verse 2
Zacni, Kubo, na ty
dudy...
Kuba, start playing the
bagpipes...

Verse 3
A ty, Janku, na pist
alku...
And you, John, on the
whistle...

Verse 4
A ty, Miksi, na
houslicky...
And you, Michael, on the
violin...

Verse 5
A ty, Vavro, na tu basu...
And you, Vavra, on the
bass...



Půjdem Spolu do Betléma (We will be going to Bethlehem together)

1. Půj-dem spo-lu do Be-tlé-ma, duj, daj, duj, daj,
duj, daj, da! Je-ží - šku, pa - ná - čku! Já tě
bu- du ko-li-ba - ti. Je-ží - šku, pa - ná - čku!
Já tě kou- du ko- li - bat.

Donations

Sokol Minnesota thanks the generosity of donors. All donations are to the general fund, unless otherwise indicated. Only amounts over \$100 or more are reported. Names are withheld at donor's request.

August
Embassy of Czech Republic,
\$9,384
SVU
Joanne Parvey

September
In Memory of Ladd Loss:
Rosemary Bodien, \$1,000
Western Fraternal Life Association,
Lodge#181
In Memory of Verona Verchota:
Georgiana Dolejsi, elevator fund
Ken and Sharon Wyberg
Elsie Roepke, elevator fund

October
Pat & Don Andrlé, Czech-Slovak
Festival
In Memory of Ladd Loss:
Frank Loss, \$100
Bessie O'Neill
Florence Haselbauer
Don and Catherine Haselbauer
Wallace Oliva



Correction

The lovely young women pictured in kroje in the October Slovo were Anne Loss Neubauer and Valeria Kuisle. We mistakenly identified Val as Vlasta Hanover. Our apologies.

Letter to Editor

Thank you so much for printing the Sokol article about my father, Ladd Loss. The layout was super!!!! I hope it will start an interest in the Sokol history which is so rich.

Sincerely,
Rosie Bodien

Thank you

Thank you to all who attended the presentation of the Cernin Palace Award to me recently - a sincere thank you to everyone who has expressed congratulatory wishes.

Libby Imbrone



Czech-American TV & Website

By Joe Landsberger

Four years ago, John Honner, a Czech national living in Chicago, thought to gather his network of friends and “volunteer” them to create a local Czech-American TV show for cable television. The show, spotlights Czech music, art, food, recipes, organizations and local and national festivals and social events, both here and back in the Czech Republic. The show is broadcast in Chicago’s western suburbs on Wednesdays at 7p.m

It’s hard to get Chicago cable in Minnesota, but the internet website www.catvusa.com brings Czech TV into homes worldwide. Are you interested in seeing *Slivovicová*, a video by Bohunil Stanik that features a happy song about creating and drinking the precious Czech brandy, slivovice? Maybe this winter you’d like to make a fresh Česnečka, or garlic soup to keep you warm? Vera Gadja, your host, will actually show you how, as well as demonstrate a number of other recipes. Have you fallen behind in your Czech language class? The letter “B” features chléb or bread in its various forms, as bochník, kůrka, veka, pečivo, though you have to watch for your vocabulary lesson! The language classes are funded Western Fraternal Life Association.

Now, if you want to see our own local movie star, you can watch Joyce Tesarek talking about our Czech-Slovak Festival when she was president. Our puppet Jurka is keeping a close watch on what she is saying,

Havel’s *The Memorandum* on CSPA Stage

By Marshall Toman

Vaclav Havel’s best known and well received play, *The Memorandum*, will be staged at the CSPA Hall February 29, and March 1-2. As usual, Havel draws upon absurdist traditions in theater. The play is set in Communist-era bureaucratic offices in Czechoslovakia, where the bureaucrats attempt to devise a politically approved, simple, un-nuanced language in which to communicate the New Order. Humorous and sad,

World’s largest book – and its Czech!

A new exhibit at the National Czech and Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is really big! At six feet-high and 210 feet-long, *The History of the Brave Czech Nation*, by Czech artist Lucie Seifertova, is the largest book in the world. It is actually a fold-out book that visitors can walk through, experiencing the large and small joys and miseries of cartoon characters winding their way through the labyrinths of time. The book has been



and I am sure that Blanche Yurka of Bohemian Girl fame, would give her good reviews!

Before coming to the U.S. more than ten years ago, John Honner worked as a newspaper reporter and TV engineer. He was a member of the Syndicate of Journalists and of the International Association of Journalists in the Czechoslovakia. “I felt the



John Honner, founder and producer of Czech American TV and Website

Czech-American community should have and deserves their own show,” said Honner, who speaks with great pride about his Czech culture. “There are many large Czech events that receive little or no coverage from the media, and that is why Czech-American TV is so important,” he said.

The volunteer-run operation, under the leadership of Honner, produces the programming for about \$2,500 monthly. Donations underwrite the expenses.”All the work to create the show,” says Honner, “is handled by volunteers. No one is getting paid. But everyone works together to serve the local Czech-American community. We are like a traveling circus, setting up a studio wherever we can. We even travel to other states to get footage. America is all about dreams and opportunity. That’s why I love this country and believe the show will continue to grow.”

the play contains timeless themes of opportunism, honesty, loyalty, and courage, while remaining rooted in the specifics of Communist Czechoslovakia.

Lex-Ham Community Theater Company will produce the play. Sokol volunteers will provide delicious and authentic refreshments. Friday and Saturday evening performances will be followed by a 2:00 matinee on Sunday. Ticket prices will be \$5 for students, \$10 for Sokol and Czech and Slovak Cultural Center members, and \$15 for the general public.

exhibited at the National Museum in Prague, as well as at international book fairs in Italy, Luxembourg, Italy and Slovakia. Seifertova’s book *Childrens’ Book of the Year*. The Museum’s describes her drawing style as playful and her affection for little people caught up in history endearing. Of particular interest is her take on the events of the 1989 fall of communism. The exhibit runs through January 27. It is sponsored by the Czech Ministry of Culture.

The Mushroom Picker continued from page 1.

However, by the end of WWII his entire concept of himself turned inside out. What he had fled became what he pursued. When he came home from the war he grew to be more intentionally Czech than anyone in his hometown. He brewed his own beer, researched his family's genealogy decades before such things became fashionable, and picked wild mushrooms. While everyone called him "The Colonel" he rarely spoke about the war. And when the CB radio craze of the 1970s hit, he chose as his handle "The Mushroom Picker," much to my disappointment.

As a boy, I loved war movies and would beg him to tell me a war story. But The Greatest Generation didn't do much of that, especially modest Czechs. He'd change the subject or make a joke, so I concluded he spent most of the war peeling potatoes. I had no idea how wrong I was. In 1983 I was a pallbearer at his funeral and figured we buried his war stories with him.

Then a few years ago my sister Jane found a pile of type-written papers in a box in a basement. It turns out, in the last years of his life my grandpa spent dozens of hours in the furnace room of his house clacking away on a Remington manual typewriter, chain-smoking Camel straights, racing time to get down onto paper what he had experienced. My sister was shocked by what she found, incredible stories written on the backs of blank insurance forms, on scrap paper or anything else he could find to hold onto his thoughts. She made copies and gave them out as Christmas presents. And the ghosts I met in those stories have changed my life.

My grandfather had a Forest Gump-like knack for accidentally being where the action was. One example is he helped liberate his family's Czech hometown, walking the same cobblestones that his grandfather had walked eighty years earlier on his journey out of Bohemia to America. But while his grandfather's



Lt. Colonel Matt Konop

*Tickets for the
Mushroom Picker
Thurs, Dec 13 at
7 p.m. CSPA Hall,
2nd floor theater.
\$15 (\$12 for Sokol
Members)*

*Call Joe 651 297
9000 before Sun,
Dec 9 to reserve
yours. Tickets
must be pre-paid.*

journey was but another departure by an anonymous peasant, the grandson's homecoming was met with flowers and flags and kisses from pretty girls. He was shocked by the reception he received, and it awakened in him a curiosity about all things Czech that became the greatest passion in his life.

People respond to this story in wonderful and unpredictable ways. I've had WW II veterans thank me for telling it like it was. I've had young people tell me they had no idea that the war was so all-encompassing. And I've had many people in their sixties, folks for whom WW II is the beginning of time, tell me they want to see the show again. It seems the further we get from WW II, the more relevant it becomes. For more reactions to the story, please check out the website www.themushroompicker.com

We Czechs have assimilated so well that many of us hardly know where we came from, or why that would even matter. That was my case. But I believe my grandpa wrote his stories in his basement for me, so I can tell them to you. So I invite you to come hear my story about my grandpa, which is also about me, and maybe all of us.



Did you know? By Josef Mestenhauer

Václav Klaus remains the only announced candidate for the President of the Czech Republic, only 4 months before the indirect elections that will be held in Feb. by both houses of the Parliament. Among other potential candidates, Dr. Jan Svejnar, Professor of Economics at the University of Michigan, and a dual citizen of the Czech Republic and the US, is considered the major and most viable.

Skoda sold almost half a million automobiles just during the first three quarters of the year, a 12.6% increase over last year. Skoda sold 150 trolley buses to Riga – first few have already been delivered.

Skoda is developing its own schools and technical college to train its future employees

The projected building of a new International Center of Clinical Medical Research in Brno (with participation of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN) has run into difficulties because

of disagreements between the Czech and US sides on how to spend the 2 billion crown investment

Despite excellent harvest, cost of bread and bakery goods will increase as much as 20% in the Czech Republic.

The revised estimate of growth of the GDP of Slovakia moved up to 8.8%

Despite an effort to curb its budgetary deficit, Slovakia may not be able to join the EURO zone in 2009 as predicted.

There may be a new political party in the Czech Republic, called "Party of Dignified Living." It can appear on the electoral lists only after 2008.

The statue of U.S. Pres. Woodrow Wilson that once stood in front of the main Railroad Station named after him will be reconstructed and returned a location somewhere near the station. The statue was sculpted by the famous Czech

artist Albin Polacek, who lived and worked briefly in Minnesota. Several of his statues are still here.

Czech Company Gufex is the exclusive supplier of ice hockey pucks for the Olympics and World Ice Hockey championship.

"Czech The News" – the official bulletin of the Czech Embassy – will now appear in electronic format. Interested subscribers should write to JoAnn M. Cooper at jcooper@linguabohemica.com

Italy is the leading source of foreign investment in Slovakia.

Canada just lifted visa requirements for Czechs and Latvians, but not others, on condition that no more than two percent of visa free visitors will apply for permanent residence in Canada.

A Sokol Family Story

By Wally Schovanec

Milý Bratří a Sestry from Boise, Idaho! I was reflecting upon my family's history on the recent occasion of my 80th birthday on September 22. I celebrated with my wife of 59 years, Louise; my son, Michael, and my daughter, Barb. I am thankful to still be blessed with abundant good health which I owe to my father, who enrolled me in Sokol at age six in 1935, as well as my mother, who cooked good healthy Czech meals as we grew up.

My father, Rudolf Schovanec, and mother, Antonia Kavřík, arrived on the good ship *George Washington* a year apart, in 1910 and 1911, respectively. They arrived in Ellis Island, and the ship's manifest lists "Rudy" with \$6.00 in his pocket. They were childhood sweethearts born four doors apart in Kluky u Čáslavi. On my first visit back to their village, I was told they were called Romeo and Juliet since they loved each other, despite the disapproval of their parents.

They married in New York City in 1913 during my father's volunteer service in the army. Their first son, my brother Rudy, was born at the home of their sister in Connecticut. In October 1920, they moved to St. Paul, where mother feared there was an Indian behind each tree!

My father learned tailoring in Vienna, and quickly was hired in downtown St. Paul at Maurice L. Rothchild's men's and women's clothing store, along with 40 to 50 other tailors! Rudy, Jr. also learned the trade from Dad, joined Sokol, and is still a very good tailor, and is active in the senior singers.

Rudy, Sr. was very active in Czech plays at the CSPS Hall, and was the personification of the *Good*



Rudolf Schovanec and Antonia Kavřík were married in 1913 in New York City. Rudy is wearing his World War I uniform. Photo courtesy of Wally Schovanec.

Soldier Švejk (an unfinished satirical novel by Jaroslav Hašek, illustrated by Josef Lada, about the misadventures of Cvejek during the Austro-Hungarian war.) He was humorous, creative, devilish, and a patriot who truly loved life and his fellow man. He died at age 56 in 1948.



Our St. Paul unit Župa Sěverní at the Sokol Slet in Chicago, 1939. Among those pictured are: Holding the sign, Wally Schovanec. First row (L-R) Anča Delestráda, Georgiana Dolesji (Smolik), Ms. Kolár. Second row, Lucille Pavliček. Third row, Frank Verner. Fourth row, Rudy Schovanec, Jr., Mir Verner, Bill Pikal. Photo taken Joseph Pavliček, courtesy of Wally Schovanec.

Czernin Palace Award to Libby Imbrone



Honorary Consul Dr. Josef Mestenhauser with three winners of the Czernin Palace award: Libby Imbrone (2007), Dr. Norm Sladek (2005) and Dr. Joyce Tesarek (2006). All are long-standing members of Sokol Minnesota,

Long-time Sokol Minnesota member Libby Imbrone received the Czernin Palace Memorial Bronze Medal and Diploma in November for “her great and significant contribution to the progress of Czech-American relations.”

Honary Consul Josef Mestenhauser presented the award on behalf of Dr. Petr Kola, Czech Ambassador to the United States. The award is granted based on nominations from Honary Consuls and Honary Consuls General.

Libby Rybnicek Imbrone was raised in a family of Czech immigrants near Mandan, North Dakota. Her parents nurtured her interest and appreciation of Czech language, literature, art music and civic affairs, as well as cooking and sewing. Her father and grandfather were accomplished stone cutters. Libby’s only brother was killed while serving in the armed

forces in Okinawa. Libby is retired after a long career, culminating with a position in the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office. She and husband Albert of 54 years have five children and four grandchildren.

After retiring, Libby remained as an active volunteer with Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, organizing many outstanding activities including receptions, cultural programs and exhibits. She welcomed dignitaries and student visitors, befriended all newcomers, and demonstrated her hospitality through cooking. She is a founding member of the Czech and Slovak Cultural center, and co-chaired a splendid reception for President Vaclav Havel when he visited Minnesota.

Libby is known as a highly organized, personal, intelligent, creative, hard working dedicated, responsible, reliable and sophisticated – in short, she is a wonder and an inspiration. Knowing no bounds to her pursuits, she once persuaded the University of Minnesota to grow flax so she could demonstrate the making of a linen apron from plan to finished product for an exhibit at the Festival of Nations.

My passion for the Czech and Slovak Cultures and the Sokol ideals made me proud and happy to share my heritage, keeping in mind that it is a tremendous responsibility to present it accurately and with propriety. In gratitude for this honor and remembering the rewards of my volunteer efforts, I recall this poem.

*There is a destiny that makes us brothers,
No one walks his way alone;
All that we put into the lives of others,
Comes back into our own.*

- Libby Rybnicek Imbrone



A full account of her accomplishments would be as voluminous as it would be rich, but to conclude in her own modest words, Libby “always intended to do projects that would make people happy to attend, and to leave them with good feelings about their heritage and a new knowledge of our culture and intellect.”

Former Ambassador Martin Palous initiated the award while he was

Ambassador. The award is named after the Czernin Palace, location of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Editor’s note: This article is drawn from materials provided by the Honary Consul, Josef Mestenhauser. See www.sokolmn.org or the full text of Libby’s moving speech.

Flash News...

Dr. Martin Butora, former Ambassador of Slovakia to the United States, just accepted the invitation to be the “Scholar-in-residence” and speak at the in 2008 Vaclav Havel Symposium on Civil Society. His wife, Dr. Zora Butorova, was also invited. The dates of their arrival are being negotiated. The Vaclav Havel Symposium on Civil Society is a collaboration of St. Thomas University and the House of Hope Presbyterian Church, with participation of the Minnesota Czech and Slovak community.

Sokol Minnesota News

By Marlene Hinshaw

Ahoj! Thanks to all who worked on Roast Pork Dinner in October. Nancy Imbrone chaired the event, and Ray Vanyo was the head chef. The Vanyo family and friends presided over the kitchen. Thanks to Bobby Jo Chandler for hours of dishwashing. Thanks also to the ladies who made the delicious raised bread dumplings. It was a joy to see so many familiar faces. Dan Washick from Darwin, Minnesota, was there. He's bicycled 2,000 miles so far this year. Way to go Dan!! It was also nice to see Norm and Joyce Sladek again, as well as Hana Matousek, recently back from the Czech Republic.

I also met an impressive young lady, Autumn Martin, age 9, a new member of our Taneční Mládež childrens' dance group. Autumn helped in the dining room, where chaos rules during serving time. She remained calm, perceived what had to be done and did it with little supervision. What a great kid! As an older Sokol member I've had the pleasure of watching Sokol kids grow to adulthood. They're an impressive group. For instance, the Cahill girls: Colleen, Megan and Carolyn. Colleen is in her second year of teaching English near Seoul, South Korea. She'll work at Kangnam University until March of 2009. Megan graduated from the College of St. Catherine in May after earning a Doctorate in Physical Therapy. She works at Regions Hospital in St. Paul. Carolyn graduated from Central High in June and is attending the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. She's interested in the health sciences. All the girls have been active in Sokol and still help out whenever they're home. Mary, Dennis and Grandma Val Kohler Kuisle, we share your pride. Another young person on my mind is Christian Hall, son of Jean and Larry Hall. Christian was a Taneční Mládež and Teen dancer from age 9 till high school graduation. Christian was also a member of the St. Francis High School Madrigal Singers. You may remember them performing for us at our Christmas parties in 2004 and 2005. As a high school junior, Christian signed on with the U.S.

Army, and upon graduation was called into service. He's already served 7 months in Iraq. This September he was home on two weeks leave, and is now back in Iraq for another 7 months. Hopefully, his service time will not be extended. I'm sure he would enjoy getting mail from his Sokol friends. His address is:

PFC Hall, Christian D/CO, 1-15 IN
Unit #5956 APO AE 09308-5956

On Sunday, November 4, as part of the commemoration of the Czech National Independence Day, Libuse Rybnicek Imbrone received the Czernin Palace Memorial Bronze Medal and Diploma from the Czech Republic "for her great and significant contribution to the progress of Czech-American relations." For many years, Libby organized numerous receptions and programs. She welcomed dignitaries, visitors and students. She co-chaired events preceding and during Vaclav Havel's visit to Minnesota, and was Sokol's liaison with St. Thomas University, Macalester College, The House of Hope Church and Czech communities. She coordinated a great reception for President Havel, his wife and Czech dignitaries. Our Sokol unit has been enhanced by her good work. Congratulations Libby! We're so very proud of you!

Lou Pavlicek wrote to say thanks for your cards, letters and visits. She uses a wheelchair now, but plays the piano daily and is taking art classes. Lou celebrated her 90th birthday on November 11. We send her birthday greetings and our best wishes. Her corrected address is:

Episcopal Church Home, 1879 Feronia Ave.,
Room #238, St. Paul, MN 55104.

We also send our best wishes to Tom Pallo who is ill.

After 100 years, Jerabek's New Bohemian Bakery, on the West Side of St. Paul is up for sale, and may be sold by Christmas. Jerabek's is known for its Bohemian kolace houska, breads and cakes. After 23 years, Melissa Deyo, grand-daughter of founder Ed Jerebek, wants a less demanding schedule. I'm so disappointed! I love that bakery! I might have to sign up for a kolače making class.

Veselé Vánoce!



Sokol Welcomes New Members

By Norm Petrik, Membership Director

At its October membership meeting, Sokol Minnesota accepted one new member: Denis Novak. He lives in Cottage Grove, has five adult children, and is interested in cooking classes, history, and various Sokol events. Welcome, Denis!

Judy Metcalf, whose membership was received in September, was installed in October. She is a member

of the adult dance group, has a child in our childrens' dance group, and is taking Czech language classes. Georgiana Dolejsi gave her the traditional Sokol new-member hug!

All new members are encouraged to attend one of our monthly membership meetings to be installed and meet fellow Sokol members. Meetings are usually the fourth Friday at 7:30 p.m. The November meeting this year is on the 30th, to avoid the Thanksgiving Holiday weekend.

Czech Road Warriors

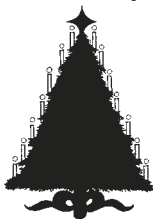
By Mark Bigaouette

In October, my mother Marcy and I attended the 2nd North East Wisconsin Czech Festival in Green Bay, Wisconsin. I recommend it highly. On the way, we stopped at Cadott in search of the old Czech hall. We found it about five miles north of town on highway 27. It's quite large, and in fairly good shape.

Because it was a Green Bay Packers home game weekend, we had to stay in Shawano, about 30 miles West of Green Bay. Our great find in Shawano was a small German restaurant called the "Hunters Haus" on Road K, just south of town. Wow, was it good: cheap, but excellent food. Sunday, we drove to Eastern Green Bay for the festival held at a banquet hall. It included lots of entertainment, two very good bands, dancing, and a wonderful, huge meal. The bands were both from Wisconsin – the Newtonburg Brass band and the OK Band. The place was packed, and everyone had a wonderful time.



The Festival was sponsored by the Wisconsin Czech's organization, which is planning to launch a web site soon. Until then, for information write to: NE Wisconsin Czech Festival, 337 Brookridge St., Green Bay, WI 54301 If you go, bring your dancing shoes.



An energetic and youthful group of novice dancers has been learning Czech folk dance steps at the CSPS Hall this Fall. On the last night of class, Leah wore her costume and crown as Miss Czech Slovak MN. The class went so well that our teacher Charlie volunteered to offer another class in January.

Give now for tax breaks

This December is the last chance for individuals 70 ½ or older to reap special tax savings when making charitable gifts from their IRA funds.

Through December 31, 2007, individuals 70 ½ and older can make a tax-exempt charitable contribution up to \$100,000 directly from their traditional IRAs to an eligible charity. If done before December 31, this qualified charitable distribution (QCD) satisfies the minimum distribution rule, and these monies are excluded from taxable income.

Unfortunately the Pension Protection Act of 2006, which allows donors to use this deduction, ends December 31, so people wishing to use this special tax-savvy opportunity need to act now. If you would like to make a gift to Sokol Minnesota, or you have questions, please contact Sokol Minnesota Finance Chair Joyce Tesarek at 612-822-6147.

Tax-deductible contributions from donors of any age are always welcome. To qualify for tax deductions on 2007 taxes, gifts must be made by December 31.





Josef Mestenhauer

This column consists of a short “feature” and brief bullet-type news from my office and from Czech and Slovak Republics. Information comes from several sources; daily press in the Czech Republic; Newsletters from Czech and Slovak Embassies; news from Czech language Kanadske Listy and Americke Listy; the Prague Post; “EU Politics Today (published by the EIN News Service); daily abstracts

from Czech newspapers (Ihned;) and from my contacts associated with the Honorary Consulate. My sources are short on news from Slovakia; readers are invited to give me leads for more information from Slovakia. There is too much to report for the space available. I invite readers to also let me know what items interest them most.

What can we learn from history?

By Josef Mestenhauer

I would like to devote this column to a bit of a historical reflection, and invite readers to join me. Three occasions prompt me to do so. The first is the selection of Derek Seyers’s book, *The Coasts of Bohemia*, for our Literary Ventures series. Literary Ventures is a joint venture of the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center and Sokol Minnesota. This book, in my opinion is one of the best books for gaining understanding of the history of the former Czechoslovakia. Admittedly, it is not easy bedtime reading because it requires constant attention to names, events and connections between them. Still, members of the Literary Ventures reading group were apparently impressed with the depth of information it provides about the history of Czechoslovakia.

Ethnic Americans have the double burden of knowing well not only the history of the US, but also the history of the countries of their origins. Programs such as the Literary Ventures can help accomplish both goals – for knowing both where we are and where we came from is essential to claiming our identities as either Czech- or Slovak-Americans, or American Czechs or American Slovaks. Books of this caliber help us see the complexity of issues that, though originating in distant past, are still active today. They also show how inter-connected the histories of our countries are.

I had a second reason for reflection. The National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, just announced the last of a three-part series of programs on the meaning of the 20th Century. This last program, scheduled for March 6-8 in Cedar Rapids, is devoted to the years following the Prague Spring. It promises to be the most important of the series, primarily because much of the politics and events of the Czech and Slovak Republics have been, and are still, dominated by the “generation of 1968.” I encourage people to attend, and thus strengthen our knowledge about what happened during our own lifetime.

Still, there was third set of reasons: two significant anniversaries that took place in October and November. The first is the birth of Czechoslovakia, celebrated on October 28; the other is the double November 17

anniversary of the Nazi suppression of Czech Universities in 1939, and the famous November, 1989, “velvet revolution”

Both anniversaries are remembered, but they are the cause of more than mere commemorations and celebratory parades. The birth of Czechoslovakia was by Cesarean operation; law and order collapsed with the monarchy and members of Sokol played a very important role in insuring a smooth and peaceful transition. Armed interventions were required to stop efforts of some German, Hungarian and Polish elements to secede from Czechoslovakia.

The Slovaks do not celebrating this anniversary because it did not give them the promised autonomy. As some claimed, the seeds of destruction of Czechoslovakia that came in 1938 were already present at its birth, and are yielding outcomes still today. Sudeten German elements in Bavaria continue to press for return of confiscated property and for redress of atrocities committed against them during their forced expulsion from Czechoslovakia. A newly formed radical Hungarian group demands autonomy of one third of Slovakia.

The closing of Czech universities and mass executions and imprisonment of many student leaders and faculty also require some reflection. Slovak universities escaped the fate of Czech universities and continued to produce new talents for the future development of Slovakia that was denied the Czechs. The year of 1968 included all collective memories, and created new ones.

Most people do not know enough about history of their own countries. Yet, while historical memory gives people a sense of collective identity, it often hides dark baggage that lives on. So, it was very fitting for the Czech Government to donate to the German Federal Republic a sculpture produced by a Czech artist Miroslav Vocht that was unveiled recently at the Prig Plats in the Scharlottenburg-Wilmersdorf district of Berlin. This impressive sculpture is devoted to reconciliation by moving beyond the past and looking forward to a better future.

As we look at the glory and gory of history, this gesture may offer a very important lesson for the future. The Europeans have an advantage in that the new Union provides an umbrella under which the future direction can be negotiated. The question for many of us is not about reconciliation and understanding among nations of Europe, but about whether the same lessons of remembering and moving forward can be applied to the communist rule of Czechoslovakia during the last 45 years. Can it work despite the arrogance of the Communist Party, its persistent adherence to Marxism-Leninism, and its complete denial of responsibility for their atrocities against life, liberty, property, and minds? I will let you decide that question.

How about more people joining the Literary Ventures reading group, or attending lectures, films and programs that help us reflect on these and other questions?

see page 7 for *Did you Know* by Josef Mestenhauer



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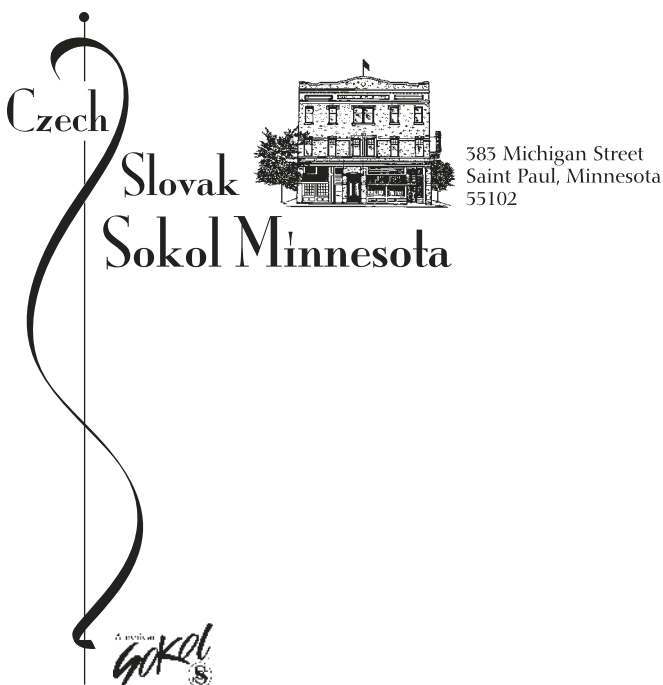
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