

The Beaded Ornaments of Czechoslovakia

By Sandee Kelsey

The history of the Czech beaded Christmas ornament industry cannot be told without first acknowledging the early Bohemian glassmaking which, in turn, created the glass bead industry.

In the early 1800's, manufacturing glass as a garnet substitute began, and by the mid-19th century, the bead industry was established, creating jewelry and supplying beads to the millinery and dressmaking industries.

Once part of the vast Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czechoslovakia was named following World War I and has the longest tradition of glassmaking on the continent. The industry was centered in Gablonz, a tiny village located on the Niesse River in a valley of Bohemia's Iser Mountains. Gablonz had all the natural resources needed to make glass. Equally important, it was located near important trade routes and business centers, so that it was accessible to the influence of Venetian artisans. Initially they worked only with colored, hollow glass tubes heated over fire-lamps and shaped with molding tongs. Soon, inspired by the master glass artists of Venice and Murano, they turned out beads of every description: blown, drawn, spun, marbled, painted, faceted, engraved, hand cut, wound and press-molded beads that could be given a satin-like finish, and even lined with gold or silver.



Kelsey Ornament Collection:
Unusual tree topper, most likely used on tabletop tree; c1926-1950.

Please see *Ornaments*, page 4

Upcoming Events

5 December,
7 pm
**Children's
Christmas
Party**

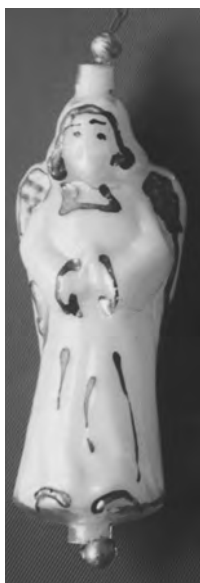
7 December,
3:30 pm
**Sokol
Members'
Christmas
Party**
(invitation in the Mail)

20 December,
1:30-3:30 pm
**Czech
Christmas
Antique
Ornament
exhibit &
illustrated
lecture by
Sandee Kelsey**

23 January,
7 pm
**Membership
Meeting**

24 January,
5 pm
**Roast Duck
Dinner**

Den Svatého Mikuláše/Saint Nicholas Day



Children's Christmas Party
Friday, December 5
7 p.m./doors open at 6:30

Featuring *Taneční Mládež*/children's folk dancers, Sokol Youth Gymnasts, visits from *sy Mikuláše* (St. Nicholas), *Andel* (angel), and *Čert* (devil), and refreshments.

Veselé Vánoče/Merry Christmas!

These large, clear glass beads from c1900-1925 are coated inside with a phosphorescent wax which, when exposed to light, glows in the dark. The details are painted on the angel (L) and the Bishop of Myra (R). These ornaments are rare. From the Kelsey Ornament Collection.



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President Komentář/President's Note

*Greetings brothers and sisters!
Pozdrav bratři a sestry*

Did you get the following letter? If you didn't, you are not a Sokol member!

You are registered only as a subscriber to the Slovo. If you did, I...

"...would like to formally invite you to renew your membership in, and contributions to, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota.

This year we again enjoyed historic high membership numbers. You may be surprised to learn that we forward all membership dues to our national organization, American Sokol. They provide us with our nonprofit status, as well as context for our gymnastics program. So you may ask, how do we support our building and all our other programs?

I have learned a lot since I became president two years ago. I have made it my task to engage with just about every aspect of our organization in order to get a better understanding. My greatest pleasure has been working with the archives since January. I approached this task with awe: touching often-dusty fragile artifacts, papers, and collections that members' hands created and worked before me, often with addresses on my very street in our West End neighborhood.

With other members I worked in our meeting room on Tuesday mornings. This is the same time that the hall echoes in more ways than one with the folk tunes of the Senior Singers, and I quietly hum along, reflecting on past Bohemian, Moravian, Silesian, and Slovak immigrants building what became our home, our hall.

But members did not build just a three story building. Members built community. They cooked; they danced; they shared books; they performed prostna. They meticulously tracked expenses and income. They documented meal preparations for future committees; they developed educational programs. They cleaned; they repaired. They came together; they shared joys and difficult times; they even fought and forgave. They carried the philosophy and spirit of founder Miroslav Tyrš "a sound mind in a healthy body."

How do you see yourself in Sokol? Whether you live near or far, we appreciate and value your membership. We appreciate your past contributions, and the memories you can provide us. They are so important. It does not matter if you cannot travel to be part of a standing committee, what matters is that one or two events benefit from your talents or attendance. Besides our social get-togethers, Sokol Minnesota must host a constant stream of dinners, bake sales, festivals, etc. that contribute to supporting our hall and programs.

We also value your donations! Our immediate project is to install a fire protection sprinkling system that meets current standards, and protects our history. All the other Sokol units in Minnesota have been closed or merged into Sokol Minnesota, we stand alone, proudly and symbolically, but in unity, honoring the Sokol tradition.

So: please renew your membership! We have had an extraordinary year: our 125th anniversary celebration; transition of Honorary Consul; festivals and dinners; and meetings where we share each other. See you soon.

Nazdar! Joe Landsberger, President



Kelsey Ornament Collection:

Lobster, the popular Zeppelin and a horn; canes, single beads, bead-rows; c1926-1950.





Help our Hall, CSPA Hall Needs an Update

By Joyce Tesarek Petrik, Finance Chair

The new year will soon be here, so it's time to make those end of year tax donations to causes close to your heart. How about a contribution to our Hall Building Fund? The Board of Directors (BOD) has approved a number of must-do projects, from fire protection and air conditioning, to elevator, remodeling and infrastructure repairs. Fundraising has begun! Our BOD has started things off with pledges (close to \$10,000 already received), and we have written and received grants from the Minnesota State Historical Society for \$8000 and a City of St. Paul Star Grant for \$22,000. These are matching grants, so we need your help to make the \$30,000 match. All donations are tax deductible and qualify for corporate matches from participating companies. Make checks payable to the Sokol MN Building Fund. If you have any questions, or would like to discuss other methods of donation, please contact me at 612-822-6147. Memorials are welcome!

Donations

By Jean Hall, Corresponding Secretary

General fund donations: Claire Press, Anne Neubauer; in memory of Donald McKenney: Sue and Dave Martin; in memory of Rose Roch: Rosemary & Dan Bodien (\$100.00), George Dostal, Bruce and Melinda Adams, Keith, Alan, Mark Adams; in memory of Val Hanover, Stan Vosejпка, Joann Oliva & Donald McKenney: Gene Kubes (\$100.00); 125th Anniversary: Carol Richter (\$100.00). Building Fund/elevator: in memory of Harris Rogers (brother to Marlene Hinshaw): Georgiana Dolejsi

Thank You!

Board of Trustees

by Terry Shima

The Board of Trustees (BOT) has been busy with a number of projects this fall with extensive tree trimming behind the building and along the parking lot as well as weeding and general parking lot cleanup before the festival. Our work projects continued in early November as we gathered up more than 20 bags of leaves and worked in the basement. Our basement work included cleaning out the drains along the building as well as disposing of a number of unused items and reorganizing the kept items. Ceiling tiles have been purchased for the second floor storage room off the elevator for installation soon.



Kelsey Ornament Collection:

The very popular human forms are from c1951-1975. Glass buttons, simple and molded beads make up the body parts; fabric and chenille used in the center ornament.

Bake and Take for the Holidays (limit 10 cooks/class)



Perniky/Czech Ginger Cookies

Instructors: Sokol Cooks

Wednesday Dec. 10 6:00-8:30 PM Fee: \$15.00 (Sokol Members) \$18.00 (Non-members) Cooks should bring their own apron, large bowl, mixing spoon, rolling pin, breadboard and containers for their cookies. Each cook will make about 2 dozen cookies.

Vanočka/Christmas Bread with raisins and nuts

Instructors: Sokol Cooks Wednesday Dec. 17 - 6:00 to 8:30 PM Fee: \$18.00 (Sokol Members) \$20.00 (Non-Members) Cooks should bring their own apron, mixing bowl, large spoon, bread board or baking sheet. (you will take your Vanočka home to bake)

Registration is required. Send payment with registration. For further information please see our website, www.sokolmn.org, "Education" or call 651-452-6240.

6th annual Roast Duck Dinner

Saturday, January 24 5 p.m. \$22.00 Limited seating by reservation



Send check payable to Sokol Minnesota no later than January 19 to:
Doreen McKenney, 7301 West 101 Street, Unit 211, Bloomington, MN 55438
For more information call 952 941 0426



Sokol Minnesota
presents a special
free Christmas offering:

**Sandee Kelsey's exhibit &
illustrated lecture**

*Antique Czech bead
& wire ornaments*

December 20, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Program at 2 p.m.
CSPS Hall, 2nd floor theater
Refreshments will be served.
Gift Shop will be open for
your own special purchase

continued from page 1

In this environment, the beaded Christmas ornament was born. These beautiful beads, strung on very thin wire, were used to create the works of art called Czechoslovakian bead Christmas ornaments—simple and complex. The airplane ornaments seem to soar under their own power and miniature ships sail on the air. Animals circled, butterflies turned as if searching for flower ornaments. Figures of people danced. These beaded ornaments provided movement and life to the Christmas trees of the past. Now they are sought after not only for their beauty and their historical value, but also as little works of folk art.

Flat, two dimensional ornaments, often with hanging tails, were popular ornaments Imported into the U.S. in the early 1900s (Photo 2). In the 1920s/30s, three-dimensional figural were popular: butterflies, airplanes, Zeppelins, people, spinning wheels, baby buggies, carousels, baskets with and without fruit—all subjects taken from everyday life. Ornaments imported into the U.S. had small “Made in Czechoslovakia” tags which became fancier after WWII, usually naming the exporting company. Export records just before WWII were destroyed during the war, making dating difficult. If home production continued through generations with a stock

of old beads, an ornament design could have been produced from 1920 into the 1950s.

One of the most important prerequisites for dating a piece is its authenticity—no wiring added, no additions of any kind that were not original to the piece. Dating by a tarnished silver lining resulting from oxidation is unreliable since such changes took place in post-war products. Popular subjects were made over a long period of time, even decades and many were certainly known before WWII. Some subjects may give you a clue to its age, i.e. Helicopters could not have been made before their invention in 1944. Note the thickness of the wire. Older ornaments were constructed with very thin wire.



Kelsey Ornament Collection:
Bicycle incorporates seed beads, canes, molded beads, bangles, bead-rows and single beads; c1951-1975



Clues to the Meaning of Your Bohemian Village Name

By Ginger Simek, CGSI President
with permission from Karen Hobbs, translator

Have you ever wondered or thought about the name of your family village in Bohemia—was there a meaning or reason behind its name? *Hrad* refers to a castle or fortified and enclosed place. If the ending of *-ec* or *-ek* is added becoming *Hradec* or *Hradek*, this is the diminutive form and the meaning is “small castle”. Several words relate to the elevation of terrain and distinguishes the differences; *hora* and *vrch* for mountain, *chlum* refers to an elongated wooded hill, *homole* is a higher, well-rounded elevation or a crest, and *kopec* refers to a hill. Some place names examples are; Kutná Hora, Chlum a town in the area of Časlav (and there are many towns with that same name or variations of), Homole in southern Bohemia, and Kopec (Kopetzen in German) in west Bohemia in the area of Stříbro. A related form of *hora* is *hůrka/hurky* and means “small mountain mostly forest-covered”. There is a Hůrky in west Bohemia in the area of Kralovice. These are just a few

examples taken from a publication in the CGSI library titled *The Place Names of Bohemia; Their History, Derivation and Meaning* translated by Karen Hobbs from published articles by Paul Brostean and Dr. Ernst Richter. Listing of CGSI library resources on the website www.cgsi.org



As different as the beads are--from the solid bead to the rocaille, the molded bead to the tiny seed, from the bead-row to the hollow bead--they are all similar in that they are never transparent. The thin wire framework is never to be seen, so color is always present in the opaque glass or painted as a lining. Bugles of many lengths, solid and hollow canes, drawn beads, molded beads also were used to create these works of art. We see the bugle cross bars connecting the radial bead-rows on the spider's web while airplanes and butterflies also depend on the bugles, too. Short bugles and little drawn beads are used as connecting pieces or wrapped around a bangle as are the rocailles, solid little beads, rounded off and perforated and brightly colored. Depending on the fashion and economics, certain materials used for ornaments changed. During WWII, colored opaque glass was used in place of inaccessible gold or silver linings.



Kelsey Ornament Collection:

Seed beads strung on thin wire, wrapped on glass/metal bangles, single and molded beads; c1926-1950.

Individual families became specialists in each step of the process. Some fabricated the beads. Others cut, polished or decorated them by a range of techniques that included painting, enameling, gilding, pearling and foil backing – a process in which foil was placed inside a faceted stone to add sparkle. Up until World War II, succeeding generations of these same families continued the tradition. Some exporters employed ornaments builders in a more familiar factory setting and paid them in piecework fashion. The production of the ornaments was seasonal and probably always done mostly at home by people (usually women). The production of ornaments seems to have been concentrated in towns belonging to the Richenberg and Gablonz districts.

Sadly, several factors led to the demise of the industry: the war, which consumed most of the raw materials used in manufacture and the emigration of skilled artisans which began in the mid-1930's. A small number of companies in the Czech Republic today specialize in glass bead Christmas tree ornaments for export and often produce similar or even exact designs as those used in the 1930s. The new beads are simple, lacking the detail and complexity of the old beads.

If you have the good fortune to own some of these beaded treasures, take care to pass them on so that their history survives. And, as you decorate your Christmas tree, reflect on the number of people and the time involved in their creation and the many miles they have traveled to add such beauty to your tree.

The following resources were used to write this article:

Jargstorf, Sibylle. *Baubles, Buttons and Beads, The Heritage of Bohemia.* Schiffer Publishing Ltd., Atglen, Pa. 1993.

Jargstorf, Sybille. *Glass in Jewelry.* Schiffer Publishing Ltd., Atglen, Pa., 1990.

Neuwirth, Waltraud. *Glasperlen Christbaumschmuck,* self-published, Vienna, 1995.



Song of the Month

Georgiana Dolejsi

From Písň Vánoční, edited by Sr. Anita Smisek, O.P. 1975

Wanting Him to sleep,
she was singing to her small son
Sitting up, the Mother sang to her darling
“Sleep, delightful Baby, Son of God!
Sleep little Infant, Gift to the World.”

Chtíc Aby Spal/Wanting Him to Sleep

Sokol Minnesota Mystery Dinner raises \$2,000 for Sokol Cedar Rapids



The night was elegant, mysterious and fun as 55 dinner guests enjoyed a catered meal by Francesca while solving a murder aboard the SS Ethelred. The audience-interactive play was produced by Denis Novak and his assembled cast of eleven, and the meal was organized by Joan Sedlacek and Joe Landsberger, and their cast of five kitchen crew/servers. Not only did the actors wear circa 1920's dress, but also many of the audience took advantage of the Halloween weekend to bring out their 20's-style costumes.



The American Sokol Development Conference

By Mary Cahill, Assistant Women's Physical Director

On Oct. 18 and 19 I attended the American Sokol (AS) Development Conference held at Sokol South Omaha, Omaha, NE. This is an annual event, organized by AS, and held at different Sokol units each year. The purpose is to bring as many unit presidents, mens and womens physical directors, instructors, gym class participants, and parents together at one time to meet and interact with one another in a weekend packed with informative sessions on artistic gymnastics routines, calisthenics, coaching and judging, the latest on training for functional fitness, how tos on expanding and creating interesting physical fitness classes for all ages, being a positive and motivational influence for your youth, updates on the progress of AS's strategic plan, promotional information on the 2009 American Sokol Slet in Ft. Worth and much more.

True to Sokol ideals, the days were structured and long (sessions from 8am to 9pm), with lots of great information – but there was time built-in to meet Sokols from all over the US. I was the only attendee from Sokol MN and had to choose among three concurrent sessions so I opted to try the smorgasbord approach, a little of everything. I was part of groups trying to learn the 2009 Senior II Coed Cal and the 2009 Slet Finale. The cal is fast paced for a senior cal II, and more complicated than in the past – BUT it will be a beautiful and interesting one to watch. The finale is set to the music “Foot Loose” and will be performed at the end of the Slet in Ft. Worth by all participants. I had an opportunity to clarify how specific deductions are taken by USAG certified judges during a competition. This information will really benefit our gymnastics competitors.

AS has well defined goals and objectives in its strategic plan that all units are expected to comply with. A couple of them include standardizing training for gym instructors, and developing the Core Physical Program

which has levels of physical fitness components with specific content so that a quality and evidence based work out is offered that has progressions in strength training, cardiovascular fitness, etc.

Last, but certainly not least, there was an update on the tremendous planning and organization that has occurred for the AS National Slet in Ft. Worth in June of 2009. This is going to be an extraordinary, don't miss event. In my 40 plus years with Sokol I cannot recall a Slet with this breadth of events and collaboration with other organizations. It really is super sized for Texas! Hopefully we can get a good contingent from Sokol MN interested in attending and participating. Join us for a good work out and great camaraderie with fellow Sokols.

American Sokol Slet Practice Begins!

By Norm Petrik, Mens Physical Director

Sokol Minnesota will begin preparing for the American Sokol Slet in Ft Worth Tx Friday and Saturday June 26-27, 2009, at our Sokol hall, on the 1st and 3rd Mondays starting January 5th at 6pm till about 7:15 pm. We will be practicing the Senior II Calisthenics and “Let Loose”, an All Participant Finale. Doreen McKenney will again be our instructor as she has for the past several Slets, and she has done an excellent job! We last participated in the World Wide Slet in Prague in 2006, and the American Sokol Slet in Chicago in 2005, American Sokol Slets are every 4 years, World Wide Slets every 6 years. We have had alot of fun, and I invite you to join us. The Senior II slet is for groups of nine adults, movement to music, groups of 9 all over the football field do the same movements. The songs are entitled: “To our Maidens”, “Coming to America” and “America the Beautiful”, the whole program lasts about 10 minutes. The “Let Loose” finale is more active and for persons of all ages, with adults doing somewhat different movements than the teenagers. So all are welcome! Please join us! Questions? Call me at 612 822-6147.

Dolejsi, Continued from Page 8

In my junior years as a *dorostenka prostna*, I had the privilege to attend Sokol Instructor's schools – some monthly, weekly and bi-weekly – to learn the gymnastic method of teaching formulated by Dr. Miroslav Tyrs. I tried to put it all into practice when I started teaching classes. It was a challenge, but I loved it.

The 10th Czechoslovak Sokol Slet in Prague in 1938 was a thrill of a life-time that I will never forget. As one of the representatives of our Unit and a member of the American Sokol Gymnastic team, I was one of 15,000 women participating in a mass callisthenic number at Strahov Stadium. Unbelievable!!! I was also one of 100 American men and women, performing in a precision special number. It not only rained but poured throughout the entire performance! The field was a sea of mud, yet our spirit never faltered. The tremendous standing ovation was our reward as our tears flowed with great pride.

I have been reminded about an incident that happened in the 1950's which has always brought laughter to those who were witnesses. At the time, I was pregnant with my daughter, Susie, and had to have a substitute replace me in teaching the prostna for an upcoming slet. She was having difficulty in teaching a part of the callisthenic so I got on the stage to help. You can imagine the picture I presented in this last stage of my pregnancy as I went through the difficult movements with the gymnasts breaking up in laughter.

Beside involvement in gymnastics, music, and singing were my next great interests. Sokol desperately needed a new piano and with fundraisers and the generosity of members and friends, our mission was accomplished and a new Baldwin piano was purchased. Singing became a very important part of our program. The Sokol Czechoslovak Singers was formed in 1978, and we have been singing ever since. About that same time period, I compiled a songbook entitled *Sokol Minnesota Sings*, which contained popular Czech, Slovak, and Moravian folksongs as well as popular Sokol songs. This songbook is still used on a regular basis by our singing group. Another dream of mine was realized when I started an annual "Sing-a-long" with the Czech singers from Montgomery and New Prague. It was a great gathering for all of us. Unfortunately, with the passing years, health problems and death depleted our numbers and this event fell by the wayside.

My thoughts go back to 1935 when I was seventeen at which time I was of age to officially join Sokol—one of my proud moments. In 1998, I received a totally unexpected surprise—an award as an honorary member of Sokol MN for my service throughout my lifetime. From 1987-1990, I proudly served in the office of President of Sokol Minnesota. During my term as president, I had the privilege of presenting a gift of honorary membership in Sokol MN to a distinguished visiting Slovak dignitary Dr. Alexander Dubcek in the beautiful rotunda of the State Capitol. I served eighteen to twenty years as Physical Director of Women in which I was deeply involved in the workings and challenges of this position, not only at the local level, but at the District and National levels as well. The teachings of Sokol founder Dr. Miroslav Tyrs certainly served me well. Over the years I helped with receptions held at our Sokol Hall for visiting dignitaries. A special highlight for me was the 1999 visit of the then-President of Czechoslovakia Václav Havel. Among the many events surrounding his visit was a Sokol program as well. I was pleased to organize the singers from the Czech communities—Montgomery, New Prague, and St. Paul—in the singing of the national anthems and our beloved Czech song, *Ta Nase Písnička Česka*. This took place at the University of St. Thomas.

As I look back on my Sokol years, I realize the important role Sokol has played in my life. It became an integral part of my life and still is to this day. In closing, may I add that none of my contributions and accomplishments could have materialized without a strong support system of faithful Sokols, my dear family, my parents, and both of my deeply loved husbands, Al Buzicky and John Dolejsi, all of whom have passed on. I am proud of being a Sokol, I am proud to be an American, and so very proud to be a Czech in my heart. Thank You!



Kelsey Ornament Collection:
Early ornaments from the late 1800s; beads, canes, chromolithograph angels on paper glued to heavy embossed paper.

Visit us at:
www.sokolmn.org

The SLOVO is published 10 times yearly by Czech & Slovak Sokol Minnesota, a non-profit organization, 383 Michigan Street, St. Paul, MN 55102. We welcome your contributions, text and pictures! Send your suggestions digitally to publicrelations@sokolmn.org, or call 651 290 0542!

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Georgiana Dolejsi awarded Černín Palace Memorial Bronze Medal and Diploma



Editor's note: on November 9, life-long Sokol Georgiana Dolejsi was awarded the Černín Palace Award of the Czech Republic "for her great and significant contribution to the progress of Czech-American relations." What follows is her acceptance speech, and a wonderful sokol history:



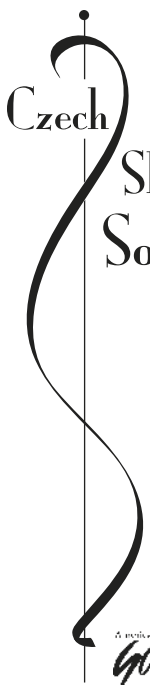
One evening a few weeks ago, I received a phone call from my friend, Dr. Josef Mestenhauser saying, "Congratulations, Georgiana!"

I hadn't the slightest idea why he was offering congratulations to me. I was certain he had made a mistake and had the wrong person in mind. After further explanation, I was emotionally overwhelmed by this joyous surprise. And so today, I am deeply honored to accept this prestigious Černín Palace Memorial Bronze Medal Award and Diploma which I will always treasure. I sincerely thank you for this great honor.

With the help of some of my dear Sokol friends, Dr. Mestenhauser compiled a very flattering "Bio" of my involvement and contributions made through my many years in Sokol. I would like to elaborate on some of the events that have been so special to me.

Reflections of my early years in Sokol and the Czech life I was introduced to as a child, dates way, way back in my book of memories. My grandfather, Josef Walla, was the first men's gymnastic instructor in Sokol way back in the 1800's, and my Mom and Dad, Bessie and Albert Smolik were also devout charter members in Sokol and played a very important role in its growth. **THEY WERE MY INSPIRATION.**

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