

Šibřinky

The C.S.P.S. Hall will come to life the night of February 9 when the festive Šibřinky ball takes the floor.

The Dale Pexa Band will warm the hall with its snappy music from 7-11 p.m. Food and beverages will be served from 6-9 p.m.

The origins of Šibřinky, a Czech Mardi Gras-type ball, date back to Prague in 1865, when Sokol co-founders Miroslav Tyrš and Jindrich Fuegner dreamt up a night of costumed practical joking and clowning.

Tickets for Sokol Minnesota's Šibřinky ball are \$10 at the door. Discounted \$8 tickets are available if purchased by February 2. Mail checks to Louise Wessinger, 3704 Denmark Ave., Eagan, MN 55123.

Costumed Czech and Slovak dancers will perform during breaks by the band.

Your invitation at right, was done in the style of Tyrš and Fuegner.



YKNIŘIBIŠ
8002 9 yraurbeF
llaH lokoS SPSC

Turn to the article on the origin of Šibřinky on page 4 to decode this invitation!

Upcoming Events

Feb 4,
10:30am
Family Yoga

Feb 7, 7pm
BOD Meeting

Feb 9, 6pm
Šibřinky

Feb 22,
7:30pm
Membership Meeting

Feb 27, 7pm
Memorandum performance

Mar 1, 7pm
Memorandum performance

Mar 2, 2pm
Memorandum performance

Mar 16, 11am
Easter Bake & Pancake Breakfast

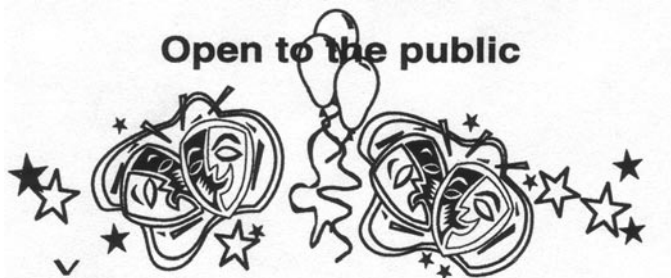
Mar 30,
12:30pm
Flavors of Slovakia

Dance to live music by the **Dale Pexa Band** 7-11 pm

Authentic Czech and Slovak dance performance during the breaks

Czech food and sausages served 6-9 pm

Open to the public



Šibřinky

(Czech Mardi Gras)

Saturday • February • 9th

\$10.00 Admittance Fee

Historic CSPS Sokol Hall 383 Michigan Street – St. Paul, Minnesota

www.sokolmn.org

\$8.00 non-refundable advance ticket sale available by mailing payment (no later than February 2) to: Louise Wessinger 3704 Denmark Ave, Eagan MN 55123

Pick up prepaid tickets at the door

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Sokol Minnesota
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President Komentář/President's Note

By Joe Landsberger

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings brothers and sisters!

As I write this at the beginning of January 2008, I am reminded of what I said in my first column: My passion will be stewardship of our history, our building, our mission. Toward that passion there has been much happening lately, keeping me and others quite busy! I am also reminded of Georgiana Dolesji's comments at our Christmas party, where she expressed confidence in Sokol moving forward into the 21st Century!

Projects and grants. These two words hold a lot of work! We have already received a St. Paul COMPAS Cultural STAR grant of \$2,000 to improve our communications technology. This will help us improve our telephone service and connect to the Internet – and perhaps even to Cable TV. We will be able to redevelop our office on the mezzanine/balcony level in order to improve administration. But there is so much more!

Joyce Tesarek as Chair of the Finance Committee and I have had conversations with the grant resource people at the United States' National Trust, grant resource people and an historical architect at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul's Historic Preservation Commission, St. Paul's COMPAS and STAR grant programs, the Vice President of Kraus Anderson Construction, the Vice President of Pope Associates (an architectural firm of Kraus Anderson), Martin Ziegler (owner of the Glockenspiel Restaurant) and Honorary Consuls of the Czech Republic, Josef Mestenhauser (sitting) and Bob Vanasek (designate). We have had informal conversations with Sokol committee chairs, and will soon formalize our priorities.

There are four projects that I personally see as critical for this year: adding a fire-protection sprinkling system, removal of the asbestos in the basement and insulating pipes, upgrade/replace the rear fire stair, and adding air conditioning to the second floor. Toward that goal, we will be applying for the Minnesota Historical Society Grants in Aid that will require matching funds!

If our applications are successful, a grant from the National Trust/Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation would commission a *Historic Structures Report*, and the National Trust/Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors would support upgrading display and storage of historic records and artifacts.

There are lots of opportunities to help raise funds for projects. Some require us to make matching contributions, some do not. Last year, Joyce organized a fund-raising committee. Its first session was with Jim Hanzel, whose family has a long Sokol connection, and who has expertise in this area. If you wish to join our fund-raising effort, please contact Joyce Tesarek, 612-822-6147 or at joycedvm@aol.com

Lots of fun things to do!

Joe Landsberger



Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota SLOVO

Published 10 times yearly by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota,
a non-profit organization, 383 Michigan Street, St. Paul, MN 55102

Václav Havel's *Memorandum* on C.S.P.S. Stage

The absurdities of both Communism and bureaucracy will come to life on the C.S.P.S. stage this month when the Lex-Ham Theater Group performs Václav Havel's play *Memorandum*.

Performances are scheduled Friday, February 29, and Saturday, March 1 at 7:30 p.m. A Sunday matinee performance is March 2 at 2 p.m. Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota and the Czech-Slovak Cultural Center are co-sponsors of the production. Arrive early for Czech and Slovak delicacies and refreshments.

Admission is \$15. A discounted ticket price of \$10 is offered to both seniors over 60 and to members of both Sokol Minnesota and the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center. The \$10 discounted price is also available to groups of seven or more if reserved at least 24 hours in advance. For more information, call 651-484-6877.

Havel, a well-known playwright and dissident against Communism, was imprisoned for his writings. He was President of Czechoslovakia from 1989 to 2002 and President of the Czech Republic from 1992 to 2003. Havel wrote *Memorandum* while Czechoslovakia was under Communist rule.

Memorandum is in the Absurdist tradition of Samuel Beckett. The satire reflects a government bureaucrat's struggle to preserve his identity in the face of inept commands from his superiors, which are delivered in a bureaucratic language called "prydepe." This "scientifically" unambiguous language of government is imposed upon, and warps, all who embrace it. The plot includes career opportunism, office attractions and sexual politics, and icy betrayal.

Even though the play was written forty years ago, our post 9-11 world is brought to mind when a mother and her baby are kept from boarding a plane because her

Memorandum

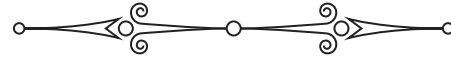
By Václav Havel

Presented by Lex-Ham Community Theater

Friday, February 29, 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 1, 7 p.m.

Sunday, March 2, 2 p.m.



\$15 Admission

\$10 for seniors, Sokol Minnesota and Czech-Slovak Cultural Center Members

\$10 for groups of seven or more if reserved in advance

Call 651-484-6877

infant's name appears on a list of suspected terrorists. Havel's literary and political achievements were honored when, in the fall of 2006, Havel was invited to Washington, D.C., and Columbia University for a seven-week residency featuring lectures, interviews, conversations, classes, performances, and panels centered on his life and ideas. For the occasion, all of his plays were performed throughout New York City. His most recent book, *To the Castle and Back*, juxtaposes the experiences of his American visit with an account of his presidency.

Mark Monfils directs this production of *Memorandum*. Tiffany Niehaus is the Assistant Director and Stage Manager. Showtimes (doors open early with refreshments and Czech and Slovak delicacies.)



Flavors of Slovakia will tempt Diners

A special Flavors of Slovakia dinner will surely lure ethnic food fans to the C.S.P.S. Hall March 30.

The menu will feature holupky (cabbage rolls), halusky kapusta (dumplings and cabbage), pirohy, pickled beets and green beans, accented with aromatic caraway rye bread. Desert and coffee will top off this dining experience.

Seating is limited to one serving only, at 12:30 p.m. Dinner tickets are \$12 for adults and \$5 for children. Mail checks payable to Sokol Minnesota to Slovak Dinner, Sokol Minnesota, 383 Michigan Street, St. Paul, MN 55102 before March 23.

Take-outs are available for this dinner.

March brings Easter Bake and Pancake Breakfast

Sokol Minnesota's annual spring pancake breakfast is scheduled for Sunday, March 16, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

All-you-can eat pancakes, complemented with sausage and beverage (coffee or milk) are \$6 for adults and \$3 for children under age 8.

For more information, contact Doreen at 952-941-0426 or Louise at 651-452-6240.

Song of the Month



Submitted by
Georgiana Dolejsi

The Slovak anthem, *Nad Tatrou Sa Blyska*, means *Thunder over the Tatras*. It is a song of storms raging over the Tatra Mountains, reflecting struggles against oppression. Words are by Janko Matúška (1821-1877), the melody is traditional. Source: American Sokol Association, The American Sokol Sings (Berwyn, Illinois, 1974).

O'er Tatra Mountains, lightning
is flashing,
Thunderclaps wildly beating.
O'er Tatra Mountains lightning
is flashing
Thunderclaps wildly beating.
Let us stand together, brothers
Before it's lost
Slovaks will live on
Let us stand together, brothers
Before it's lost
Slovaks will live on.

Slovak National Anthem (Thunder over the Tatras)

Allegro energico

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of five staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: Nad Ta-trou sa blý-ská, hro-my di-vo bi-jú, Nad Ta-trou sa blý-ská, hro-my di-vo bi-jú, Za-stav-me sa bra-tia, ved' sa o-ny ztra-tia, Slo-vá-ci o-ži-jú, Za-stav-me sa bra-tia, ved' sa o-ny ztra-tia, Slo-vá-ci o-ži-jú. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (mf, f, ff, rit.), articulation (accents), and chord symbols (F#m, Bm, A, D, E7, C#7, Bm7).

Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors

By Jean Hall, Corresponding Secretary

Generous donors continue to honor Sokol Minnesota with donations to support our building and programs. Sokol thanks the following recent donors.

In Memory of Veronica Vrchota:
Tillie Dolejsi (Elevator Fund)

In Memory of Ladd Loss:
Eleanor Watson
(\$100 to General Fund)

**In Memory of Adolph & Mary
Pliva and Agnes Pliva Mules**
Tamara Radke
(\$100 to General Fund)

In Honor of Libby Imbrone
Elsie Roepke (General Fund)

Capital Fund
Marit Kucera
Tom and Penny Tesarek

General Fund
Darlene Sitko

Childrens' Dance Fund
Kathleen Philipp

Thank You!

For all those who donated in 2007, Sokol Minnesota sends a very heartfelt "thank-you." And to all who gave not only money, but also of their time and their talents -- all of you are the greatest! The Holidays are now over and as you think of the up-coming new year, please keep Sokol a part of it.

And just a quick reminder: please send contributions directly to the Treasurer at Sokol Minnesota, 383 Michigan Ave., St. Paul, MN 55119. Clearly note that your check is a donation, and the Treasurer will pass information to me to that we can acknowledge your generosity.

Dancers light up the Holidays

By Louise Wessinger

The St. Paul Czech and Slovak Dancers celebrated the Holidays with performances at two of their favorite events. The Sunday after Thanksgiving found the group performing at “Christmas Around the World” at the Ukrainian Hall in Minneapolis. This annual event features many folk groups from the Twin Cities area – it is always a treat to see many of the groups we dance with each Spring at the Festival of Nations. After the performances, there is always time to visit old friends while tasting the Ukrainian versions perogies, cabbage rolls or borcht soup!

In early December the dancers performed at Murphy’s Landing in Shakopee. This restored immigrant village features a cluster of homes – each of a different nationality – along with town buildings such as you would have found in the 1850s-1870s era. Each



The St. Paul Czech and Slovak Dancers

December, Murphy’s Landing hosts a “Folkways for Holidays” celebration featuring ethnic performers in the Town Hall and church.

Fortunately, we danced at Murphy’s Landing on Sunday, and missed the messy December 1 snowstorm. We always enjoy dancing at Murphy’s Landing on the old wooden floor surrounded by the crowd. It must be a bit like a dance in the little town halls in the villages of Europe. It was a wonderful way to begin the holidays.

Now, it’s time to get ready for the Festival of Nations. We have already learned our opening dance... a very traditional Bohemian “Kalamajka.” We learned this dance from Alice Janotova, who was our guest teacher in September. Our choreographer, Charlie Rusnacko, has set this dance for our group. He has also prepared for us a Slovak women’s dance and a men’s dance, as well as a Moravian couples dance. We should be busy!

Family Yoga at CSPS Hall

Family yoga is coming to the C.S.P.S. Hall in February.

Family yoga utilizes storytelling, yoga asanas (poses), yoga games and meditations to help children and parents experience yoga together. Patorno Family Yoga will offer 2 eight-week sessions beginning February 4.

Mondays, February 4 to March 24, 9 to 10:30 a.m. Fridays, February 8 to March 28, 9 to 10:30 a.m.

The 90-minute class follows a simple, predictable schedule that allows children to identify what is coming next so that they feel comfortable to explore, learn and grow. Adults are given ideas to better practice yoga with their children from newborn through age 5. Patorno Family Yoga combines yoga and storytelling to help improve children’s literacy, written, oral and listening skills, while inspiring and gently building strength, flexibility, balance, awareness and confidence. Yoga, combined with storytelling, helps develop skills children need to face the challenges of growing up.

They learn to pay attention to themselves and the world around them.

Instructor Tami Eshult has a B.A. in psychology and is a certified yoga instructor who has been practicing since 1999. She also has over 17 years experience working with families who have children with autism. She has a passion for creating opportunities for children and families to learn and grow.

Patorono Family Yoga is unique because it uses two teaching assistants, who provide support for the class and help children play safely as they flow in and out of the yoga practice with their family. The class closes with a supervised free expression time for the children and coffee or tea time for the adults.

Tuition is \$112 per adult for adults and \$16 per child. Sokol members are offered a \$95 discount tuition.

For online registration and information, go to www.patorono.com, or call Tami Eshult at 612-790-0602.

Editor's note: This article appeared in a past issue of American Sokol. It was extracted and translated by Bro. Bo Bata from the biography Miroslav Tyrš prohry a vitezství, written by Zora Dvorakova. The translation from Czech resulted in some stilted English, but to retain the full flavor of the article, we have chosen to use the article exactly as it appeared in American Sokol. Jindrich Fuegner was a co-founder of Sokol with Miroslav Tyrš

The Origin and Meaning of Šibřinky

In the early part of 1865, after an extended discussion and various proposals, it was decided by Sokol Prague to hold a Sokol costume ball. Fuegner proclaimed: "It has to be a real Sokol costume ball." Then he turned to Tyrš: "You should find some appropriate name for it."

Tyrš searched Jungmann dictionary; he discarded first few ideas. Then he discovered the verb "šibřiti." In the past it originated from imitation of sparrows' song, and later it stood for practical joking and clowning. From there it was just a short step for designating the Sokol costume ball "Šibřinky."

Fuegner himself took charge, with enthusiastic help of Gabriel Žižka, who had organized various balls in the past. Fuegner sent out invitations, which caused

excitement by their unusual form:

Some were very angry and others were laughing that they did not immediately recognized that they must read the invitation from right to left. Some even suggested that it was in Turkish or Hungarian.

In the evening of February 25th, 1865, the entire Sokol hall neighborhood was full of spectators. In front of the Sokol hall were guards with torches. As the carriages carrying the masked guests pulled up to the entrance, they were greeted by an imposing bear.

The inside was fully decorated and the entire main hall became a mass of whirling masked dancers. Fuegner was strolling through in a velvet costume of Mafioso. Tyrš transformed himself into a Spanish hidalgo.

*icon lůp o cenok
YKNĪRĪBĪŠ 5681 aronů 52 end
alokos ohékszarp encĭvčolět v
ěndioh 7 o ketáčaz*

Šibřinky Invitation in Czech



*thgindim ta gnidne
YKNĪRĪBĪŠ 5681 yraurbef 52
kokos eugarp fo llah eht ni
kcolc'o 7 ta gnitrats*

Šibřinky Invitation in English

Editor's note: Long-time Sokol Minnesota member Libby Imbrone contributed this thoughtful essay while taking a respite from the Minnesota winter in Florida.

On the Importance of History

By Libby Imbrone

The old year 2007 is now history! What excitement will history record in the year 2008?

I am reminded of a very recent and very public faux pas showed ignorance of an important time in United States history – the Cuban Missile Crisis. My husband, Al, was in the United States Navy Reserve at the time in a special unit that certainly would have been activated. Our five children ranged in ages 2 to 8 years at the time. This crisis became an indelible memory to our family.

Each succeeding generation needs to be told anew the old family history (both sides of the family), the youthful history of their young parents, and the history of the United States and the countries of our birth. Our families need to hear the history from our lips not from others sources which may have altered the facts. We need to be reminded that the schools cannot teach what is precious to our hearts.

We have in our Sokol organization many World War I, Korean War, Vietnam War and other veterans. Among them is John Cicha, a World War II prisoner of the Japanese. In addition, we have expatriates, who escaped Czechoslovakia or who were able to come to the United States under special circumstances during Communist rule.

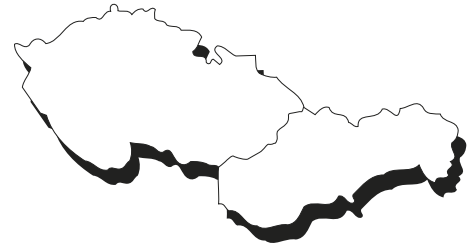
Each person's history is interesting, enlightening and should be documented.

Dr. Joseph Mestenhauser's life history and background have been very helpful to us here at Sokol Minnesota. As Honorary Consul, Dr. Mestenhauser has been our informed connection to what we do not know and what we should know about our Czechoslovak history. Also, he has heard firsthand many personal stories from his many colleagues. Dr. Mestenhauser has been especially instructive and helpful to our Culture Camp classes and to our young students who seek his knowledge and guidance. His unequalled vitality and dedication are bridges to our understanding of the Czech and Slovak contemporary life.

Motivate yourself and encourage others to "jot down" the memorable moments of our lives to ensure an accurate and personal account of our individual history.

News from the Slovak and Czech Republics

Compiled by Honorary Czech Consul, Dr. Josef Mestenhauser



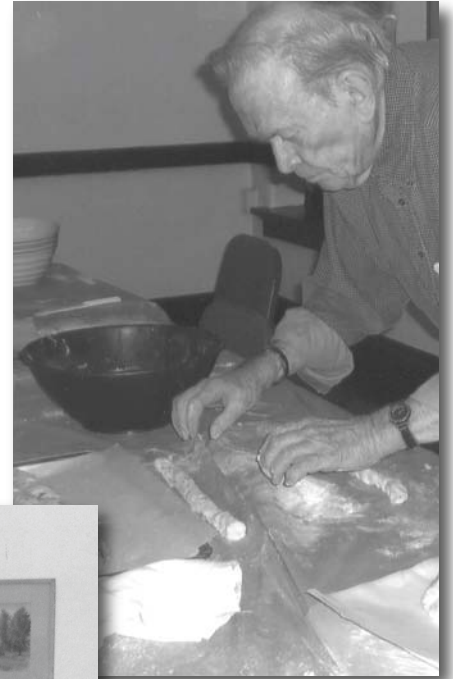
Did you know that

- The Czech Parliament passed a new law regulating maternity benefits. It established a three-tier scale by which parents must decide how long they will stay with their newborns. If for 2 years, the monthly benefits will be Kc 11,400; if 3 years, it will be Kc 7,600, and if 4 years, the monthly benefits will be Kc 3,800.
- A new law will facilitate the smoother functioning of the justice system by preventing people from dodging the system by simply not appearing in court. The new law allows the Court to make judgment even without the presence of the parties. The law will no doubt be tested in court.
- President Klaus received a prestigious Russian award from President Putin, the Puskin Medal, for his contribution to the study of Russian language, support for cultural heritage and contribution to closer relations among the nations.
- The number of people with access to internet in the Czech Republic has reached 4.5 million people .
- Church property confiscated by the communist regime will be compensated by the government over a period of 60 years to the tune of Kc 267 billion. Church leaders and the Government agreed to this solution
- Dr. Jan Svejnar is definitely a candidate for the President. The former Prime Minister Paroubek requested President Klaus to agree to a public TV debate with Svejnar. Klaus reportedly declined this invitation.
- both Slovak and Czech Republics have now joined the “Schengen zone” – a no visa – no documents for entry into the Schengen zone countries.
- December polls show public opinion in the Czech Republic now appears to give an edge to the Social Democratic Party, 33 percent to 24 percent over the ruling ODS Party.
- Thirty-year old congressman for the Green Party, Ondrej Liska, became the Minister of Education – finally after the post was vacant for several months. His major tasks will be to proceed with reform of the higher education system.
- The Skoda auto factory in Mlada Boleslav gained a profit of 20 billion Kc, based on sales of 630,000 cars
- As of mid December, unemployment in Slovakia continues to be below 8 percent, and the country is beginning to face shortage of skilled workers
- The Slovak Republic is meeting conditions for an early acceptance of the Euro by January 2009.
- Slovakia has a new U.S. Ambassador, Vincent Obsitnik, who is optimistic that Slovaks will soon be able to travel to the U.S without visas soon.
- The City government of Prague voted to spend more money on extension of the metro line C to Letnany past Ladvi.
- Ruzin airport processed a record of 12 million travelers last year, a 7.3 percent increase.
- Population in the Czech Republic increased to 10.3 million – due largely to more births, fewer deaths, and increase of permanent foreign residents.
- Prague Metro government is seeking government approval to press for the Olympics in 2016.
- New legislation in Slovakia will make it easier to expropriate land for the building of highways and freeways mandated by EU as part of an overall European transportation system
- The most important Czech voted by the public is again Charles IVth; the next is Tomas G. Masaryk, and the third is Václav Havel
- Presidential elections have now been definitely set for February 8 – voting may take several days.
- Special long distance highway stamps are now available in some 9,300 locations (including gas stations), but the price has gone up.



Zazvorniky Class
instructor Kevin Hurbanis

Sokol Cooking Classes



Vanočka Class



Zazvorniky Class



Gulaš Class



Vanočka Class



Gulaš Class

Sokol Minnesota News

By Marlene Hinshaw



Ahoj!

Two joys of the holiday season are visiting and eating. We did just that at the Sokol Christmas parties – the Childrens’ party December 7th and the Members’ party December 9th. The Sokol Singers had even more holiday fun – an elegant Christmas luncheon at the Embassy Suites in Minneapolis. President Joe Landsberger was the honored guest. Louise Wessinger and Katie Haselbauer brought former singers Val Hanover and Florence Haselbauer to the luncheon. It was good seeing them and having them join us in singing our beloved Czech carols. Many thanks to Phyllis Vosejпка, for making this event perfect in every way.

Sadly, as I write this column, I just learned that Phyllis’ husband Stanley died January 11. Stanley had been seriously ill for several months. He died while Phyllis was making arrangements for hospice care.

On December 13, Sokol member Patrick Dewane performed *The Mushroom Picker*, the play he wrote about his grandfather, Matt Konop. Konop was a soldier in the U.S. army, and led the liberation of Domařlice, his father’s ancestral village in the Czech Republic. It is an especially moving story, because when he arrived in Domazlice, he did not realize it was his father’s home village. Patrick performed to a packed C.S.P.S. hall. After the performance, folks had a great time socializing, enjoying ethnic items on display and partaking of the bountiful table prepared by our lovely ladies. Mushrooms? You bet! Big, fat, luscious, stuffed mushrooms were served. Doreen McKenney even had mushroom cookbooks for sale. This was a special evening.

It’s great that our hall is being used more for public performances. It lets people know who we are, where we are, and what we’re about. That’s important for hall rentals, applying for grants, etc. Well over 100 years old, our hall is always in need of tender loving care.

We are very fortunate to have members past and present who take care of “the hall.” Art Hutchinson (deceased) and Ralph MacHolda rewired the hall. Miro Verner comes to mind, also Joan Sedlacek and Ken Wyberg. Over the years, I’ve seen these folks in every physical contortion imaginable, while they worked on their beloved hall.

Recently, it was noted that the gym floor needed refinishing. Estimates from commercial sanders were between \$5,000 and \$7,000. The day after Christmas, President Joe Landsberger, Norm Petrik and John

Mansfield refinished the floor themselves. It took 16 hours of their combined time, and cost only \$405. Quite a savings! The floor looks beautiful. Please thank them when you see them. Thanks also to our Board of Trustees who keep plugging away at the fix-it list.

Joe Landsberger, Joyce Tesarek Petrik and members of the Finance Committee are exploring grant opportunities to help preserve our Historic Hall. Hopefully, we’ll soon get good news.

Do you know anyone who likes to sing? The Czech/Slovak Sokol Singers are recruiting. The group performs now and then at different ethnic events. You don’t need to know the language. Most of the singers are familiar with the language, but don’t speak it. Native speakers in the group help with pronunciation and meaning. Because the music is sung in syllables, it’s easy to pick up. Folk songs are simple melodies easily remembered. Give it a try! We meet at the hall, Tuesday mornings from 10 a.m. till noon. After practice, we frequently go to lunch and socialize. We’re a darn nice group of people! Czech us out! Our leader is Georgiana Dolejsi. You can reach her at 651-994-9773.

Congratulations to Sokol gymnastics coach Alisa Hollibush and husband on the birth of their daughter Skylar.

Happy 50th birthday to Scott Hinshaw. A half-century? Oh, my!

I heard through the grapevine that there’s a restaurant in Cambridge named Joe’s Czech Restaurant, and that Jim Felger (formerly of Hinckley) has a bakery in Sandstone. Does anyone have more information about these two? Many of us remember Jim’s wonderful Czech breads and pasteries.

FYI – According to the U.S. Census, Czechs rank 9th out of Minnesota’s top 12 ancestries. Czechs tied with the Dutch at 100,000 people. Germans are first, with 2 million.

This wonderful January thaw makes me think ahead to spring and the annual April garage sale. If you, a relative or friend are moving, downsizing or just cleaning up, we could use your saleable cast offs. Things we cannot use are TV’s, computers and large pieces of furniture Please call Dorothy Sladek, 507-645-4793 or Doreen McKenney, 952-941-0426.

Our Sokol kitchen needs dish cloths and dish towels. Old bath towels make great cleaning cloths too. Please drop them off when you come to the hall or for possible pick-up, you can reach me at 651-222-4073. Thank you.



At right is a program playbill for the Sokol production of *Little Joe from the Pub* produced in 1930.

Translated:
A Special Presentation
Production of the comedy in three acts presented by Sokol's Dramatic Section Těl. Unit Hawk in St. Paul, MN. One night, December 7, 1930
At the C.S.P. S. Hall on West 7th St. at Western Avenue.

Playbill compliments of Wally Schovanec.

PROGRAM
DÍVADELNÍHO PŘEDSTAVENÍ
PEPÍČKA Z MALÉ HOSPUDKY

Veselohra o 3 jednáních sehraje
Dramaticky Odbor Těl. Jednoty Sokol St. Paul, Minn.
V neděli večer, dne 7. prosince, 1930.
V sını Č.S.P.S. roh zap. 7mé ul. a Western Ave.

----- OSOBY -----

Jan Bručoun, hostinsky "U Bručouna" Rudolf Schovanec
Pepička, jeho dcera..... Josefa Buzicka
Lesni Filoun..... Alois Hlaváček
Baruska Kocvarova, Majitelka Zelinarske
zahrady..... Karolina Štastna
František, její syn..... Karel Chott
John Nejedly, majitel továrny
žvykaci gumu..... Frank Posavád
Julinka, jeho dcera..... Marie Pikalova
Karel Lhota, inženýr..... Michal R. Novák
Dědeček Slabizna, vyměnař

Děj v dnešní době v jižních Čechách

Režiser Jan J. Svoboda
Začátek přesně v 8 hodin večer

Náповěda Frank Trojan
Vstupe 50¢ ditky 15¢

Dobra Česká Hudba

Flavors of Slovakia

Sunday March 30th

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Thank you!



Josef Mestenhauser

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.

One nation (?) Indivisible (?)

By Honorary Czech Consul, Dr. Josef Mestenhauser

This title is not from the Pledge of Allegiance; this is how most Czechs felt about Czechoslovakia.

Unfortunately for them, most Slovaks did not agree – and the result was a “velvet divorce” in 1993.

When we celebrated the New Year of 2008, we also celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the birth of the Czech and Slovak Republics. Only, there were fewer fanfares and celebrations – still this anniversary needs a reflection and commemoration.

I draw partially on an editorial from a Slovak daily, *Směř*, that was reproduced in *Americke Listy* for December 6, 2007. I also draw on my own recollection of events that I experienced personally when I lived in Prague as visiting professor at Charles University under the Senior Fulbright lecturing grant.

I was glued to the television every free moment of my stay and read at least three or four dailies and two of the most respected weeklies. I was at the castle for an appointment with Pavel Tigrid the day president Havel rendered his abdication and observed several delegations of prominent Slovaks trying to seek Havel’s intervention. By this date, events had moved rapidly beyond anybody’s ability to stop them.

The facts were different from the “one nation of brothers” and “indivisible republic.” History accounted for many reasons for the differences; a complete history has not yet been written. All the forces for cohesion, as well as division, came to a head after the elections in June 1992. It became obvious that the format of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic that was imposed on the country by the Soviets had no chance of surviving. Even before the elections there were serious differences over such “innocent” questions as the name the new republic would have, and which part of the possible federation should pay for the other.

Public debates caused great emotional reactions in both parts of the country. The elections meant that the Občanské Hnutí of Václav Havel dissolved. Václav Klaus became head of a new party, the ODS, that won significant majorities in the Czech lands, while Mečiar’s

party, the HZDS (Movement for Democratic Slovakia) won similar majorities in Slovakia. After the elections, ODS nominated Klaus for the Prime Minister of the Czech Government, while President Havel also appointed him to put together the Federal Government.

From this point on the negotiations took place between the two “republican” governments. Mečiar, who became the Prime Minister of Slovakia, suggested that the new constitution should be based on a concept of economic and defense union, but this solution was not acceptable to ODS. This and other differences led to an informal agreement between Klaus and Mečiar that the differences were “irreconcilable”.

Emotions were running high. The media featured many debates, and political personalities on both sides were proposing virtually every possible solution, including a two-nation confederation or even a “customs union.” Typical of the disagreements were tendencies to push for a referendum, but parties could not even agree on the format of such referendum or questions voters should be asked. The longer these matters were debated, the more it became obvious that an eventual separation was imminent.

The Czech side increasingly showed a lack of willingness to compromise. Two issues settled the debate: Slovak representatives failed to vote for Havel as President, and the Slovak National Council voted on July 17th its Declaration of independence and sovereignty. This was also the day when Havel submitted his abdication. The final constitutional law regarding the end of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic was passed by the Federal Assembly on November 25th, to become effective on January 1, 1993 – with two successor countries emerging from this dissolution: the Slovak and Czech Republics.

I draw two major conclusions from this decision. First, that despite very high emotions that existed on both sides, the actual separation that took place was exceptionally smooth, rational, and mutually beneficial, and took just six months to work out. Secondly, that both new countries looked forward to an improved mutual cooperation within the framework of NATO and later the European Union – this time on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

Public opinion itself followed suit. The Smer cites, for example, that while in 1993 only 30 percent of Slovaks agreed with the split, this number increased to 40 percent by 2005 – and is growing still. On the Czech side, more than half of the public now also agrees that the split was a good solution for both parties.

So, the fifteenth anniversary of the birth of Czech and Slovak Republics does indeed give us several causes to celebrate. May the Czech and Slovaks living in the U.S. work together with mutual respect as well as people do in their home countries. There relations could not be better.

see page 7 for Did you Know by Dr. Josef Mestenhauer

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March 1 (copy deadline: February 1)

April 1 (copy deadline: March 1)

May 1 (copy deadline: April 1)

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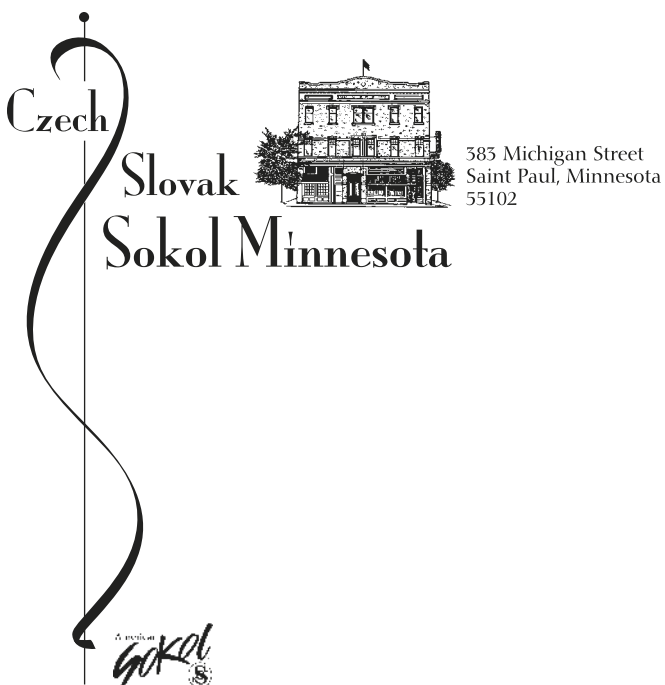
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