



The Tatra

Czech engineered and built; Minnesota displayed

By Joe Landsberger

An unusual Czech artifact is currently residing on the third floor of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. The aerodynamic 1936 Tatra T87 automobile qualifies as both art object and a piece of automotive history.

In the words of the museum curators: "In the 1930s, the essence of time and speed were exemplified in a body of work that embraced industrial design, new synthetic materials, worship of the machine and the cult of the future. The advent of the teardrop form, the sexy, windswept, contour, speed lines and sleek, shiny surfaces are manifested in an array of imaginative concoctions that convey a residue of charm and innocence."

This is no ordinary car. Manufactured in Czechoslovakia, the Tatra T87 is a four-door sedan designed in 1936 by Hans Lewinka. It was manufactured by the firm of Rignhoffer-Tatra-Werk, AG in the east Moravian village of Nesseldorf, now Kopřivnice in the Czech Republic.

In 1937, Lewinka (1878 – 1967) invented or engineered the world's first aerodynamic car: the

T77, with frameless central tubular "backbone" chassis with wing axles, fully independent suspension, and a rear-mounted air-cooled pancake engine. He applied his innovative stream-lined design to mass production, and no less than Ferdinand Porsche "copied" his concepts in building the Volkswagen Beetle. After World War II, Ledwinka was unjustly accused of

collaboration with the German occupation forces and jailed for five years in Czechoslovakia. He was released in 1951, and retired in Munich, Germany. In 1992, he was pardoned by Czech authorities, and in 2007 was named to the European Automotive Hall of Fame.

The vehicle production industry in Kopřivnice actually began as early as

1860 with the "Neutischeinek," produced by the Schustala coach factory. Tatra continues today as one of the oldest surviving vehicle manufacturers in the world, but it abandoned the Tatra car in 2007 to focus on all-terrain truck manufacturing. For more information on the history of the Tatra, see www.tatraworld.nl/tatraworld-historypage.htm

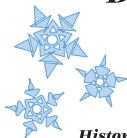


Photo compliments of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Gift of Funds from the Regis Foundation.

Upcoming Events

- Jan 10
Sokol Board Meeting
- Jan 11, 7pm
Sokol Camp Assoc Annual Meeting
- Jan 25, 7:30pm
Membership Meeting
- Jan 26, 5pm
Duck Dinner
- Feb 9, 6:30pm
Šibrinky
- Feb 12
Gymnastics Session III begins

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www.sokolmn.org

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President Komentář/President's Note

By Joe Landsberger

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings brothers and sisters!

It is the New Year!

It is also my second year as president, as well as for the new-look digital Slovo, and this gives me cause for reflection. We've been getting lots of good compliments about the Slovo: additions of photos, new writers, and the diligent work of our production team featuring past-president Jay Fonkert and layout by Teresa Pojar, building on the continued years of faithful contributions of Ken and Sharon Wyberg. A good cause for celebration!

Actually I have been thinking quite a bit about this year of 2007 and the directions Sokol is heading. What often comes to mind is our past. Specifically, I wonder what it was like for the early membership to use English!

Early West Enders, often immigrants via the Mississippi, came from the "old country" by boat to the Upper Landing, and eventually built their homes and businesses and communities, and of course, spoke Czech and Slovak. They divided philosophically into Catholics at St. Stan's, and free thinkers/non-Catholics at the CSPS Hall. But all spoke the language of their villages, and the West End became a new linguistically-amalgamated village of Bohemians, Moravians, Slovaks, and even a few other Slavs.

What lessons do we think we can learn from spoken English's change from vehicular language (that used as a secondary language across communities) to that as the main communication tool, as it is today? What was the transformation like? Were some not able to participate because of limited understanding? Did some refuse to use English at all? Were "old timers" angry or sad about the loss of their native languages? Did the language issue divide the community?

I am often at a disadvantage when greeted in Czech or Slovak, since my second language is French, learned on-site in West Africa. And then, I am reminded of transformation.

I believe our Sokol unit is in another state of transformation. Our membership is at its highest since our formation as a unit 125 years ago. We have many successful programs. Yet, we are also rebuilding with dwindling set of organizers. Some events have lost their financial benefit when compared to volunteer hours and energy spent to produce them. So, in the new year, we'll be focusing on the successful, or re-designing what is not.

I have great confidence in our transformation, wherever it may lead us, and in our ability to make decisions based upon evidence and our priorities. Our financial status is excellent due to good stewardship. The energy and joy put into gatherings, even directors' meetings(!), makes my personal Sokol experience very rewarding. And with that, I wish us all a very good year!

Nazdar!

Joe Landsberger



Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota SLOVO

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Membership Notes

By Nancy Imbrone, Financial Secretary

Sokol Minnesota has a total of 318 members as of December 2007. That number is comprised of 140 men and 178 women. In 2007, our new members numbered 53. We have 20 members who have been Minnesota Sokols for 50 or more years. Of those members, a few milestone anniversaries are in 2007:

Florence Haselbauer joined in 1932 – **75 Years!**
Ann Neubauer joined in 1942 – **65 Years!**
Evelyn Holman, Vera Hawkinson and Jim Clebeczek all joined in 1952 – **55 Years!**
Shirley Verner joined in 1957 – **50 Years!**

The following Sokol's also have achieved a milestone in 2007:

45 Years – Since 1962

Dorothy Kucera
Gary Albert Pavlicek

40 Years – Since 1967

Susan Marabella

30 Years – Since 1977

Mildred Grealish
A. Keith Hanzel
Frank Loss
Lorraine Olson
Joyce Sladek
Joyce Tesarek

25 Years – Since 1982

Lillian Bednar
Beverly Clancy
Al Dvorak
Carole Gonsowski
Mary Ann Kodada
Ralph MacHolda
Tom Pallo
Elsie M. Roepke
Rudolph T. Schovanec
Richard F. Skrivanek
Sharon Wyberg
Kenneth Wyberg

20 Years – Since 1987

Mark Bigaouette
Marcella Bigaouette
David Stepan

15 Years – Since 1992

Albert Imbrone
Rodney Kotaska
Norman Petrik
Ted Skluzacek

10 Years – Since 1997

Greg Andrlé
Allen L. Blaich
Molly Chandler
Karen Grant
John Keller
Debra Keller
Rosanne Kostelecky

5 Years – Since 2002

Barb Armour
John Armour
Diane Cina
Eileen Flint
Pamela J. Langworthy
Roger Meihak
Lois Meihak
Gary G. Novak
Rebecca Petrik Olson
Grace Ann Sharp
Joseph Stodola
Beverly Stodola
Romelle Vanek



Some of Sokol Minnesota's 2008 Leadership Members
Pictured from left to right, starting in the back, Dennis Cahill, Marit Kucera, Jeanette Pafko, Nancy Imbrone, Louise Wessinger, Mary Cahill, Jean Hall, Joan Tesarek, Norm Petrik, Ken Wyberg, Joe Landsberger.

Thank you all for your commitment to Czech & Slovak Sokol Minnesota!

And on that note – your 2008 dues letters will be arriving in the mail shortly. Please watch for them and make it a priority to prepare and return your dues payment quickly. We thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Questions regarding membership can be directed to Norm Petrik at 612-822-6147, or Nancy Imbrone at 651-481-7949.

Membership News

By Norm Petrik, Membership Director

Sokol Minnesota welcomed a new member at the November 30 membership meeting, when we inducted Denis Novak of Cottage Grove. He was accepted for membership at the October meeting.

Denis is 100 percent Czech, and is interested in cooking classes and cultural events. After he took the Sokol pledge, he was given the American Sokol bylaws and received a Sokol welcome hug from Joyce Tesarek, who substituted for Georgiana Dolejsi, who traditionally gives bestows the Sokol welcome hug!

Newly accepted members are encouraged to attend an upcoming Sokol membership meeting for induction. The next membership meeting is January 25.

Czech and Slovak Cultural Center Potluck

The Czech and Slovak Cultural Center invites you to join in an evening of good food and fellowship with families at the CSCC potluck dinner, Sunday, January 28, in the club room at 7230 York Avenue South in Edina. Details will be posted on the Cultural Center's website: www.cs-center.org Bring a dish to share.

Guest speaker Olga Splichalova-Espinosa, an Olympic swimmer representing the Czech Republic, will talk about her experience. Stana and John Gerlach, Czech world travelers, will show pictures and talk about their trip around the world, with emphasis on fellow Czechs they encountered in their travels.



The CSPS Hall is never more festive than at the annual Sokol Children's Christmas Party, featuring the youth dancers and gymnasts. Parents, grandparents and friends were entertained by colorful folk dances and a lively gymnastics exhibition.

The faces of children and adults, alike, lit up when Sv. Mikulas and Anđel, his angel helper, appeared out of nowhere. Of course, they were accompanied by a representative cert, or devil, who tried without success to find some bad children in the crowd.



Instead, all the children entered their names in the angel's good book and received a special gift bag from Sv. Mikulas. The devil had a bag full on onions to give away, but there were no takers!

Special thanks to Louise Wessinger who did did a remarkable job as mistress of ceremonies and lead dancer!



all photos by Jay Fonkert

A Visit to Czech Village

By Jay Fonkert

Thanksgiving took my wife and me to Lisbon, Iowa, this year to visit my sister-in-law on the farm. In addition to the usual hearty country-style turkey dinner, the trip afforded us a chance to pay a short visit to Czech Village in Cedar Rapids.

The Czech and Slovak National Museum anchors the Village, situated on the west bank of the Cedar River, across from downtown Cedar Rapids. Always a treat, the museum this winter is featuring the hall-sized version of *The History of the Brave Czech Nation*, the wildly popular children's pop-up book by Czech author Lucie Seifertová. The exhibit runs through January 27.

The walk-through book is a visual delight, depicting the long and storied history of the Czech lands from ancient times to the present. What a fun way to brush up on Czech history. You can find additional information about the exhibit at the Museum's website: www.ncsml.org

Of course, a visit to Czech Village requires a stop at Zindrich's for some tasty Czech food. The restaurant was humming even at mid-afternoon that Saturday. We chowed down on cabbage rolls, gulaš and bread dumplings. What a treat! – although Sokol Minnesota's dinners are every bit as good!

I had a hard time dragging my wife and mother-in-law out of the Museum's gift shop. The Christmas



Georgiana Dolejsi, Joan Sedlacek and Mary Cahill looking forward to lunch at Zindrick's in Cedar Rapids in 2002. The food was tasty then, and is still worth the trip today.

ornaments were captivating. I picked up a copy of a very interesting book called *Through Different Eyes: An Immigrant's Heroic Journey*, by J. Barbara Alvord. It is the story of the author's grandmother, who was chosen by her family to accompany her illiterate godfather on his journey from a small town near Kutná Hora to a small town outside Cedar Rapids. When I get around to reading the book, I'll perhaps write a short review for the Slovo!

So, if we have a few blizzard-free weekends in January, you might want to take a quick trip south of the border to Cedar Rapids to enjoy *The History of the Brave Czech Nation* and warm up with some hot gulaš!

Czech & Slovak Genealogy Conference

By Mark Bigaouette

A number of Sokol Minnesota members attended the 11th National Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International Genealogical/Cultural Conference in Madison, Wisconsin in October. The Society is one of the largest ethnic genealogical societies in the world, with over 3000 members in all 50 states, Canada, Europe, Australia, and other countries. The society was founded right here at our Sokol hall in 1988.

Madison sure was busy! Thursday's offerings included two different tours, one to the Milwaukee-Slovak Museum and the other to the Wisconsin Historical Society, (which houses one of the best family history collections in the country). That evening, we enjoyed the opening of a special exhibition from the Czech National Archives in Prague.

Friday started off with a talk by Dr. Lenka Matušiková of the Czech National Archives in Prague. The remainder of the conference featured multiple concurrent sessions on a number of interesting topics. Among them were a talk on Czech immigrant arrivals by Leo Baca of Texas; beginning Slovak genealogy by

Lisa Alzo of New York; identifying grandpa's military regiment by Karen Hobbs of Colorado; and advanced computer genealogy by John Kracha of California.

There was entertainment to compliment the learning. The wonderful Cleve Bellin Polka band entertained Friday evening, and Saturday evening brought a parade of kroje (folk costumes) and a performance by the Tatra Slovak Dancers.

Almost 300 people attended from more than 20 states and Canada. I highly recommend these events. You learn so much, and meet all sorts of wonderful and interesting people from all over North America. We celebrate our heritage, history, music, language, art and culture – the very things that make us who we are. Your ancestors gave up a great deal so that you could have a better life here in a new land called America.

Join us! The next two major events are a Czech-Slovak Symposium (slightly smaller than a conference) April 11 and 12 in Seattle, and the 12th National Czech & Slovak Conference in Cleveland in October. We will be visiting Cleveland's two Sokol halls and many other places. For more information about the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society, visit the website at: www.cgsi.org

Song of the Month



Submitted by
Georgiana Dolejsi

The name of the Czech anthem, *Kde Domov Můj*, means “Where is My Home?” It originated in an attempt to create national opera. Josef Kajetan Tyl wrote the lyrics. The music is by Frantisek Skroup. Source: American Sokol Association, The American Sokol Sings (Berwyn, Illinois, 1974).

Where is my home?
Where is my home?
Water’s rustling o’er
the meadows,
Pinewoods murmuring
o’er the mountains,
Orchards are radiant
with spring blossoms,
Earth’s paradise on sight!
And that is that beautiful land,
Czech land, home of mine
Czech land, home of mine.

next month the Slovak National Anthem

Czech National Anthem (Where is My Home?)

Andante con moto

D *p* A Em A₇ D D₇ G

Kde do-mov můj? Kde do-mov můj? Vo-da hu - či po lu-

D D₇ G G D *mp*

či - nách, Bo-ry šu - mí po - ska - li-nách, V sa-dě

A₇ D A₇

stkví - se ja-ra květ, Zem-ský ráj - to na po-

D F#₇ *cresc.* Bm *f* Em

hled! A to je ta krá - sná ze - mě, Ze-mě

A₇ Bm G D A₇ D

če - ská do-mov můj, Ze-mě če-ská do-mov můj!

A New Year of Slovos

Slovo means “the word” in Czech and Slovak. The Slovo is our way to get the word out to all our Sokol Minnesota members and friends. You, the readers, are the ones who bring the word to life. The Slovo depends on your contributions.

Our new design and revamped content have brought rave reviews. To keep up the good work, we need your help. We welcome your contributions of news about Sokol events and Sokol people. All of the following, and more, are welcome:

- News about upcoming Sokol events
- Photos from Sokol events
- News about Sokol members
- Essays (and photos!) about your Czech and Slovak travels
- Articles about Czech or Slovak arts, music and culture
- News about Czech or Slovak-related events in the Twin Cities and Midwest.
- Stories about Czech or Slovak immigration and genealogy
- Memories from the history of the CSPS Hall

Send your contributions to the Slovo Editor at slovo@sokolmn.org.

It takes many volunteer hours to put out the Slovo. Please consider joining the fun crew that folds and labels the Slovo for mailing each month. We will be folding the Slovo from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Monday, January 21, in dining room at the CSPS Hall.

Walk down memory lane with us
Sokol Minnesota 125 years
C.S.P. S. Hall 121 years

Our history project needs your hall documents and memorabilia

- photos
- family histories
- theater playbills
- letters that talk about our building, its construction, its renovation, its history

Either contact Joe Landsberger
jfl@studygs.net 651.297.9000

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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 Americké 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.

Will February 2008 be a shadow of February 1948?

By Josef A. Mestenhauser

In the last issue of Americké Listy (November 22, 2007), Dr. Mojmir Povolny provided an excellent thought piece about the Czech Republic presidential elections that will take place this coming February. I draw on this article heavily. For a long time, the current President was the only declared candidate. He was strongly supported by his party, the ODS, (of which he is the Honorary Chair, even though he claims to have no connection with any political party) and was implicitly endorsed by general public opinion that gave him an overwhelming positive evaluation.

It might be recalled that the Czech Republic elects its President by through a complicated system of voting by both chambers of the Parliament. Last time, in 2003, there were seven candidates (six men and one woman), and the protracted election process lasted some six weeks through nine rounds of three votes. Vaclav Klaus was elected by a majority of 142 votes of both houses against Jan Sokol, who received 124 votes.

Even though the voting was by secret ballot, simple arithmetic tells that Klaus was elected with the help of communist votes, thereby absolving the communists, according to Povolny, of responsibility for the totalitarian era and legitimizing them as a regular democratic party that is no longer a threat to democracy.

President Klaus reacts strongly against suggestions that the communists elected him, and cautions against continued emotional and irrational "professional" anti-communism. On the other hand, the communist party has never renounced revolutionary violence, Leninist methods, or dictatorship of the proletariat, nor has ever accepted responsibility, or apologized, for the damage done to people, property and values. Thus, the specter of February 1948 may repeat itself this February.

Speculations about an "anti-Klaus" candidate intensified this summer when the major opposition party, the Social Democratic Party started leaking names of its potential candidates. One of the first mentioned was Jiri Dienstbier, followed by the non-partisan academic Vaclav Paces

(President of the Czech Academy of Science) and Petr Pithart. The Green Party, though a member of the governing coalition with ODS, has declared itself opposed to the candidacy of President Klaus. Most recently, when it became clear that Paces and Pithart would not consider being candidates, the Social Democrats started floating the name of Dr. Jan Svejnar, whom the Green Party endorsed almost immediately. Svejnar started approaching other parties (not the ODS) to familiarize them with his views, and his rounds included the communists.

In a television interview, he reportedly explained his interest in the communist votes on the grounds that the Communist Party is undergoing a major developmental stage, and if this stage continues, the party renounces revolutionary violence, and if it accepts democratic methods of functioning, it may indeed become a democratic party in the sense of others in Central and Eastern Europe, where the communist parties resemble more the Social Democrats than anything else.

The way things stand now is that Svejnar, who is already acting as a candidate, announced that he would make a final decision sometime in December. By the time people will read this article, the decision may have already been made. The Social Democrats have already endorsed Svejnar, but will finalize their decision after Svejnar makes his own decision final. The Peoples' Party, which is also a member of the governing coalition, is expected to follow suit.

Who is Svejnar? He left Czechoslovakia in 1970 when he was seventeen. He completed his studies in economics in the United States, and is a professor at the University of Michigan, where he spends about half of his time. In the Czech Republic, he is a reputed expert on economic development, and is very highly regarded. He has dual citizenship and serves on Boards of several important Czech financial institutions, including the Czech Commercial Bank (OB), with which the Czech Government has a lawsuit of about 30 billion Czech crowns. This gives the ODS ground to wage a strong anti-Svejnar campaign on the ground that he represents a conflict of interest.

Svejnar does not differ much from President Klaus's view on economics. Both are free market-oriented and liberal economists. Svejnar, however, is highly critical of Klaus's post-1989 out of control transformation of the economy, is pro-European integration, and pro-policy of ecology and environment.

On the other hand, Klaus is a leading "Euro-critic" who often makes statements embarrassing even the government of his own party. He declares himself against what he calls the "ideology" of those who are concerned with global warming and ecological changes caused by people. Recently, he gave an interview in a German newspaper in which he criticized the policy of German Chancellor Merkl, and compared her plans for improvement of the environment to the infamous five-year plans of the communist era. To make his points, he organized an academic forum on the environment with participation of scientists who agree with his views.

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March 1 (copy deadline: February 1)

April 1 (copy deadline: March 1)

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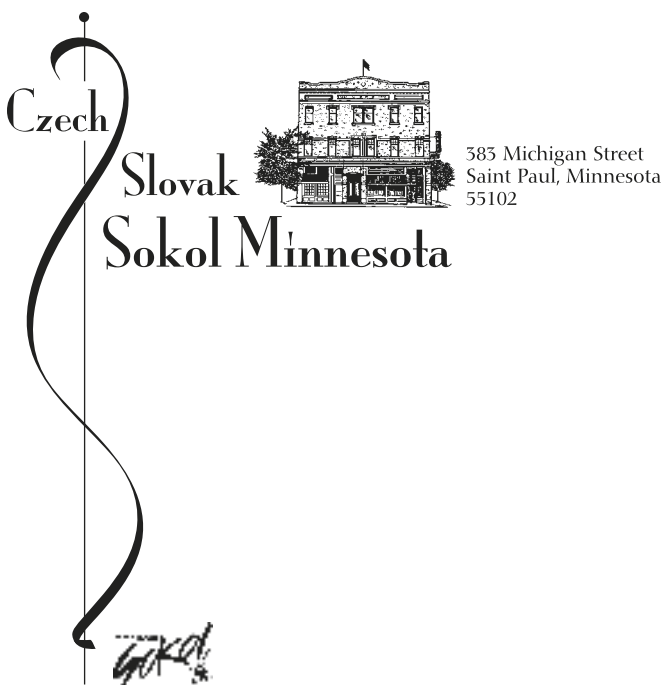
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