



80th Annual Booya and Picnic - Sunday, August 15, 2010

Contributed by Ray Vanyo

Minnesota Sokol Camp on beautiful Cross Lake in Pine City will host its 80th Annual Booya and Picnic on Sunday, August 15, from noon to 5 p.m.

We are planning to have an incredibly beautiful, sunny day filled with fun activities and great food. There will be delicious chicken Booya for sale by the bowl or in bulk. Bring a jar or pot to fill to take home and enjoy or share with friends. There will also be jiternice, brats, hot dogs, meatloaf sandwiches, cabbage rolls, kolace, and candy. A cold pivo or refreshing soda pop will satisfy any thirst. Old time music, dancing, bingo, a cash prize raffle, kids games, a Country Store, and a performance by the St. Paul Czech & Slovak Folkdancers will take you back in time.

Our Country Store is always in need of white elephant donations. Please call Pat Andrlé at 651-484-6360 for pick-up coordination or bring your donation to the Sokol Camp on the day of the picnic. For any other questions, please call Ray Vanyo at 651-222-6448.

To get to the campground, take the first Pine City exit from Interstate 35 North, and follow the signs that will be put up on the day of the event. You can also view a posting on Facebook under "Sokol Camp Booya." There are pictures of the road signs and other fun pictures of past events.

Get away for a day and enjoy life at the Sokol Camp Booya and Picnic on Cross Lake in Pine City, Minnesota!

Annual Garage Sale – A Great Success!



We sold items totaling over \$1,600 at the Sokol Minnesota garage sale April 16-17. We credit our successful fundraiser to the many members and friends who so generously donated their gently-used treasures, everything from household items to antique tools, kids toys, old 78 LPs, clothing, books, and jewelry. Many thanks also to the loyal volunteers who helped to set-up and staff the sale. Our Sokol garage sales are fun-filled days with good camaraderie, many laughs, hardy lunches, and some hard work. Join us next year; mark your calendar for mid-April. Again this year, we

partnered with Saint Mark Evangelical Lutheran Church on West 7th Street and Goodhue (two blocks from CSPS Hall), passing the unsold merchandise on to Saint Mark's for its early May rummage sale.

Upcoming Events

Slovo Deadline:
June 1

Culture Camp: June 14-18

Submission Deadline for Fall Events Postcard:
July 15

Fall Festival at Highland Park:
September 19

Prostna:
1st & 3rd Mondays,
6 p.m.

Notice:
There will be no membership meeting in June or July. See you in August!

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Past issues of *Slovo*
and Sokol Minnesota's
calendar of events are
available online at
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President Komentář/President's Note

By Joe Landsberger

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings brothers and sisters.

What will the American Sokol Organization (ASO) be like in ten years?

This is a follow up to my column last month, in which I asked the same question of Sokol Minnesota. It is colored by my impressions of the ASO convention held April 21 – 25, 2010. At the convention, about 120 delegates, plus a dozen alternates met in a somewhat charged environment to discuss the future and to set a course towards Sokol viability.

This was my second exposure to the national organization. My first was the Presidents' conference last October in Chicago. This national ASO conference was unique for me in that each session began with roll call by district, and no one was missing! No one was sneaking out for private shopping, touring trips, or family visits. Also interesting was the lack of any informative break-out sessions on topics of concern. There were no unit or district reports, or sessions on topics like fundraising strategies, recruitment or membership updates, fitness or cultural programming, etc. Rather, the agenda was focused on issues surrounding the ASO Strategic Planning Taskforce which was created at the last convention four years ago, editing and changing the by-laws, electing officers, and discussing the ASO's challenging finances.

I learned that Sokol Minnesota is unique in growing our membership, and in the breadth of our activities reflecting the four core ASO programs, including physical, educational, social and cultural programs. However, I was impressed with the diversity of our member units, both in size and emphasis, though I would say Sokol Minnesota is weakest where many are strong - in fitness and gymnastics programs (there is a Sokol Minnesota Task Force to address this).

The ASO Strategic Planning Taskforce (SPTF) has worked hard over the past four years to try to halt the decline in Sokol memberships as well as the number of units in the United States. However, the Taskforce's conclusions and directives brought significant vocal opposition, especially because they offered no concrete proposals, except for a broad plan to hire more staff and standardize practices across units. The only constraint seemed to be financial, as ASO is currently challenged to meet its current year administrative budget. Also of concern was the perceived threat of standardization and the loss of units' independence.

The SPTF promised to keep the lines of communication open as it works through issues, as did the new President, Brother Tom Pager. Pager also promised to keep a close eye monthly on the budget. With fiscal assurances and an impending annual deficit, convention delegates approved a \$10 increase in membership fees effective the third quarter and beyond.

I will not detail changes in the by-laws. I would, however, like to keep the lines of communication open between us, the Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors, and you, the membership. I am writing a summary of, and reaction to, the convention for the ASO Board of Governors, and will confer with my three fellow delegates - Denis Novak, Joyce Tesarek, and Norm Petrik. The Sokol Minnesota Board of Directors will also discuss our findings and make recommendations on strategic planning for our unit. These two will merge in a topical session for the members of Sokol Minnesota.

Nazdar

Czech Surnames and Their Meaning – Part III

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

Some Czech surnames owe their origin to foreign influences. This is true especially in the case of the adoption of German surnames in Czech areas that had German administrations, clergy, or landlords. “Novák” (meaning newcomer) was translated to “Neumann” or even Czechized to Najman. Sedlák (meaning farmer) became the German word Bauer or Bajer. Schmied or Smid resulted from the name Kovář (meaning blacksmith).

Rychtr/Rychtář/Richter originated from the German word meaning judge. The name Vlach is of Italian origin and is used generally to refer to anyone doing masonry work. Czech artists with the names of Chittusi and Stretti also reflect the Italian influence. Some French surnames such as Rohan and Buteau can be found and most likely traced to those who came after the French Revolution, or to soldiers who had served with Napoleon in the early 1800s. Hungarian and Polish names can be found as well.

The world of nature contributed to the origin of numerous Czech surnames. Many names based on animals were thought to reflect the physical appearance or character of the individual. Examples include Vrabec (sparrow), Žaba (frog), Ježek (hedgehog), Vrána (crow), and Jelének (stag). Other names were based on plants, such as Fiala (viola), Řepa (beet), Doubek (oak), Jedlička (fir), Chmela (hops), and Jahoda (strawberry).

Many surnames originate from Biblical influences. Beneš comes from Benedict and Marek comes from Marcus. Many derivatives resulted from just these two names: Beňák, Benda, Benček, and Mareš, Mareček, and Markovič are a few. Janák, Janda, and Janousek are derived from John; Mach/Macháček and Martínek derived from Martin, and Pešek and Petrák are derived from Peter.

Sokol Says “Thank You” to Donors

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

Lodge Cech, No. 51 CSA, Saint Paul
for Taneční Mládež Dancers, \$1,000

U.S. Bancorp Foundation, Employee Matching Gift Program
match for gift of Doris M. Maravitz

Georgiana Dolejsi, \$100,
in memory of Darrell Rasmussen

Bernice Rachel
Slovo - in memory of James Rachel

Gerald Mashelt
Slovo

Donations received by the Corresponding Secretary after April 20 will be acknowledged in the next issue of the *Slovo*.

Looking at the meaning and origin behind the surname can be fascinating and educational. A more in-depth article entitled “A Genealogist’s View of Czech Family Surnames” appeared in the March, 2010, edition of *Naše rodina*, the journal of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International. The article was written by Dr. Miroslav Koudelka who is a professional Czech genealogy researcher living in Olomouc, Moravia. See the CGSI website (www.CGSI.org) or call (651) 964-2333 and leave a voice mail to inquire about obtaining a copy.

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

Publications Committee

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

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

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Visit us at: www.sokolmn.org

Thanks to all who made Festival of Nations 2010 a Great Success!



1. Dawn Bulera. 2. Terry Shima. 3. Cindy Fortune. 4. Mary Cahill, Megan Cahill, Dennis Cahill, Joyce Tesarek, Jason Brozovich, Norm Petrik. 5. Bazaar Shop as hosted by Doreen McKenney, Kathy Jorgenson, Doris McKenney, Joan Sedlacek. 6. SlovCzech Trio and guests.



7. Peggy Endress, Eileen Flint, Matt Mazanec. 8. Joan Sedlacek. 9. Taneční Mládež (Youth Dancers). 10. Don Pafko, Honorary Slovak Consul and Lipa Slovak Folk Dancer. 11. Culture Booth as hosted by Lydia Akradi (standing) and Sally Nelson.

Member News Update

Contributed by Marlene Hinshaw

After some health issues, I'm happy to return as the Member News contributor. Sokol Minnesota now has 321 members. I must rely on you to help me gather information about them. If you know of a member's illness, hospitalization, marriage, promotion or other important life event, please call me at 651-222-4073 or e-mail me at marle5421@aol.com. Our news deadline is the 1st of each month.

Deaths: : Dennis Saliny, a long time Sokol Minnesota member, died April 29. Dennis was 71. He had been in ill health the past two years. He held many offices within Sokol and was lastly, our very able Gaming Board chair. Dennis was bright, capable, and an all around nice guy. We'll miss him.

Marcella (Marcy) Bigaouette, passed away February 17 at her winter home in Arizona. She had been battling cancer for two years. Her funeral service was held May 6 in North Oakdale, Minnesota. Marcy learned to speak Czech as a child and loved sharing all things Czech with others. She and her son Mark made many trips to her beloved Czech Republic. She was generous of her time and energy on behalf of Sokol Minnesota. Marcy will be missed.

Hospitalized and Recovering at Home: Bob Vanyo, Ed Hamernik, and Ralph Halbert.

Surgery: Louise Wessinger, everyone's favorite dance teacher, had knee surgery May 11. On May 14 - 16, she took part in a program she organized, to honor the more than 200 children who have danced with Taneční Mládež (Youth Dancers) since 1990. Wow! What a role model! You just can't keep a good Czech down.

Engagements: Scott Hinshaw and Diane Imbrone became engaged at Šibřinky on April 17.

Chuck Draheim and Jean Verner announced their engagement March 15. They will be married on September 24, 2010. Congratulations!

Trips to the Old Country: Darla Kolb and her husband, Wes, took a river cruise in May, stopping in Prague. She visited the village of Mlaka, where her grandmother was born.

Awards: Sokol member Jay Fonkert was presented an award for first place in the annual writing competition of International Society of Family History Writers and Editors at the 2010 National Genealogical Society Conference in Salt Lake City in April. His winning article was about his research into his wife Barb's 18th and 19th Century English ancestors.

Missing: Our very active member Marit Kucera. Marit is caring for her mom in International Falls.

Drink pivo! Stay well! Enjoy life!



Sokol Minnesota Gymnasts: On Fri April 16, seven competitors, their families, four Sokol MN coaches, and two instructors-in-training headed for the annual Western District Competition which was hosted this year by Sokolice Crete at Crete, Nebraska. The competition was Saturday morning, an awards dance and victory celebration was held Saturday evening, and an all Western District Sokol program was given on Sunday afternoon, April 18. It was a great weekend for all – new friends made, new experiences had, and personal accomplishments achieved.



Pictured Far Left: Rosalie Weber doing a cartwheel on the beam.

Pictured Left Competition "Crew" to Crete: L-R first row: Competitors Alice O'Brien, Erica Meyers, Siri Schroeder, Rosalie Weber. L-R 2nd row: instructor-in-training Shelby LaBonne, competitors Madeline Moser, Kyenne McQuerry, instructor-in-training Ellen Sutton. L-R 3rd row: instructor Brittney Ruscheinsky, Women's Physical Director Lisa Hollibus, instructors Megan Pera and Molly Coleman, not pictured competitor Jayne Pobanz.

Updates from the Board of Trustees

Contributed by Chuck Draheim

HVAC (Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning) Grant

Our grant application has been submitted to the Minnesota Historical Society for their review. Consideration of all grant requests by the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) will have concluded by May 25, 2010. The HRAC will forward its recommendations to the Minnesota Historical Society's Executive Council for action at its next meeting.

Cleanup Day

The April BOT workday was a success! The BOT would like to thank all who helped out. The parking lot was blown clean and the winters' accumulation of debris was picked up, bagged, and taken to a compost site. Pansies were planted in the flower boxes. The third floor landing was cleared of all of the stuff that had accumulated there. Obvious trash items were disposed of properly and everything else was put in its proper storage space in the Hall. The Hall was scoured for any electronic waste, used fluorescent tubes, and compact fluorescent lamps that needed to go to a recycling center. Some used fluorescent tubes may still remain.

Most of the crew assembled in the basement after the outside work was completed. The elevator lobby was cleaned and most of the things that had been stored there were relocated to more appropriate locations. Several new storage platforms were put in place to keep necessary items off of the floor and out of harm's way in the event of a sewer backup or seepage of groundwater into the basement. Additional platforms will be added in the near future.

Quite a lot of "stuff" had accumulated in the basement since the last major cleanup. Members are reminded that the Hall basement is not a dumping ground for junk. It should also not be used to store anything of value that can be damaged by high humidity, mold, mildew, or water.

(Note: Since the cleanup day, people have placed more things in the elevator lobby. They will be removed. The elevator lobby is not a storeroom!)

Street Repair Project

Please remember that Michigan Street between Richmond and Western will undergo major work this summer. Access to the parking lot will be more difficult than usual and on one or two occasions access to the lot will not be possible.

Education Committee Notes

Contributed by Jean Verner

At the April Membership meeting, Brother Chuck Draheim presented a short biography of his great-grandmother, Julia Carlson Winje. This was one example of the kinds of stories we are hoping to collect as part of Sokol Minnesota's Family History, Family Story Project.

Chuck is our Family History, Family Stories project coordinator. As you collect stories and lore about your families, write them down and send them to Chuck at education@sokolmn.org. He will collect them into a book to share with the membership and other groups interested in immigrant experiences and genealogy. Members will be able to share their stories at several meetings throughout the year.

Slovak and Czech language classes will resume again in the fall. Remember, the class sessions (Levels 1, 2, and 3) are sequential, so if you are new to our classes, you will want to start right away in the fall. Watch the Sokol Minnesota website (www.sokolmn.org) for schedule and registration information.

The pre-meeting singing sessions, lead by Sister Georgiana Dolejsi, will resume in September. See you then!

For more information on any of the education classes or events, contact Jean at education@sokolmn.org.

Membership Report

Contributed by Norm Petrik, Membership Director

Sokol Minnesota accepted two new members at the April 23 membership meeting.

Matt Mazanec of Saint Paul has interests in cooking, language, genealogy, and festivals

Sharon Jannusch of Hudson, Wisconsin. is interested in cooking, language, genealogy, dinners, and festivals.

Welcome to Sokol Minnesota!

Contributed by Joe Landsberger and Hana Matousek

From Sokol's archives, this series of fables are from the children's book *Svět Zvírat* published in Prague in 1919 as a children's book by B. Koci, illustrated by L. Lada, with accompanying verses by Petr Kricka.

Pochodové cvičení v husí škole

Z hluboka a volně dýchat,
hlavu vzhůru, prsa ven.
Tempo držet, ne-po-spí-chat,
jinak bude vyřazen.

Kdo chceš husou moudrou slouti,
pamatuj a vědom bud:
Volně kráčet, zvolna plouti
udržuje k jídlu chuť.

Hlavně však z vás každý musí, —
a v tom nemám výmluv rád —
bez chybičky pochod husí
do puntíku řádně znát.

Tedy pravím: klidně dýchej,
Hlavu vzhůru, prsa ven,
Tempo drž a ne-po-spí-chej,
nechceš-li být vyřazen.



Marching Practice in Goose School

Breathe deeply and slowly,
head up, chest expanded,
hold your tempo, do-not-rush,
otherwise you will be out.

If you seek to be called wise,
remember and be advised:
ease of step and floating slow
keeps your appetite a flow.

Most important, everyone -
your full knowledge is a must -
no exceptions, it's your style,
for flawless marching is goose's pride.

I say again: breathe slowly,
head up, chest expanded,
hold your tempo, do-not-rush,
if you not wish to be out.

May Song of the Month Translation

In the May issue of *Slovo*, we promised an English translation for *Švestková Alej: The Prune Song*. Hana Matousek has provided a general meaning of the song; it is not a translation to rhyme with the music. Enjoy this sweet, but sad story of romance.

Past our town, around the road,
there are Bosenky plum trees – Ah yes
I and Ann used to guard the trees,
eating plums, having good time;
we sit close to each other,
watching the stars and sky;
Now, alone, I remember those times
and I wish to be close to you again.

Past our town, around the road
there grow plums as big as a fist – Ah yes
Ann did not say anything and left me,
now I have no luck;

Ann is guarding the plums with another guy now,
she will do our povidla (plum jam) no more;
Those stars used to see things we will not mention here.

Past our town, the plums are all gone – Ah yes
My suit is put away, we signed at the
church with someone else;
when I am married I might forget, but
sometime I will remind to you Ann
what you've done to me,
plums have no meaning anymore.

Song of the Month

Contributed by Georgiana Dolejsi

From the song book *Narodni Ztevník*, compiled by Jaromir Gelnar, Praha 1975.

33. EJ, OD BUCHLOVA

Pomalú *Moravská ze Slouvácku*

Ej, od Buchlo-va vě-tr vě-je, už téj Kač-en-ce pan-tle be-re.

Dneskaj nevěs-ta, zaj-tra že-na, dnes večer budeš za-če-pe-ná, -pe-ná.

2. Ty si Kačenko, bílá růta,
tobě nebylo třeba muže.
[: Tys mohla chodit po slobodě,
ta jak rybička v bystřej vodě. :]

3. Ty si, Martine, strom zelený,
tobě nebylo třeba ženy.
[: Tys mohl chodit po galánkách,
ta jak holúbek po hambalkách. :]

Ay, From Buchlov

Translation by Karleen Sheppard

Ay, from Buchlov the wind is blowing,
it is picking up Kacenka's ribbons.
Today a bride, tomorrow a wife,
this evening you will start wearing a cap.

You Kacenka, are the white rose,
you did not need a husband.

You could have remained single
like a fish proudly swimming in the water.

You Martin, are a green tree,
you did not need a wife.

You could have remained a gallant man,
flying like a dove.

Note: Single women wore ribbons and
flowers in their hair, married women wore
caps covering their hair

At the Czech/Slovak Movies

Contributed by Cinnamon Whaley

All My Loved Ones (1999)

All My Loved Ones is based on a true story, with an opening and closing narration by David Silberstein, a Holocaust survivor. This is the amazing story of a young business man, Nicholas Winton, who saved children by raising money to send them to the United Kingdom - 669 of them in total.

The movie focuses on the well-off Silberstein family in 1938-1939, as news begins to reach Prague about Hitler and his movement. We meet the four grown brothers: a doctor (Jakob), a rabbi (Leo), a professional violinist (Sam), and Max (circus worker). Max is the first to be stung by the Nazis. He arrives at Jakob's house with news that his carousel and circus booth had been burned near the border, and asks to stay with the family.

When the occupation began in 1939, changes came more quickly. Sam is no longer allowed to play violin in concert and Jakob cannot see state-insured patients. Even at this point, Jakob and his wife Irma think, "What else can they do to us?" Sam is invited to play at a benefit hosted by Nicholas Winton to raise money to send children out of Czechoslovakia. Sam speaks to Nicholas about sending Jakob's son David away, but while Nicholas agrees, Jakob and Irma do not agree. Immediately after turning down Nicholas' offer, Nazi's repossess Jakob's car and invade his family's home to inventory all valuables. In the end, they change their mind, and David is sent on the last train out of Prague funded by Nicholas' group.

The movie touches on Palestine, something I have not seen in previous Holocaust movies. When Jakob's daughter's fiancé is meeting Jakob and Irma fairly early in the movie, he mentions their desire to escape to Palestine. This is absolutely frowned upon, and Jakob refuses to approve the wedding. The family believes its homeland is right where they are, and scripture dictates that the Jews agreed to go forever into exile. One of the saddest parts of the movie is seeing that this young man wanting to flee while he still could, but he could not convince the Silberstein family that there was danger coming.

At the end of the film, we are shown a TV clip from 1988. Nicholas Winton had been invited to a British TV show and surprised with more than two dozen surviving adults who he had saved almost 50 years earlier. It is truly an amazing story.

***Slovo* from Start to Finish Each Month**

Contributed by Marit Lee Kucera

A feat of coordination and cooperation goes in to the production of our Czech and Slovak Minnesota *Slovo* ten times each year. We established a *Slovo* advisory committee to publish our *Slovo* starting with the March 2010 issue. Each issue is fueled by the committee's commitment to keep our members and our non-member subscribers informed of all that we do at CSPS Hall, 383 Michigan Avenue, in Saint Paul.

For each edition, we print and mail nearly 500 copies of our 12-page newsletters in black and white. A color edition is available online at www.sokolmn.org. More and more of the production from start to finish is done digitally. Articles and photos are sent digitally to the copy editor, proofs are sent and read digitally, the layout is done on a computer, and the issue is sent digitally to have a master copy made before it is printed. Copying/printing, collating, folding, and labeling are still done by hand.

Cinnamon Whaley is our copy editor; Julie Tomáška is the layout editor; J. H. Fonkert and Marit Lee Kucera are the interim co-managing editors. Other members of the advisory committee are Joyce Tesarek, photographer; Norm Petrik, the News Nag who sends e-reminders about the next issue's deadline; Mary Cahill, collating and folding supervisor; Jeanette Pafko, membership list; Jean Verner and Doreen McKenney, advisors; Sharon and Ken Wyberg, production, labels, and non-member subscription managers. Readers include Fonkert, Kucera, Pafko, Tesarek, and Verner.

Joe Landsberger maintains the e-list, which includes other Sokol units around the country, former members, and others interested in what is happening at Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota. Currently e-editions go to more than 560 people. Jim Robasse, Sokol's webmaster, posts each issue online at www.sokolmn.org. Jim also has created a digital website archives of all of the *Slovo*s produced since the new digital format was instituted more than three years ago.

In addition we have many loyal contributing writers (check the bylines) who are members of our unit. Hana Matousek, Denis Novak, and Milan Tomáška help us with Czech and Slovak translations.

We are all volunteers working within a strict timeline. The deadline for copy is the first of each month. We print a single combined issue for June-July and November-December.

Cinnamon Whaley is our copy editor until November, when she is stepping down. We are beginning our search for a new copy editor. If you have editorial skills which you would like to donate to our *Slovo*, please contact us at slovo@sokolmn.org. The copy editor's work is at the beginning of the timeline, performed during the first five to seven days of each month. Cinnamon does a superb job of preparing the copy, with proofing help from readers on the advisory committee, for the layout editor, Julie Tomáška. Cinnamon has also added interest and spice to our *Slovo*'s content with the periodic movie review and food article.

Here are some of the many compliments that were sent to Joe Landsberger by a reader in Prague as well as from American Sokol Organization members and units around the country, after they read the May issue, which was sent to them via email:

Hi, my name is Donarae Hill and I am the editor of the Sokol Detroit News Letter. I would like to be on your list to receive your newsletter. If you would also like to receive ours monthly, I would gladly add you to my distribution list. Our web site is sokoldetroit.com. Nazdar

I enjoyed this month's newsletter had some great, interesting articles in it. Thanks and Nazdar, Maryann Fiordelis, Sokol Detroit, and a lead in the ASO Strategic Planning Task Force

Great newsletter, as usual!! I am always amazed at the quality content of your newsletter, the photographs, and educational inclusions. Sis. Mary Ellen Newsom, President, Sokol Chicagoland

Many thanks for another most interesting reading on your activities! I am reading The Minnesota Slovo with real joy, especially appreciating also the songs, your interests in traditional Czech and Moravian food and Czech incipites in the main articles. Nazdar! RNDr. Jan Kralik, CSc., organizer of Czech and Moravian Festival of Sokol Theatre Groups and researcher in quantitative linguistics in the Czech Language Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague.*

**Editors Note: We learned from RNDr. Kralik that "incipit" is Latin for "first words in a line," or "beginning of a poem or song," where we often use Czech language text.*

Please send me Slovo. I will share it with our members. Your newsletter is really full of information. How often do you publish the newsletter? I can send you Sokol Baltimore's newsletter also. Please tell me to what email should I send our newsletter? Hello to everyone in Minnesota Sokol. Nazdar, Ann Cervin Huber, Fallston, MD

Elections, Elections, Elections in Central Europe

By Josef A. Mestenhauser



Josef Mestenhauser

Elections have been already held in Austria, Hungary and Ukraine, and will be shortly taking place in Poland, the Czech Republic (May 28), and Slovakia (June). In Austria people re-elected the Social Democratic President Fischer for another term, but less than 45 percent of people voted. Although the President was re-elected by an overwhelming majority, some parties actually were advising the electorate not to vote, or if they voted, to cast an empty ballot – because they had no alternative candidate. In Hungary people threw out the Social Democratic government and elected the leader of the Conservative party, which received a large majority and is likely to govern with the help of a smaller but vocal Nationalistic party. The forthcoming elections in Poland are cast into a dramatic atmosphere following the tragic death of the Polish political elite in the plane crash near Smolensk. The brother of the late President is standing for election to replace him, but polls indicate that he may have a difficult campaign.

The political scene in the Czech Republic is heating up with serious criticism of the past regime that is accused of living out of the past and not responding to the current and future trends. The elections in the Czech Republic on May 28 featured three new political parties. The first, the Party of Law (Strana Prava), a splinter group from the Social Democratic Party, is chaired by the former Socialist Premier, Milos Zeman. The second is called the TOP9 Party of the former adviser to President Havel, and later Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karel Schwarzenberg. It is a conservative, slightly right of center party. The third new party is called Public Affairs (Veci Verejne), whose leader is journalist and commentator Radek John. John incidentally has Minnesota connections, having been here at Macalester College on a World Journalist Program. His party is performing strongly in public opinion polls.

Most people in the United States are not aware of the political atmosphere in these countries and do not realize that the results may influence not only the Czech and Slovak Americans, but the United States as a whole. Let's look at the potential impact. In Ukraine the new government is sitting on large numbers of nuclear weapons, and although the newly elected President hurried to visit Brussels to assure the European Union of his interest in good relations with them, the new government made concessions to Russia for a continuing rental of the naval facilities in Sevastopol for an undisclosed discount on Russian gas. The government claims that it is committed to what it calls metaphorically being a "bridge between the European Union and Russia" – the same metaphor used by former President of Czechoslovakia Eduard Benes. That metaphor did not work in practice then and is not likely to promote stability of Central Europe in the future, because the Ukraine is deeply divided in loyalties toward the West and the East.

In Hungary, the new government is expected to vote shortly on giving Hungarian citizenship to all Hungarians living abroad, including Hungarians living in Slovakia. This proposal increased tensions that already existed when Slovakia passed the "Patriotism Bill" which required the use of Slovak as the official language. The importance of the election outcome in the Czech Republic is heightened by the possibility that the Social Democrats will win a substantial plurality and be asked to form a government - something it would have a hard time doing without the Communists, who are expected to win as many as 20 percent of the votes. This would in effect return the Communists to power and influence.

I have two major concerns. One, we have more at stake in Central Europe than most people recognize, but we seem to know very little about the dynamics of political, social, and cultural developments there, especially during the twenty years following the Velvet Revolution. Second, we seem to have been looking for a simple solution in expecting people of the countries that have suffered a double occupation and totalitarianism to develop a healthy democracy simply by having political parties and elections. These countries do have them now, but what most of the Western consultants neglected is the difficulty of developing a civil society and an educational culture that would develop sound critical thinking.

There may be more implications after the elections have been completed and after the new governments that have just been elected make their political directions known. Stay tuned – and think about our own political culture and the status of our own civil society.

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