

Sokol Happenings

The Sokol social calendar continues full speed ahead in November with the annual Pancake Breakfast in November and holiday parties in December.

The Pancake Breakfast serves up traditional hotcake treats November 18 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. A thrifty \$5 delivers all-you-can-eat pancakes, as well as sausage and juice, milk or coffee. Kids eat for \$3.

Crafts for your holiday gift-giving will be for sale

SUNDAY • NOVEMBER • 18

Pancake Breakfast



Holiday Craft & Bake Sale

Craft tables and Bake Sale open 9a -2p

Serving Food 10a - 1p

Adults \$5.-

All you can eat pancakes
sausage
juice, coffee or milk

Children

(8 and under) **\$3.-**

All you can eat pancakes
1 sausage, juice or milk

CSPS SOKOL HALL

383 Michigan Street 55102

To reserve a craft table please contact

Dorothy 507.645.4793

Upcoming Events

Nov 1
Potato
Dumpling
Class

Nov 15
Gulaš with
Extras Class

Nov 18
Pancake
Breakfast

Nov 23
Membership
Annual
Meeting

Dec 5
Zazvorniky
Slovak
Ginger
Cookie Class

Dec 7
Children's
Holiday Party

Dec 9
Sokol
Members
Holiday Party

Sokol Minnesota Elections

The Sokol Minnesota Annual Meeting and Election is 7:30 p.m. Friday, November 23 at the CSPS Hall. All Sokol members are encouraged to attend and participate in this important meeting. President Joe Landsberger and committee chairs will present annual reports, including discussion of the anticipated 2008 budget. Other directors will be elected for one-year terms. Louise Wessinger, Joyce Tessarek and Mary Cahill are serving on this year's Nominations Committee: give them a call if you are interested in a position!

Sokol Members' Holiday Party

The annual Sokol Members Holiday Party is scheduled for Sunday, December 9. Festive food and entertainment, as well as joyous music from the Sokol Senior Singers, will highlight the event. For more information: December's Slovo!



Sv Mikuláš is coming to town

Sv Mikuláš (St. Nicholas) has announced he is coming to the CSPS Hall again this December.

Parents and Grandparents, circle Friday, December 7, on your calendars. On that evening, we'll celebrate the holidays with all our Sokol Minnesota children. There will be special performances by the Sokol gymnasts and our youth dance groups, the Taneční Mládež and the Taneční Teens.

Sv Mikuláš will come with his angel, Andul. Of course, the Devil will probably also tag along, and be up to his usual mischief. There will also be treats for young and young-at-heart, alike. The program will begin at 7 p.m. followed by individual visits with Sv Mikuláš and refreshments.

Czech and Slovak
Sokol Minnesota
2007 Board of
Directors

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SLOVO
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President Komentář/President's Note

By Joe Landsberger

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings brothers and sisters!

A festival is a time for celebration, and when I welcomed you and visitors to our Festival in September, two things struck me. When I reflected that our Sokol unit's membership has grown for the first time in our history to more than 300, the crowd "buzzed!" Then when I mentioned that our unit is celebrating its 125th anniversary, applause broke out.

That day reflected much celebration. The entertainment was continuous and of high quality, and the weather cooperated. I even received compliments from neighbors who dropped by. We also made the acquaintance of Macalester College students, Vera and Dominika, from the Czech Republic, and Amanda, an American who is fluent in Czech. They had great fun seeing the kroj, hearing folk songs sung in Czech, meeting other Czech-speakers, and watching the children dance. The event was also enhanced with the beautifully staged exhibition of "sumi-e" (Japanese-style painting) of Czech artist Simona Némcová.

At our September membership meeting potluck, we inducted six more members and marked the passing of two. I think even their passing is a cause for celebration of lives well-lived, contributions well-respected.

As you read this, we will have celebrated and entertained visitors to our hall at two more events: the Harvest Dance and Roast Pork Dinner. However, I would like to draw your attention to another significant, regular event that we need to do a better job of promoting: membership nights! September's potluck was a delight, but perhaps due to the work of putting on the past week's festival, only about 20 attended. So, take note of the calendar on the front page for our November events and our Christmas party in December.

The treats are always delicious, lots of wine remains from the festival, and you cannot beat the company! See you then.

Nazdar,
Bro. Joe



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

Guidelines: Czech and Slovak Minnesota welcomes your contributions to the Slovo. We especially invite news about upcoming events, articles about Sokol members, essays about Czech and Slovak cultural heritage, and accounts of travel in the Homeland, as well as photos and artwork to illustrate your stories.

Publication schedule

The Slovo is usually mailed the last week of the month prior to the date of the issue. For example, the November issue would be mailed the last week of October. Stories and ads for events during November should be in the November issue.

Deadlines

Usually the first of the month. For example, the deadline for the December issue is November 1.

How to submit

Articles should be typewritten, if possible.

You can submit in several ways:

- As a Word (.doc) file, via email.
- As typewritten text within the body of an email.
- Typewritten, via postal mail.
- Handwritten via postal mail.

Length

Generally, article should fit on one Slovo page. This generally means one to two single-spaced type-written pages in your word processing program.

Czech Government Sokol Grant

The Czech Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs has awarded a CZK200,000 grant to Sokol Minnesota to assist with costs associated with tuck-pointing, window replacement and other costs of rehabilitating the CSPA Hall. The grants amounts to approximately \$9,000 in U.S. funds.

"Sokol Minnesota is honored that the Czech Government has recognized the importance of our organization and the CSPA Hall for maintaining and preserving Czech heritage in Minnesota," said Joe Landsberger, Sokol Minnesota President. The grant application was written in 2006 by then-President Jay Fonkert and Sokol member Dave Stepan.

Wish us luck...

Under the leadership of Chair Joyce Tesarek, the Finance Committee is applying for grants to help us grow the organization: The General Mills Hamburger Helper's MYHOMETOWNHELPER.COM for \$12,700 would be for non-emergency administrative projects. The City of St. Paul's 2007 Cultural STAR Program supports Organizational Development and Special Projects. Our request is for \$ 47,130 for part-time administrative position(s) and technology support. The McKnight Community Art Program for \$4,000 would be used for a commemorative art work related to our building's 125th anniversary.

A Welcome Opportunity

Now through December 31, 2007, individuals 70 1/2 and older can make a tax-exempt charitable contribution up to \$100,000 directly from their traditional IRAs to an eligible charity. If done before December 31, this Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) satisfies the minimum distribution rule and these monies are excluded from taxable income. Unfortunately the Pension Protection Act of 2006 which allows donors to use this deduction ends December 31, so people wishing to use this special tax-savvy opportunity need to act now. If you would like to make a gift to Sokol, or you have questions, please contact Joyce Tesarek at 612-822-6147. Tax-deductible contributions from donors of any age are always welcome.

Sokol Welcomes New Members

By Norm Petrik, Membership Director

Sokol accepted six new members at the September 28 membership meeting.

John and Ann Kuzma of Mankato have a 13 year-old daughter, Rachel, and expressed interest in children's dance.

Cynthia Coulter of St Paul is interested in language and cooking classes, as well as history and genealogy.

Judy Metcalf of Oakdale has 2 children, James, 14 and Jessica 11, and is interested in children's dance, language and cooking classes, adult dance and genealogy.

Julia Rauchfuss of Minneapolis is interested in language and cooking classes and other Sokol events.

Patrick Dewane of Edina has two children, Andre 12 and Mathias 8, and is interested in our events and genealogy.

Welcome to Sokol Minnesota! Please come to an upcoming membership meeting to be installed and welcomed. Our next meetings are October 26 and November 30 at 7:30 p.m. at the CSPA Hall.

Gym Notes

By Sokol MN Board of Instructors

Sokol Minnesota gymnastic classes began again in September, with returning Women's Physical Director Alisa Hollibush ready for another year of fun and learning. Instructors Lexy Millett, Megan Pera and Molly Coleman also returned for another year.

This past summer, juniors Hannah Brady, Shelby LaBonne, Kirsten Mitchell, Brittney Ruscheinsky, Ellen Sutton and Danielle Willy attended spotting classes taught by Alisa. They will be assisting with the tots and small girls classes.

The Board of Instructors is pleased to see so many returning gymnasts in the small girls and junior girls programs. There are also several new faces, many of them friends of returning gymnasts who have attended the holiday or end of the year exhibitions and decided they, too, would like to join the fun.

The Sokol Minnesota gymnastics program has openings to tots classes (ages 4-6). The tots classes meet 6-7 p.m. Tuesdays.

To enroll, contact Alisa Hollibush 651-651-221-9955.



Photo by Mark Bigaouette

Fruit Dumpling class:

You can almost taste them! The class met under the able spoon of Marcella Bigaouette on October 4.

Cooking classes continue!

Become your family's dumpling or gulaš gourmet! For more information, contact Louise Wessinger at 651-452-6240, or use the class registration form at Sokol Minnesota's website: www.sokolmn.org.

Each class has a limit of 10 students. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required.

Raised Bread Dumplings

Potato Dumplings/
Bramborový Knedlíky
Instructor: Doreen McKenney;
Thursday Nov. 1-6:00-8:30PM;

Fee: \$12 for Sokol Members; \$15 for non-members.

Cooks should bring an apron, mixing bowl, and spoon.

Gulaš with Extras!

A special "Gulaš with Extras!" class will be offered by a special guest teacher from the Czech Republic.

Thursday, November 15, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Cooks should bring an apron and large container.

Take and Bake for the Holidays

A special two-part holiday baking series

Zazvorniky/Slovak Ginger Cookies

Instructor: Kevin Hurbanis

Wednesday Dec. 5, 6:00-8:30 PM

Fee: \$12 for Sokol Members; \$15 for non-members)

Cooks should bring their own aprons, rolling pins, and containers for their cookies.



Vánočka/Christmas Bread

with raisins and nuts

Instructor: Hana Matousek

Fee: \$18 for Sokol Members; \$20 for non-members)

Cooks should bring their own apron, mixing bowl, large spoon, bread board or baking sheet. You will take Vánočka to bake at home, fresh for your morning coffee.

Czech dance expert helps local dance groups

By Louise Wessinger

We had the good fortune to have an expert in Czech dance in the Twin Cities for two weeks in September. Alice Janotova is from Strakonice in south Bohemia. She spent the summer in Wisconsin, working at a summer restaurant in Door county. With the help of Michael Cwach, our Czech bagpiper friend from Tabor, South Dakota, Alice played at our Czech and Slovak Festival on September 23, and stayed on to teach Czech dance.

She worked with the Taneční Mládež, Taneční Teens and the St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folkdancers, then spent Sunday afternoon with the Domaci Dancers in

New Prague, instructing Arnie and Deb Ziscovsky's young dancers.

Alice attended the Academy of the Performing Arts in Prague, studying dance pedagogy. She has been a dance instructor at the School of Basic Arts in Strakonice and a violinist/co-leader of the bagpipe band Vandová Dudácká Musika that accompanies the children's folklore group Prachenacek. Alice dances with the South Bohemian folklore group Prachensk soubor písní a tancu. She is fluent in English, German, and basic Spanish.

We enjoyed working with Alice, and we hope that the dances she has taught us will soon become part of our dance presentations.

Western District News

Save the dates for future Sokol Slets! The 2008 Western District Slet will be in Omaha, Nebraska April 19-20, hosted by Sokol South Omaha. Delegates from Sokols Omaha, South Omaha, Cedar Rapids, Crete, Wilber and Minnesota met in the last weekend in September in Wilber, Nebraska, to discuss Western District and American Sokol business, and to plan for the Slet.

The next American Sokol Slet will be held in Fort Worth, Texas, June 22-28, 2009. A Slet is a gymnastic competition and exhibition, with events for all ages and abilities.

They are a wonderful Sokol event for the entire family, whether one is a participant or an observer. Meeting Sokols from other units across the United States is exciting, making for many life long friendships.



In 1931, St. Paul Sokol gymnasts traveled to Cadott, Wisconsin to help them develop their unit's program.

Photo courtesy of Rosemary Loss Bodien from her father, Lad Loss' collection.

Song of the Month

Okolo Hradce

submitted by Georgiana Dolejsi



(Doprovod: 5)

Česká (trio zlidovělé)
Marcia



1. O-ko-lo Hrad-cev ma-lé za-hrad-ce ros-tou tam tři rů-že.



Jedna je červená, dru-há je bí-lá, tře-tí kvete mod-ře, ře.



R. Vo-já-ci jdou, vojáci jdou, bože ja-ká je to krá-sa, vo-já-ci



jdou, vojáci jdou pěkně v řa-dách za se-bou, vo-já-ci



jdou, vo-já-ci jdou, kaž-dé dív-čí srd-ce já-sá, když



vo-já-ci jdou, vo-já-ci jdou pěkně v řa-dách za se-bou.

2. Kobyłka malá, kovat se nedá,
kováři nechce stát;
Tak jako má milá, když se na mě
hněvá, hubičku nechce dát.

3. Kobyłka malá kovat se dala,
kováři postála,
Tak, jako má milá, když se udobřila,
hubičku mi dala
Tak, jako má milá, když se udobřila,
hubičku mi dala

Around the castle is a small garden
growing three roses
The first is red, the second is white,
the third is blue

Refrain:

Soldiers are passing, soldiers are passing,
what a beautiful sight
Soldiers are passing, soldiers are passing,
in rows one behind the other
Soldiers are passing, soldiers are passing,
every young girl's heart rejoices
When the soldiers are passing
in rows one behind the other.
Soldiers are passing, soldiers are passing,
what a beautiful sight

Sokol Minnesota News

By Marlene Hinshaw

On September 23, Sokol and the nation, lost a hero: Agnes (Lackovic) Daluge. Agnes and husband Willard were active Sokol members until recently when Agnes became ill. Agnes was born into a very poor Slovak family in the 1930s. Due to malnutrition, Agnes experienced slow growth and life-threatening illnesses. In 1939, she was taken in by an aunt, Rosa Schneider, of Munich, Germany. Aunt Rosa was a member of the anti-Nazi underground, working with the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA. She helped downed pilots, soldiers and Jews escape Germany. Gradually, her aunt drew Agnes into Munich's underground. She taught Agnes five languages so she could communicate.

Agnes was the perfect spy. She was intelligent. Only 5 feet-tall and delicate, she could easily pass as a child. Agnes passed messages. She pretended she was a child fleeing with her family, but was actually leading the family to safety. She was known as "Mighty Mouse" by the airmen she rescued. She also guided paratroopers on secret missions. Agnes helped save 300 people. When asked how she had the courage to do this, she replied, "I didn't know what I was getting into until it was too late, and then it was too exciting to stop."

Agnes met Willard Daluge, a U.S. soldier in postwar Europe. Willard was from Truman Minnesota. They married and moved to Eden Prairie in 1948. Agnes became a U.S. citizen and worked for Control Data in the 1960's. She wrote a book about her experiences titled *Rosa's Miracle Mouse: The True Story of a World War II Undercover Teenager*. She spoke at schools, churches, and other places sharing her experiences about the war. You can type in her name on the internet and find out more about her amazing story.



It was an honor to meet and work alongside Agnes at Sokol. She was a delightful person! May this good dear soul rest in peace. Agnes is survived by husband Willard, son Wendell of northern Minnesota and daughter Margaret Plank of Illinois.

Whew! We just finished the Fall Festival and already we're up to our eyeballs in other events. Believe me: this hall is "jumping." We had the Harvest Dance in October, and November brings, the Roast Pork Dinner, Pancake Breakfast, and Craft & Bake Sale. In December, we have a Holiday Tea & Dessert. This will all be worked around singing classes, dance practices, language and cooking classes and kids flipping through the air in gymnastics.

This year at the November 18 Pancake Breakfast, Craft and Bake Sale, we'll be trying something new: The Country Store. We will sell jams, jellies, honey, and meals and/or

desserts in a jar. If you have any suggestions or good recipes for meals in a jar please call me at 651-222-4073. Paula Vukonich of Chisolm has donated several jars of homemade jelly; some are from hand-picked wild berries. Thank you. Paula.

Coming into the hall is an adventure 'cause you never know what or whom you'll encounter. Last week, I arrived to the sounds of folk music and children's excited voices. Alice Janotova, a dance teacher from Strakonice in Southern Bohemia, was teaching our youngest dancers. The children were clearly interested and followed Alice around the gym as though she was the Pied Piper. I was fascinated by how she got them to perform and made it so much fun. What a great opportunity for the children! A big thank you to Louise Wessinger, who organized Alice's two weeks of tutoring and provided lodging. Alice also worked with the adult dancers.

In September, our Sokol MN dancers celebrated their 45th year as a dance group. The group was started by members Vera (Verner) Hawkinson and Dorothy Kucera.

Their first performance was in 1962 at Kolache Days in Montgomery, Minnesota. Congratulations! We're so proud of the excellent job you do promoting our culture.

Congratulations are also in order for Mark Bigaoutte who reached the mid-century mark. And, "good cheer" to Alan Garrison who survived major surgery in September. Alan is back home and doing very well.



Beautiful weather graces lively Czech and Slovak Festival

By Louise Wessinger and Dave
Stepan, Program Co-chairs

A beautiful first day of Fall provided a wonderful backdrop for entertainment at Sokol Minnesota's Czech and Slovak Festival in September. The afternoon began with an hour and a half of strolling concertina music by the very talented Jerry Minař. Occasionally, Jerry would stop for an impromptu song with singers in the crowd.

The official program began with presentation of the Czech and Slovak national flags and singing of the anthems. Lori Vosejпка inspired us with her beautiful a cappella singing of The Star Spangled Banner. Our own Czech and Slovak Sokol singers then led the audience in the Czech and Slovak Anthems to honor our heritage. The American flag was carried by U.S. Army veteran, Norm Petrik. The Czech

and Slovak flags were carried by the Martin family. Dave, Sue, Emma and Livi were all dressed in Czech and Slovak kroje. Bagpiper Mike Cwach and violinist Alice Janotova led the procession.

Master of Ceremonies David Stepan introduced Sokol President Joe Landsberger and Czech Honorary Consul Josef Mestenhauser, who both welcomed our guests. Georgiana Dolejsi and the Sokol Singers followed with a wonderful concert of lively Czech and Slovak tunes.



The children then took over the stage as the Sokol Taneční Mládež folk dancers and the Sokol gymnasts presented an array of dances and gymnastic routines. The Taneční Teens also performed two sets of dances that showed the variety and color of Czech, Moravian and Slovak folkdance.

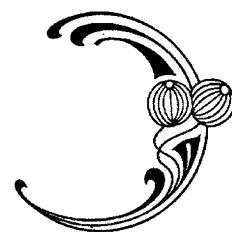
Special guests for the day included Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Leah Sticha, who presented her violin solo and her Princess Jessica Lambretht. Bagpiper Michael Cwach and violinist Alice Janotova treated the crowd to authentic Czech music and song.

The Ethnic Dance Theatre of Minnesota brought a special performance treat, dancing a suite from their spring concert under the direction of Donald LaCourse. The St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folkdancers gave their usual lively presentation of four sets of dances, ranging from ballroom to village dances from all around the Czech and Slovak lands.

The afternoon concluded with a children's kolache eating contest and the ZCBJ bike raffle.

And so the day was filled with good food, games for kids, bingo, informative booths and gift shop, silent auction, and art! Something for everyone!

Special thanks to all who made helped pack this year's Festival with love and enthusiasm for our Czech and Slovak culture.



LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE U. S. IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF AL

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, under Act of Congress approved March 3, 1903, to be delivered to the U. S. Immigration Officer at the port of arrival at a port in the United States.

S. S. *Grosser Kurfurst* sailing from *Germany* April 5, 1905

No. on List	Age	Sex	Married	Calling or Occupation	Abile to Read, Write, or Speak English	Nationally (Country of last permanent residence)	Race or People	Last Residence (Province, City, or Town)	Final Destination (State, City, or Town)	Whether having a ticket to such final destination	By whom was passage paid?	Whether in possession of \$50, and if not, how much?	Whether ever before in the United States, and if so, when and where?	Whether going to join a relative or friend, and if so, what relation or friend, and his name and complete address.
1	24	F		Housewife		Czechoslovakia	Czech	Prague	Minneapolis	Yes	Self	None	No	Her husband, Andreas Pafko, 247 1/2 W. Michigan St. Minneapolis, Minn.
2	24	F		Housewife		Czechoslovakia	Czech	Prague	Minneapolis	Yes	Self	None	No	Her husband, Andreas Pafko, 247 1/2 W. Michigan St. Minneapolis, Minn.

Editor's note:

Sokol Minnesota members cherish the immigration history of their Slovak, Moravian and Czech ancestors. So, it is great good fortune that the University of Minnesota is home to one of the nation's the truly outstanding immigration history research centers. Sokol member Don Pafko is a past president of both Sokol Minnesota and the Friends of the Immigration History Research Center.

Sokol Minnesota Supports Immigration History Research Center

By Don Pafko

Founded in 1965, the Immigration History Research Center is dedicated to advancing research on global immigration, with a special emphasis on immigration to the United States. The Center's archives and programs serve scholars from across the University, as well as from around the world.

Many members of the Czech & Slovak communities have archived their family immigration histories in the vaults of the IHRC. The use of the IHRC library and archives is open to anyone and all may contribute to the Center's collections.

A national non-profit support group called the Friends of the IHRC help promote the Center and acts as a liaison with ethnic organizations. I have had the honor of representing Sokol Minnesota on the Board of the Friends of the IHRC since 1998, as well as the honor as serving as President of the Friends for five years. The Board of the Friends represents twenty-four different ethnic organizations.

The Friends of the IHRC meet monthly on the third Saturday of the month. Each year we hold an annual ethnic dinner and annual meeting. This year's event will be held November 3 at St. Katherine's Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Arden Hills. The featured speaker will be Professor Hy Berman, long time University of Minnesota historian and Minnesota history specialist, who will speak on the film "Sweetland," which was directed by Twin Cities director Ali Selim. He will also address the 30th anniversary celebration of the Friends as a support group to the IHRC. All are welcome to this annual meeting and dinner.

If you wish further information about the IHRC or the Friends of the IHRC, feel free to contact me at 952-831-1449 or Pafkova@aol.com. You may contribute to the Friends of the IHRC, or directly to the IHRC, and may designate your contribution to the Czech or the Slovak Studies Fund. I encourage you to support these two very important Funds.

I am proud to represent the Czech & Slovak communities on the Board of the Friends of the IHRC.

Passenger ship manifests document the arrival of many immigrants. This record from the National Archives records the 1905 New York arrival of 24 year-old Maria Pafko and daughter Zusanna on the S.S. Grosser Kurfurst, on her way to join her husband Andreas Pafko in Minneapolis.

A little engine that could: Czech train adventures

Story and photos by Jay Fonkert

It sometimes takes a while, but you can get most anywhere (or at least, close) on the train in the Czech Republic.

There are no sleek bullet trains, but a dense network of trains crisscrosses the country. The armchair traveler can take an imaginary train trip at the website of České dráhy, the Czech national railway www.cd.cz/static/eng/ Just click on "Timetable" at the top of the page to plan your journey. Unfortunately (or fortunately, as the case may be), schedule search is in Czech, but not too hard to figure out. Okud is origin and kam is destination.

From my limited experience, the service is reliable, but some trains are slow. Really slow. My first experience with a slow train was while traveling with a group of Sokol Minnesota-sponsored Venture Scouts after the 2000 Slet in Prague. We were making our way from České Krumlov to the small town of Blatna in southern Bohemia. As the crow flies, the two towns are probably not more than 100 miles apart, but the trip took three trains and most of the day.

We sailed along on a couple of main lines until we got to Nepomuk, where we had to wait an hour or so for the



train to Blatna. Were we in for a surprise! It was a one-car train. No, not an engine and a passenger car, but a one-vehicle train: engine and passenger compartment in one car.

How does this work, you ask? Well, I'm not mechanically inclined, but the thing sounded like a truck on rails. It actually shifted through several gears as it pulled out of the station, reaching amazing speeds of perhaps 20 miles an hour when going downhill.

It was a fun ride. We passed little bus shelter-like huts that served as local train stations out in the middle of the countryside. The train would stop for 10 or 15 seconds, and one or two people would get off. Basically, the train resembled rural bus service on rails.



After a delightful stay with host families in Blatna, the locals made sure we took the bus back to Prague. They said it was the only way to travel.

My wife and I encountered the little truck-on-rails train again a year ago when we took a day-trip from Telc to the quaint town of Slavonice on the Austrian border. This time, there were two of the little combination engine-passenger cars hooked together. It took about an hour to go about 15 miles. The bus would have been faster, but the train ride was beautiful and memorable.

Get romantic next year!

Our 5th annual roast duck, candle light dinner will be held on Saturday, January 26 at 5 p.m. There will be limited seating by reservation only. For more information, don't miss December's Slovo!

News from Prague and Bratislava

Compiled by Jay Fonkert

Cab Fares Stir Controversy in Prague

Your next trip to Prague might be a bit more expensive – at least if you plan to get around town in a cab.

A city ordinance caps cab fares at 28 crowns (about \$1.45) per kilometer, but a Municipal Court recently ruled the limit invalid. Under the ruling, cab drivers would be able to set their own rates, without limit.

Not so fast, says the Prague city government. The city says the 28 crown limit will stand until the city receives a written version of the court ruling. The Prague Post reports that some cab companies are already hiking their fares, while others are waiting for a green light.

One Old Town Square cabbie went on an eleven-day hunger strike last winter to protest the municipal cap on fares. He is now back to work, charging up to 99 crowns per kilometer. Ponert says he was making only 15,000 crowns (about \$775) a month under the regulated fares. The average monthly wage in Prague is about 26,000 crowns.

The Chairman of the Praha Taxi Trade Unions says a reasonable fare would be about 40 to 50 crowns per kilometer. That would be around \$2.50 per mile.

Of course, Sokol Minnesota travelers know that some of the best Prague sights can still be seen on foot!

Source: Prague Post, September 26, 2007

Beetles on Rampage

An invading army of bark beetles is laying waste to the beautiful Sumava region of southern Bohemia. The beetles have affected about 7,500 acres in National Park Sumava, the Czech Republic's largest national park.

The beetles are the second frontal attack on "The Green Roof of Europe" in the past year. A vicious hurricane-like windstorm struck Europe in January, resulting in blow-downs similar to the great Boundary Waters blowdown in Minnesota several years ago.

Some activists are upset that the government is not aggressively attacking the beetle army by cutting down and removing infected trees. The Environment Ministry prefers to leave most trees standing, arguing that dead trees protect remaining healthy trees from storms such as January's "Hurricane Kyrill."

The Environment Ministry is also concerned about effects of pollution and tourism on the forest. Only about 1,000 people live in the park year-round, but the Environment Ministry says the area is badly overcrowded during tourist season.

Source: Prague Post, September 26, 2007

Upcoming film profiles Vaclav Havel

An unique documentary film profiling former Czech President Vaclav Havel will premier in January. Before his accidental death last year, director Pavel Koutecky shot 45 hours of behind-the-scenes footage of Havel at work and play, ranging from political negotiations to giving restaurant tips to the Rolling Stones.

The film covers 10 years of Havel's presidency. Co-producer Pavel Strnad says the film is "almost a comedy," focusing on Havel the man more than Havel the politician. The film is, of course, in Czech.

Source: Radio Prague, September 25, 2007

Roma music rising

Roma (gypsy) music is rising on the popularity charts in the Slovak Republic, but not all the news is good. Some of the most authentic singers have been kidnapped and spirited away to sing on the streets of foreign countries. This was the fate of Bela Pokuta, from the east Slovak village of Zehra.

A Slovak ethnologists told Slovak Radio International that the Roma derived from lower-class South Asian populations that traditionally earned money by selling services, including musical entertainment. In their travel across Europe, the Roma have influenced folk music in many countries.

Folk songs were originally accompanied by pipes and drums and only later by stringed instruments such as violins, of which the Roma musicians became masters. Roma songs fall into two broad categories: phurikane gila, or old songs, and neve gila, or new songs. A new genre, "rom-pop" is emerging. A father-son duo called Kmeto Band has made it into Slovak charts with a "Rom-funky" style.

A CD called Phurikane Gila, and an accompanying book (available in English translation) feature modern Roma music. A second CD, Phurikane Gila II, will be released in the Slovak market in November.

Source: Radio Slovakia International



Josef Mestenhauser

Author's note: I am pleased to have the opportunity to write a monthly column for the Slovo. The column will consist 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 Kanadské Listy; Americké Listy; the Prague Post; 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.

Elections, elections, and more elections

The hype we experience with the presidential elections is not unique to the United States. It seems that electioneering is a common human condition – as people and countries search for stability of government and society. Many countries, in which election-generated fever is unfolding, are facing crisis of fragmented civil society.

This is the case not only in the Czech Republic, but also in Poland, Russia and the Ukraine. Outcomes of these elections will be watched carefully, not only by us in the United States, but in the Czech and Slovak Republics as well.

In the Czech Republic, the presidential election campaign is warming up even though there is so far only one declared candidate, Vaclav Klaus. His party, ODS, is now intensifying his campaign because the popularity of the ODS party has declined and the party slipped behind the Social Democrats. The CSSD indicated that it might select its candidate early in October.

The governing coalition is not necessarily supporting Pres. Klaus. Both the Greens and the Peoples' Party (Lidová Strana) are apparently actively searching for an "anti-Klaus" candidate, and are feverishly holding various negotiations in search of an acceptable candidate who could defeat President Klaus in early February next year. Several names are appearing as possible choices: Senator Petr Pithart (he publicly declined interest), former Minister of Foreign Affairs Jiri Dienstbier (he is willing but has not yet been nominated by anybody), highly respected economist Jan Svejnar (he spends half of his time in the U.S. and half in Prague), President of the Czech Academy of Science Vaclav Paces, and now a surprise nominee from Jirina Siklova, the present Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Karel Schwarzenberg.

According to Mojmir Povolny, who is well known to Minnesotans, the Czechs do not have yet a sufficiently large supply of qualified people who can fill the unique position of the Czech Presidency. Since we have a surplus of candidates, maybe we should loan them a few. We shall be watching closely.

Flash News

The Executive Committee of the Vaclav Havel Symposium for Civil Society (St. Thomas University, House of Hope Presbyterian Church and the Czech Community) just voted to invite as 2008 Scholar-in-Residence Drs. Martin Butora and his wife, Zora Butorova. Dr. Butora is the former Slovak Ambassador to the US when he also visited our CSPS Hall, and is Honorary President of the Institute for Public Affairs and its Director of European Integration and Transatlantic Relations Program. He was also a candidate for President of Slovakia. Dr. Zora had a brilliant academic and public affairs career, and is presently Scholar-in-residence of the above mentioned Institute for Public Affairs. Invitation to participate in this program has just been issued and we hope the Butoras will accept and give us the preferred dates when they come.

Did you know...

- The Czech Parliament will likely pass a new labor law that will substantially liberalize the labor market?
- Corruption in the Czech and Slovak Republics is now at its lowest level?
- President Klaus gave a controversial speech before the opening of the UN General Assembly on global warming, in which he stated that it is not caused by people, thus defying the cabinet's decision on global warming?
- The Czech Republic will chair the European Union Council in the first half of 2009?
- Brno will have the biggest industrial park in CR by 2015, size of 360 soccer fields?
- The Slovak Parliament declared the Benes Decrees as "untouchable"? This caused uproar

- in Hungary; many Hungarians have been expelled from Slovakia on the basis of this decree. More on this issue in the next Random News.
- CR is actively campaigning to be voted as non-voting member of the UN Security Council?
- Austria is "stalling" the application of the Schengen agreement for its neighbors, CR, SR, and Hungary? The Schengen agreement establishes Europe as no-border control zone. The Vysehrad Four countries oppose this move.
- A Shortage of workers is forcing the CR to consider "importing" workers from Vietnam?
- Last summer was an exceptional bonanza for Czech farmers – their income rose to 15 billion crowns
- Slovak unemployment was down to 8.3% - lowest in history since 1989

- Slovak surgeons successfully separated Siamese Twins?
- The Czech Parliament may turn one of its MP's to the police for prosecution for crimes against humanity? Josef Vondruska is alleged to have been a brutal prison guard; he claims he is proud of his actions to protect the country.
- Slovakia is ahead of the CR in a number of economic indicators? E.g. deficit rate; level of inflation; and plans for instituting the Euro by 2009.
- Economists' Intelligence ranked countries on how democratic they are? 1) Sweden, 2) Netherlands, 3) Norway, 17) USA; 18) CR; 38) Slovakia; 39) Hungary; 46) Poland.
- The CR will soon have a functioning Institute to Study Totalitarian Regimes?
- The Slovak Budget is currently in surplus for July and August?

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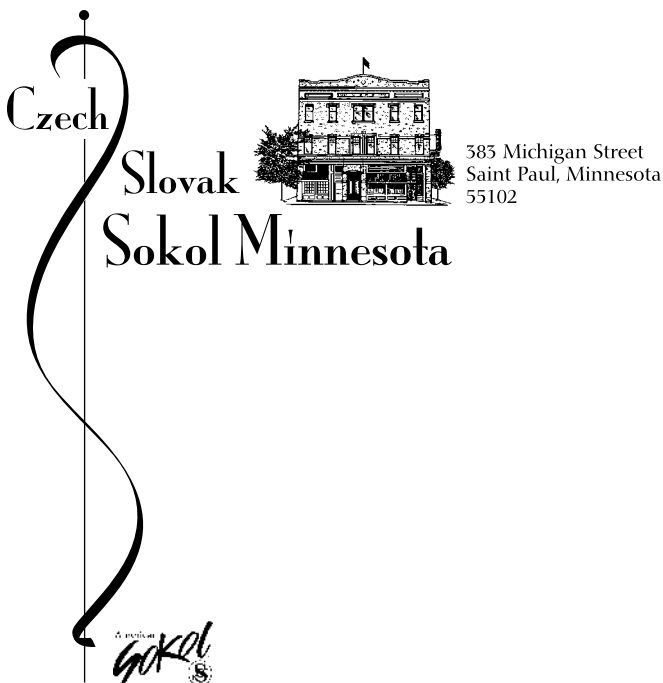
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