

UPCOMING EVENTS October 2015

November *Slovo* Deadline
October 1

Board of Trustees
October 7, 7 p.m.

Sokol Members' Workday
October 10, 8 a.m.

Family Night
October 11, 4 p.m.

Board of Directors
October 15, 7 p.m.

Sokol Minnesota Singers
October 20, 10 a.m.

Czech Roast Pork Dinner
October 25, 11:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Bulletin Board VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Sokol Members' Workday
at the Hall • October 10 • 8 a.m.
Contact: trustees@sokolmn.org

Czech Roast Pork Dinner

Sunday, October 25, 12:30 p.m.

Limited reserved seating

Roast pork, raised-bread dumplings,
sauerkraut, dessert, and coffee.
Beer, wine, and pop will be available for sale.

\$16/adult; \$8/child under 9

Pre-paid reservations are required by October 16

For reservations call: 651 - 290 - 0542

Pre-paid takeout is also available by reservation

Hosted by
Czech and Slovak
Sokol Minnesota

**Public
Welcome**

C.S.P.S. Hall
383 Michigan Street
Saint Paul, MN
55102

www.sokolmn.org



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Sokol Minnesota
2015 BOD
(Board of Directors)**

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Past issues of *Slovo* and
Hall Calendar of events:

www.sokolmn.org

Prezidentův komentář/President's Notes By Judy Aubrecht

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings Brothers and Sisters

Every spring I enjoy reading essays written by graduating high school seniors in the Western Fraternal Life newsletter about what Sokol means to them. The essays usually emphasize themes of fitness, friendship, family inter-generational activities, and fun opportunities to try new things.

Sokol Minnesota recently received memorabilia for our archives along with a donation to the Legacy Fund. The memorabilia came from Mary Riegraf Johnson and her sister, JoAnn Riegraf Paton. They could have easily written such essays 50 years ago when they were 16 and 17 years old and members of the Saint Paul Sokol junior girls' gymnastics class. Along with the memorabilia, Mary enclosed the following note:

Back in the early 1960's, my mother looked out the kitchen window at my sister JoAnn and I jumping rope. She said that we did not look very coordinated and that was the reason that she decided to enroll us in the weekly gymnastics class at the C.S.P.S. Hall. We were the oldest of five kids and lived on Wordsworth Avenue in Saint Paul. Our family had Czech/Bohemian heritage and had lived in the Carver/Chaska area, but I do not remember connecting to our heritage as a reason for joining Sokol. Neither of us were good gymnasts, but we went for several years and it was fun, and it certainly did improve our coordination.

Mary and her husband moved to New Prague, Minnesota, ten years ago when he retired and continue to live there. JoAnn shared a February 21, 1965, Minneapolis *Tribune* article entitled "What Is Sokol?" that she had saved in the scrapbook that she made as a girl. Many of the activities described in the article are similar to what happens at Sokol today. The feature article was written by Lora Lee Watson to acknowledge 100 years of Sokol in the United States. The article included a photo of the girls' junior gymnastics class marching in the Hall. Another photo featured Frank Verner at age 62 on the rings, with his son Miro Verner at 32, and his granddaughter Jean Verner at age 6, watching. A third photo spotlighted the Vanyo sisters Susan, 6, Roberta, 8, and Cecilia, 7, each dancing in Moravian *kroj*. (See the 1965 newspaper pictures on the top of page 3.)

JoAnn also enclosed a page from her scrapbook that included the official schedule of events for the June 1966 Western District *Slet*, which was held at the new Highland Park Senior High School. Participants came from Chicago, Iowa, and Nebraska to compete. Entertainment included swimming at the high school pool for 25¢ per person, a dance with music played by the Jolly Coppersmiths Band, and a concert by the Cretin High School Band.

One hundred and fifty years of Sokol in the United States will be celebrated in Chicago in November; more information is available at <www.american-sokol.org>. Now is the time to register to attend the festivities. The event themes will be similar to the events from 50 years ago: fitness, family, and fun. After participating at such events at the festival and throughout the year, next spring more high school seniors will have reasons to include in their essays about "What Sokol Means to Me." *Nazdar!*

Honorary Consuls, plus Sokol Minnesota Committee Chairs (not seated on the BOD)

Honorary Slovak Consul: Donald Pafko Honorary Czech Consul Designate: Marit Lee Kucera

Past Honorary Czech Consul: Robert Vanasek

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Kitchen Coordinator: open

Website: Joe Landsberger

Volunteer Coordinator: open

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Hall Contacts: Dan Bednar, Ed Hamernik, Joan Sedlacek

Slovo newsletter: Marit Lee Kucera, Christy Banks, Deb Ziskovsky, Mary Kucera

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This year Sokol celebrates its 100th anniversary in America. It's a family sort of thing. Frank Verner, 62, belongs. So does his son Miro, 33. So does Miro's daughter, Jean, 6. Miro's wife teaches a children's class. His son, Ricky, won't be eligible to join until next year, when he's 4. If you're of Czech ancestry, you'll know what Sokol is. If not you might wonder . . .

What Is Sokol?

By LORA LEE WATSON
Minneapolis Tribune Staff Writer

"Sokol" means "falcon" in the Czechoslovakian language. That's why Sokol was the name chosen for a physical fitness organization — because the bird is noted for strength, stamina and freedom of flight.

Sokol was started in Czechoslovakia in 1863 and two years later was brought to the United States by Czech immigrants. So 1965 is the 100th anniversary of American Sokol.

The organization is dedicated to the ideals of vigorous health through exercise and of serenity through mental and moral uprightness.

There are three Sokol units in the Twin Cities area, in St. Paul, Minneapolis and Hopkins, made up of persons of Czech ancestry.

The St. Paul unit conducts several regular classes in gymnastics, and all three groups have regular social and business meetings.

Throughout the United States, there are 76 units organized into six districts with a membership of more than 12,000. National headquarters are in Chicago, Ill.

Sokol had membership close to 2 million in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland and Russia before the Nazis and Communists caused them to disband.

There are active units now in England, France, Switzerland, Austria, Canada, Argentina and Morocco.

Lower age limit for Sokol gymnastic participation is age 4. There is no upward age limit. Children of members may participate free except for an insurance charge. The gymnastic classes are not limited to members of the organization.



Here are the Riesgraf sisters, 50 years later, (L-R): Mary Johnson and JoAnn Pooton. They are second and third from the left in the 1965 Sokol junior girls gymnastic class marching picture.

February 21, 1965, Minneapolis *Tribune* article saluted 100 years of American Sokol.

Sokol Minnesota Annual Memberships

Renewals: Individual \$50; Couple \$90.

Senior \$40 (over age 65); Senior couple \$80.

New memberships: Individual \$55; Couple \$95.

This includes a one-time \$5 registration fee with our national organization, American Sokol Organization. Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's annual membership runs from January 1 to December 31. Dues are reduced for members joining after June 30.

Membership applications: <www.sokolmn.org> or by request from Norm Petrik (612-822-6147). Please send your completed membership application and check to

**Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, Attn: Membership
383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102**

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE: The *Slovo* is published ten times per year by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, a non-profit organization, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102. Sokol Minnesota members receive the *Slovo* with their membership.

The *Slovo* Advisory Committee welcomes submissions. Send news, articles, and pictures digitally to <slovo@sokolmn.org>. **The deadline for the November 2015 issue is October 1.**

This October 2015 issue of *Slovo* will be archived on the Sokol Minnesota website by mid-October: <www.sokolmn.org>

Slovo accepts business card-size ads (3.5"x2"), paid in advance: one-time insertion \$25; 3 consecutive issues: \$65; 10 consecutive issues: \$175. Ad reservation deadline is 6 weeks before publication (October 15 for December issue), with ad and payment due by copy deadline (November 1 for December issue).

Slovo gift subscriptions and non-member renewals are \$15/year (10 issues). (Rate is good through October 2016.) Please include name, address, phone number, and email address with your new/renewing non-member subscription.

Make your check to: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota. Send to: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *Slovo* Subscriptions, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102. Extra copies of *Slovo* are \$2 each, plus postage, while supply lasts.

Please contact us for a **change of address**, for problems with *Slovo* subscriptions, if you missed an issue, or if you received notice of payment due when a payment has already been made.

If you are temporarily out of town for an extended stay, the post office will not forward your *Slovo* because we use bulk mail. If you wish to have this newsletter suspended during this time or if you wish to have it sent to your out-of-town residence, please let us know. After one returned issue, we hold all future issues until you notify us. We pay 49¢ for each returned issue.

Email us: <slovo@sokolmn.org>, phone us: 651-290-0542, or write us: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102. *Thank you!*

Member Volunteer *Slovo* staff: Christy Banks, copy editor; M. L. Kucera, managing editor; Mary Kucera, production assistant; Deb Ziskovsky, labels; Joyce Tesarek and Martina Gurgle, photographers; Doreen McKenney, ad designer; Mary Cahill, mailing production; Joan Sedlacek, mailing; with Jean Draheim, Arlene Hamernik, Norm Petrik, Jitka Sebek, Pam Snopl, advisors. Photographs: Mary Johnson, M.L. Kucera, Kari Muyres, Gary Lofstrom, Renata Ticha.

Membership Updates

By Norm Petrik, Membership Director

At the August 20 Board of Directors meeting one couple was accepted as members of Sokol Minnesota: Roger and Kathi Rinnac from Minneapolis. They expressed interest in language, cooking, and various events. Welcome to Sokol Minnesota!

Sokol Remembers Departed Members

Helen Filipek, age 96, of South Minneapolis passed away August 17, 2015. She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank. Helen was great-aunt to Louise Ouradnik who stated that Helen was a longtime member of Sokol. For the last years she has been living in Rakhma Peach Home and was unable to attend events at Sokol. Helen loved the pork and dumpling dinners and even when she was unable to get to the Hall on her own, her Sokol friends would be sure she got to Sokol Hall for the dinners.

Remembrance of Josef Mestenhauser

The public memorial service to honor Sokol's good friend **Dr. Josef Mestenhauser (June 23, 1925 to March 14, 2015)** is Saturday, October 3, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., at the University of Minnesota's Cowles Auditorium and Atrium, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, 301 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis.



A reception follows. The Czech and Slovak community, along with the many other friends and colleagues of Dr. Mestenhauser, welcome this opportunity to show our respect.

The reception in the Campus Club, Room ABC, Coffman Union, from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., includes presentations by faculty, staff, students, and alumni commemorating Dr. Mestenhauser's scholarship and life. For the reception, Sokol will prepare and serve *chlebičky* (Czech open-face sandwich), a staple at all Mestenhauser family celebrations; if you would like to volunteer, please contact Joyce: 612-822-6147.

The Memorial is held in conjunction with the annual Mestenhauser Lecture, which brings scholars from around the world to the University of Minnesota. This year's lecture is "The Freedom to Be: International Education and Crossing Borders" presented by Hanneke Teekens from the Netherlands.

This lecture is scheduled for Friday, October 2, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the 3M Auditorium and Atrium, Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota.

The service is sponsored by the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, the College of Education and Human Development, and International Student and Scholar Services, all programs at the University of Minnesota in which Dr. Mestenhauser played an integral part. For more information about the event, please visit global.umn.edu/icc/legacy/

Board of Directors (BOD)

August 2015 Meeting

By Cindy Coulter

During the August meeting, the BOD heard from three guests: Marit Lee Kucera, Dan Bednar, and Gary Novak. Marit discussed her upcoming installation as Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic for Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakotas. A celebratory reception will be held in Marit's honor at the C.S.P.S. Hall when the installation date has been confirmed. Sokol Minnesota members are invited.

Dan Bednar reported that the BOT had a successful workday on August 8 with a team of volunteers sprucing up the C.S.P.S. Hall, painting fresh coats of paint and pruning outside. Kudos to the team! The next workday is scheduled for October 10, so please stop by to lend a hand. The fire inspection of the C.S.P.S. Hall is still in progress; the BOT is working to complete the inspection report requirements.

Gary Novak detailed the air conditioning system progress: pipefitters are working on the gas line, air conditioning contractor is working on the duct work in the attic, and the electrical cutover is complete so Sokol Minnesota is now on the new switchboard. Patience and persistence have been needed to face the challenges in coordinating the schedules of Sokol Minnesota and several contractors.

In support of the American Sokol 150th Anniversary Weekend scheduled for November 13 and 14 in Chicago, the BOD approved the motion for Sokol Minnesota to purchase a 150th Sokol commemorative plaque and to sponsor a half-page in the commemorative program. The BOD also approved the motion for Sokol Minnesota to financially sponsor one Czech-Slovak Minnesota Queen Candidate up to \$200, including initial individual registration fees.

The Sokol Minnesota gymnastics instructors are receiving several new inquiries as they gear-up for the new 2015-2016 season. The team leaders look forward to attending the Western District Annual Meeting on September 19 and 20 in Omaha, Nebraska. Sokol Minnesota covers their overnight and gas expenses up to \$500.

As the days grow shorter and the chill of autumn approaches, it's an excellent time to get together with family and friends at the C.S.P.S. Hall and enjoy the many events including:

- Czech Roast Pork Dinner (October 25)
- Pancake Breakfast with Holiday Craft and Bake Sale (November 22)
- Family Events (October 11 and November 15).

Hope to see you there!



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My Czech Presidential Medal from Václav Havel

By Paulette Will

Fifty-four years ago in 1961, the Berlin Wall went up. Twenty-six years ago in 1989, the Berlin Wall fell and there was unrest in capitals around Europe. Rumblyings in Berlin, Bratislava, Gdansk, Budapest, Warsaw, and Prague was the stuff of real news. No e-mail, Twitter, or Facebook messages foretold the Cold War coming to an end. It was said that it took Poland ten months, Hungary ten weeks, and Czechoslovakia just ten days to declare their nations freed from Communist domination and to emerge from being members of the Warsaw Pact. The giddy expectation of three fledgling democracies joining the free world belied the realities of presidents, parliaments, and diplomatic corps to be elected and named.

Playwright Václav Havel was catapulted into the presidency of Czechoslovakia. He was not unknown in Washington, D.C., having friends in both the Republican and Democratic parties. And he was, undoubtedly, not unknown by a college professor from Minnesota, Paul Wellstone, who in 1990 would be elected to the U.S. Senate. Havel and Wellstone's paths would only cross once, in a frosty encounter in the Capitol rotunda.

Soon after the "Velvet Revolution," Czechoslovakia split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia; Havel then found himself the president of the Czech Republic. His writings and plays on civil society and living in freedom were becoming as well known as his unconventional style of governing and his circle of friends which included Frank Zappa and Mick Jagger. Havel had spent time in the U.S. in the sixties and had gained critical attention and acclaim on both American coasts.

In the U. S. presidential election in 1990, Bill Clinton was elected President and Paul Wellstone was elected to the U.S. Senate. President Clinton in 1996 named Czech-American Madeleine Albright his second Secretary of State. In 1997, Senator Paul Wellstone was named to serve on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee along with Minnesotan Republican Rod Grams.

Shortly thereafter, a NATO* treaty was submitted to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee for ratification seeking admission of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to NATO membership. The Clinton administration was openly in favor of expanding NATO membership to include the three new democracies. There was much work to be done by Secretary of State Albright in persuading Senator Jesse Helms, Republican, to schedule a hearing on NATO expansion. Senator Joe Biden, the ranking Democrat, was also in favor of ratifying the NATO treaty. But only one Minnesota Senator, Republican Rod Grams, supported NATO expansion; Senator Paul Wellstone announced his opposition. There was work to be done and it was clear that Minnesotans who were familiar with Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic might be able to lend support in lobbying the reluctant Senator Wellstone. John Radzilowski worked with the Minnesota Polish community, Laszlo and Agnes Fulop represented the Minnesota Hungarian community, and Mark Bigaouette and I worked with the Czech community.

The Minnesota NATO support group secured a resolution of support from the Minnesota State Senate; several of us

travelled to Washington, D.C., for the hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. After nearly a year, we finally secured a meeting with Senator Wellstone on February 14, 1998, in his St. Paul office.

A group of ten Minnesota NATO supporters met with Senator Wellstone and unconventionally attempted to break the ice by presenting Senator Wellstone with heart-shaped Valentine cookies iced with the message "Vote Yes On NATO." Senator Wellstone laughed; appreciating the effort, he invited his staff to share the cookies.

My recollection of the meeting was that Senator Wellstone indicated his long-held belief (convinced by his Ukrainian-born father's wisdom) to never back the Russian bear into the corner; his feeling was that NATO expansion would do just that.

NATO expansion passed the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee without Senator Wellstone's support and went on to pass the entire U.S. Senate as required by the U.S. Constitution; it was signed into law on March 12, 1999, in the Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri. Shortly after NATO was expanded, President Vaclav Havel travelled to Minnesota to inaugurate the Václav Havel Civil Society Symposium in Saint Paul in April 1999.

During his visit to Minnesota, I organized Minnesota Rocks, a benefit rock concert for Kosovo refugees, which President Havel, Governor Jesse Ventura (a Slovak-American), and the Czech delegation attended. While President Havel was in Minnesota, I was awarded the Czech Presidential Medal. I am still not quite sure how I came to receive it, because I was not told that I would, thus I was not at the presentation. Mark Bigaouette, one of my fellow travelers in the "Cookie Coalition," accepted it on my behalf. I am happy to share this story because of the great honor it was to receive the Presidential Medal from Václav Havel. And the rest is history.

* The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance of countries from North America and Europe formed in 1949. The North Atlantic treaty requires member states to come to the aid of any member state subject to an armed attack.



Czech Proverb:
Co je napsáno, to nesmyješ.
The written word remains.

On the beautiful summer evening of August 22, we gathered at the C.S.P.S. Hall for an unforgettable event of tasting wines from Central and Eastern Europe and learning about the regions' history. The event was organized jointly by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota and the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota. The presenter of the evening was Jason Kallsen, a well-known wine expert and lecturer in the Twin Cities. Jason first took us on a journey through the main wine regions of Austria both on the map and by tasting three Hofer wines: *Grune*, a white wine, *Zweigelt Rose*, and *Zweigelt*, a red wine. We had tasty hors d'oeuvres to eat with the wines. We enjoyed the second flight of wines after a little social break.

Next stop was Moravia. We tasted *Vino z Czech*, a Riesling with a beautiful label of a painting reproduction by Alphonse Mucha. The Hungarian wine that followed, the *Disznoko Dry Furmint*, also a white wine, was very distinct



from the Moravian sample. This tasting experience was remindful of the differences and similarities between cultures and histories of European countries that are not far apart.

Last, but not least, was the *Plavac Mali*, a Croatian red. For many of us, it was the favorite. Jason shared with us that Croatia has a great potential for becoming one of the rediscovered, sought-after wine regions that has the right conditions for producing wines that please many palates.

By listening to Jason's expert lecture on Central and Eastern European wines and history of the regions, we learned the importance of good wines for good relations. The evening brought together

wine enthusiasts with a passion to learn more about their culture and to make new friends.

Jason left us with one important thought by explaining that unlike beer that needs to be made according to the same recipe again and again to keep satisfying the taste of its consumers, the taste and character of wine changes according to the vintage. Wine is sensitive to the ecological conditions. And sales are often dependant on the popularity of the region.

The event was enjoyed by all and inspired future plans for another wine tasting and learning about regions that are not as well known for their wines as they should be.

Come and join us next time!

Another Season for Celebration! By Vanda Kofroňová, columnist from Prague

The warm weather is definitely gone for this year, but that is not a reason to be sad. The hard work of harvesting was over by this time for our ancestors, so they finally had time for some celebration. And we can do the same. In October, it's time for *Posvícení*, the celebration commemorating the anniversary of the dedication of a church and also the occasion for an associated fair. A special mass is held to celebrate the patron of the church and then there is a parade with masks. Judging of the ram is at some places part of the tradition (the rams nowadays should be thankful for only being judged, because in the past it was not a symbolic court that was prepared for them). In the 18th century Emperor Josef II did not like the idea that this festival was not held on the same day across his empire because people did not work during the celebrations. So he decided it would be celebrated everywhere on the third weekend of October. Today nobody cares about the emperor anymore (and most of us do not work on weekends anyway), so people in the villages went back to the original dates. If you want to see how this festival was

celebrated centuries ago, you have to go to smaller villages of Moravia where the tradition is still strong. In big cities, the celebrations are quite different. However, in the last few years people have turned to the past for inspiration and have been trying to revive these traditions. It is more of a town market now, where you can taste special *koláče* and have a glass of hot wine. Usually there are also masks and some nice music.

What is nonetheless present in the Czech language is an old saying that everybody still understands: *Není každý den posvícení*. (Not every day is *posvícení*). What it means is that you can't have a party every day, and also that you cannot be successful every time. But the fact that the celebration is rare is what makes it so special, isn't it?

And how do you celebrate the anniversary of your church?

Editor's note: See a picture of a *Posvícení* (sometimes called *Kermesse*, from the Dutch "church mass") in the Slovácko village Bohuslavice u Kyjova (Czech Republic, 2009) at < [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kermesse_\(festival\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kermesse_(festival)) >

August 9th Sokol Camp Booya Picnic in Pine City is the Perfect End to Summer

By Kari and Scott Muyres,
Booya Picnic Co-Chairs



To our fearless team of volunteer workers we extend a huge thank you!

Photo left: Sokol Camp Booya Co-Chair Scott Muyres and Head Booya Chef Ray Vanyo.

The last of the quarts were sold, hundreds, maybe thousands of tickets were counted, and the kettles were thoroughly cleaned and put away for the season. What might be the intended meaning with this opening statement? The 85th annual Sokol Camp Booya Picnic is officially in "the books" and the Picnic was well-attended!

The weather cooperated, thank goodness, and all of the Booya went into many freezers and refrigerators in homes around Pine and surrounding counties.

Country Store sold out many valuable goods, kiddy games were brimming with little ones, and the Bingo prizes and raffle monies were all claimed by lucky winners!

All of this would have never been made possible without the many helping hands of our hard-working Sokol members and friends who generously volunteered their time and talents! Thank you!

Photo right: Scott Miller and Donn Lincheid stirring the big pot of Booya.



Please mark your calendars for Sunday, August 14, 2016, for the next Booya Picnic!

Fall 2015 Education News By Jean Draheim

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota welcomes back Blanka Brichta and Renata Ticha as our Czech language instructors and Barbara Carlson as our Slovak language instructor.

Czech Language Class: Beginner

Instructor: Blanka Brichta
Monday evenings, 6-7:30 p.m.
8 weeks: September 21 - November 9.
Fee: \$80 (Sokol members), \$95 (non-members)
Communicative Czech, text plus cassettes/workbook
(approximately \$115)

Czech Language Class: Intermediate

Instructor: Blanka Brichta
Wednesday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m.
8 weeks: September 23 - November 11.
Fee: \$80 (Sokol members), \$95 (non-members)
Communicative Czech, text plus cassettes/workbook
(approximately \$115) or a text of the instructor's choosing.

Czech Language Class: Conversational

Instructor: Renáta Tichá (Norm Petrik, coordinator)
Tuesday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m.
8 weeks: September 22 - November 10.
Fee: \$80 (Sokol members), \$95 (non-members)
Česky Krok Za Krokem, text and workbook

Slovak Language Class: Beginner/Intermediate

Instructor: Barborka Carlsonova
Thursday evenings, 6:30-8 p.m.
8 weeks: September 24 - November 12.
Fee: \$80 (Sokol members), \$95 (non-members)
Slovak (Slovak for You) text, workbook and phrase book (approximately \$65)

All classes meet at the C.S.P.S. Hall. Pre-registration is required for all classes. <<http://www.sokolmn.org/education.htm>>
Please bring the completed Registration Form and payment to the first class.

If you would like more information about any of these classes or if you would like to have your information included on our interests list, please contact Education Director Jean Draheim: <education@sokolmn.org>.

*A minimum of six paid students is required for each class. Maximum number of students is ten.
If we do not have the minimum registered by the due date, classes may have to be cancelled.*

MOVIE REVIEW: By Cinnamon Whaley

The Country Teacher

Venkovský učitel (*The Country Teacher*, 2008), directed by Bohdan Sláma, brings us into the life of Petr, a 30-something school teacher who has moved from Prague to teach in a small town. The Czech countryside is beautiful and you can see why someone would make such a transition: the fields, sunsets, and old buildings on narrow streets are picturesque, and everyone knows everyone else. We watch as Petr meets and gets to know a widow named Marie and her near-grown son, Lada. Petr starts helping out on their farm and the family becomes quite close with him. Marie eventually tries for a kiss from Petr and while she first assumes he denies her because she's older, we later discover that Petr is gay. When Petr's ex arrives unexpectedly, the movie's turning point comes as we find it is Lada that Petr is interested in.

Each of the characters in the film make regrettable decisions of different scope and the consequences are laid bare. The feelings and thoughts this movie bring are quite difficult to work through. Not everyone will see the decisions made by the characters as the choices they themselves, or many people might make.

There is a scene in which Petr is praying at the church and a vacuum starts. This scene was particularly powerful as the film began with and has a continuing view of a lovely quaint town, but we find there really isn't peace to be had for those with a heavy conscience. People are apt to make mistakes no matter where they live, and mistakes are not universally resolved. This film is available via Netflix.

Czech and Slovak Literary Ventures

Join us for literary presentations and small-group informal discussions of Czech and Slovak books in English translation. Discussions are cosponsored by the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, and both offices of the Honorary Consuls of the Czech Republic and of Slovakia. Questions? Contact gwen@cs-center.org

Everyone is welcome. Book discussions are held on Saturdays, 10 a.m. - noon at the C.S.P.S. Hall, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, unless otherwise noted.

September 19, *Apocryphal Tales* by Karel Čapek, 9 - 11 a.m. City Bella Board Meeting Room, 6600 Lyndale Avenue South, Richfield, Minnesota

October 17, *Gottland: Mostly True Stories from Half of Czechoslovakia* by Mariusz Szczygiel

November 21, *Out of This Furnace: A Novel of Immigrant Labor in America* by Thomas Bell

December 19, *Bringing Up Girls in Bohemia* by Michael Viewegh

January 16, 2016, Play reading of *Minach: A Trilogy "about" and for Women* by Iva Klestilová Volánková in *Czech Plays: Seven New Works* edited by Marcy Arlin, Gwynn MacDonald, and Daniel Gerould

February 20, *Havel: A Life* by Michael Zantovsky, first half of the book through the chapter, "The Battle for Wenceslas Square," and showing of C-SPAN inter-view with the author 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., City Bella Board Meeting Room, 6600 Lyndale Avenue South, Richfield, Minnesota

March 19, *As Golems Go: Rabbi Loew, the Reluctant Czech* by Benjamin Kuras

April 16, *All This Belongs to Me: A Novel* by Petra Hulová

May 21, *Turnaround: A Memoir* by Miloš Forman and Jan Novak

Summer Meditations. Václav Havel. New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1992, translation by Paul Wilson, 174 pages. Available in bookstores and libraries.

BOOK REVIEW: By Gwen Willems, Ph.D.

Havel Believed in Politics as Public Service

Of Václav Havel's many plays and books, *Summer Meditations* is one of the shortest and easiest to read, but also very powerful in terms of sharing his perspectives on the leadership needed in Czech lands after the fall of communism. Written in July and August 1991, after a general election had retained him as president of Czechoslovakia, Havel described it as "a series of spontaneously written comments on how I see this country and its problems today, how I see its future, and what I wish to put my efforts behind."

At that time, the joyous optimism from the first days of democracy had faded. Havel wrote, "The era of enthusiasm, unity, mutual understanding, and dedication to a common cause is over." He added, "Times have changed, clouds have filled the sky, clarity and general harmony have disappeared, and our country is heading into a period of not inconsiderable difficulties." Little could he predict how large those difficulties would be. It would be a challenging transition to a new pluralistic political system, market economy, and constitutional and legal structure. The tensions between Czechs and Slovaks were apparent. Havel wrote that he was "unequivocally in favor of" a combined state, while also thinking the decision was entirely up to Slovakia. The Velvet Divorce came two years later, splitting Czechoslovakia into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Summer Meditations provides an inspiring snapshot of a specific time in Czech history. The book offers excellent insight into the philosophies of the former dissident who spent four-and-a-half years in jail and went on to lead the new democratic government, plus how he hoped the federation would hold together, how he fought for it, what he wanted, and what he was thinking at the time. He remained an optimist who appreciated Czechoslovakia's unique identity: "Life and the world are as beautiful and interesting as they are because, among other things, they are varied, because every living creature, every community, every country, every nation has its own unique identity.... We are what history has made us. We live in the very center of Central Europe, in a place that from the beginning of time has been the main European crossroads of every possible interest, invasion, and influence of a political, military, ethnic, religious, or cultural nature."

In *Summer Meditations*, Havel focused on practical politics motivated by a moral responsibility of public service, a market economy tempered by compassion, and the importance of art and culture. He explained his political philosophy: "Genuine politics—politics worthy of the name, and the only politics I am willing to devote myself to—is simply a matter of serving those around us: serving the community, and serving those who will come after us. Its deepest roots are moral because it is a responsibility, expressed through action, to and for the whole...."

The fine translation by Paul Wilson, published in 1992, a year after the book's Czech publication, smoothly brings the eloquent and wise words of Havel to English readers.

Gwen is coordinator of the Literary Ventures: Czech and Slovak book discussion group. For more information, go to www.cs-center.org or contact gwen@cs-center.org.

Czech and Slovak Ambassadors Visit Kansas City

The Czech and the Slovak Honorary Consuls in Kansas City produced “A Technology Forum” on September 11. Both the Czech and the Slovak Ambassadors attended several events on their two-day visit to Kansas City, which also included laying of wreaths on 9/11 at the gravesite of President Harry S. Truman (33rd President of the United States) in Independence, Missouri; a tour of the Truman Library with documents on special display that pertained to Czechoslovakia during Truman’s presidency; and also a concert by Slovak-born violinist Filip Pogády.



L-R: H.E. Petr Gandalovič, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to the United States; Sharon Valašek, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic for Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska; Marit Lee Kucera, Honorary Consul Designate of the Czech Republic for Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota; H.E. Peter Kmec, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States; and Ross Marine, Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic for Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma.

Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors

By Arlene Hamernik, Corresponding Secretary

Sokol Minnesota greatly appreciates your donations supporting Sokol programs and the refurbishing of our historic C.S.P.S. Hall.

General Fund: \$100 - \$499: **Metronic (Your Cause, LLC)**, a double match donation from **Brian Schousek**.

Legacy Fund: Up to \$100: In memory of Rosemond I.Kucera: **Elizabeth Andrews, Tom and Judy Aubrecht, Ed and Arlene Hamernik, Doreen and Doris McKenney (kitchen), Kathlyn Overbo, Ronald and Colleen Tabaika, Dan Washick.**

Legacy Fund: \$100-\$499: **Mary Johnson, Darlene Sitko.**

General Fund: \$100.00 **Legacy Fund:** \$390.00

October 28 is Czech Independence Day

Den vzniku samostatného československého státu, Foundation of the Independent Czechoslovak State, marks the creation of the state of Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918.

How Independence Day is Celebrated

The Czech Republic Independence Day is a national holiday. On television, the president gives a speech and afterwards he awards medals to Czechs for outstanding accomplishments. Several thousand prominent citizens attend the ceremony at Prague Castle, where they enjoy good food, drink, and a festive atmosphere. Celebrations take place throughout the country to mark that date in 1918 when Czechoslovakia at last gained its freedom from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The Flag

In honor of the holiday, let’s consider the flag of the Czech Republic. This flag is familiar to many of us as the flag of Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic. It has two components. The white-over-red bars represent the “land colors” of Bohemia since 1253, which first appeared as a flag only in the 19th century. This Bohemian flag was identical to the Polish flag (white and red were traditional Slavic colors) though neither nation had an official flag at that time.

The first (provisional) flag of Czechoslovakia upon its establishment in 1918 was this red and white striped one. In 1920, the blue triangle was added. Blue was a traditional color for Slovakia, and the shape represented unity. After the split of Czechoslovakia in 1992, the Czechs initially returned to the white-over-red flag, but they soon put the triangle back, as it was more generally accepted.

The information about the flag in this article first appeared in the October 2014 Sokol Greater Cleveland newsletter with information from <www.loeser.us/flags/czech.html>, where you can learn more about vexillology, the scientific study of flags.

C.S.P.S. LEGACY FUND

We ask for your support of renovations to C.S.P.S. Hall as we celebrate the Hall’s 128th year in 2015.

Contact Joyce Tesarek to discuss your tax-deductible donation: 612-822-6147 or <finance@sokolmn.org>

Thank you!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State, Zip: _____

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To help Restore, Renovate, and Refurbish the C.S.P.S. Hall, I make a tax-deductible donation of \$ _____

I would like my gift designated: in memory or in honor of:

Make checks payable to **Sokol MN**
Write **Legacy Fund** in the memo line
Mail to **C.S.P.S. Hall Legacy Fund**
383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102
Or donate online **www.sokolmn.org** *Thank You!*

Part 3 of an ongoing series. Parts 1 and 2 appeared in Slovo earlier this year in the April and May issues. This series grew out of the memories of the '48er/'8er/'89er Panelists at our September 26, 2014, Featured Friday Members' Meeting, which celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Velvet Revolution and the fall of communism (November 17, 1989). Here, Hana Matousek, a '68er, shares the third of her recollections of growing up under communism. If you are a '48er/'68er/'89er and would like to share your experience, you are welcome to send it (600-800 words) to <slovo@sokolmn.org>

Život v komunismu / Life under Communism - Part 3 **By Hana Matousek**

Our family life in the 50's continued, with bumps and starts, but somehow our parents managed.

Social life was almost non-existent; there was nothing left of the exuberance of the postwar years, when people celebrated mightily, being grateful for mere survival. In the "ballroom season," right after Lent, there used to be a Grand Ball almost every weekend, sponsored in turn by every organization you can imagine: Teachers, Firemen, the Auto Club, the City, and so on. It was great fun for us kids just to watch all the nicely-dressed people walking to the Grand Hotel. We, of course, living on our town's main street had a "front-row" view.

Now, there was very little of any real entertainment beyond the movie theater and a state-owned restaurant or two with plain food. That was about the extent of it. And everywhere there was communist propaganda, radio stations playing loud marches and other programs relating all the economic achievements or the greatness of our solid new friendship with our ally the Soviet Union!

The only event that was left from the former dancing season was a *Šibřinky* carnival, when couples get in costumes and masks and dance half of the night sort of incognito. The women liked to hide their costumes from their husbands, so the husbands had to be on their toes to correctly identify their wives on the dance floor. They all unmasked at midnight to many surprises and sometimes embarrassment.

I remember my Mom planning this affair with her friends with much excitement and how much fun they had relating all the happenings for a long time after.

In those years people did not visit much, just close family kept in touch. I suppose it could not have been much fun to watch what you were saying all the time. Our grandparents lived close by in

Lanžhot, only 7 km away, a pretty village. Many times we kids just hopped on our bikes and went to visit them, sometimes on an errand from Mom, when she needed some eggs from grandma's chickens or the good village butter from her neighbor.

The summer school vacations were the best for us. My brother spent most of his time at this grandma's house, having a good time with the neighborhood boys. At times I spent a few days there too, running with all my brother's boyfriends. Beginning in May, we'd go to a *pískovna* (sand pit), where groundwater and rainwater formed a nice pond for swimming. When the spring season was warm, the first cherries were already ripe by the end of May. Then we would spend half a day in grandma's cherry tree in the front of her house, not minding her warnings not to eat too much. I never got sick, but my brother did sometimes. All the houses on their street on both sides had a cherry tree in the front, which was a beautiful sight when they were in bloom.

There was a village pond called Jazerko with a creek flowing through it at the end of grandma's street. We all spent many hours playing there with all kinds of makeshift water vessels, even grandma's washtub became a boat. Grandma, however, did not appreciate us dragging the tub back all muddy. Every morning in summer, we were awakened by a spectacle to which we were unwilling witnesses; all the geese from that part of the village were making their way to the pond. At first, further up the street they marched obediently all together as they were let out to the street by the women. As they approached grandma's house where a slow decline began, with Jazerko in sight, they started taking off one by one with a lot of ruckus, a loud "ah-yyyy, ah-yyyy," so they were flying low and fast passed our bedroom windows, happily landing then on the pond. It was quite a sight (and noise) to see maybe a

couple of hundred geese in action. They did wake us up early, but I still remember them well. Later in the day, all the geese made their way back home safely, walking slowly home in small groups, never missing the right house.

At home, our father continued to listen very quietly to Radio Free Europe and broadcasting from Vienna. He'd then relate the news to Mother. At first, she listened eagerly, but as time went on, she slowly lost interest, because in our own country the chances for any positive political changes were nil. The communist regime had a firm hold and it looked like it was going to stay that way.

Then came the year 1956, when something was happening in our neighboring Hungary! There was no official news at first, people were only whispering questions. Only foreign broadcasts were supplying real news. It became a huge excitement amongst our citizenry when the Hungarians revolted against the communists! If they can do it, maybe we could too! But the hopes of freedom were crushed in about a month, in a fight that was fierce and bloody. More than 2,500 people lost their lives, while 700 Soviets and 200,000 Hungarians fled and emigrated. The Soviets ruthlessly showed the World that Central and Eastern Europe was 'their' domain and they intended to keep it at any cost.

Father was bitterly disappointed, and I am sure he must have felt as helpless as many other Czechs did. They wished so much for the Hungarians to succeed! He was always a passionate reader and now he turned to his books even more. He still took us sightseeing on weekends, sometimes, but I could sense a change.

That winter season was quite cold, the ponds and creeks froze over and even parts of our river froze. So we kids had a lot of fun. After school was out, we ran home, grabbed our skates, and hurrah! We skated, sometimes until dark.

To be continued in a future Slovo.

**150th Anniversary
Weekend and Gala
November 13-15, 2015
Chicago**

www.american-sokol.org



CZECH AND SLOVAK SOKOL MINNESOTA

Written by Joan Sedlacek with Illustration by Doreen L. McKenney

The commemorative booklet for the 150th Anniversary Celebration of American Sokol is a compilation of Sokol history and education, along with Sokol memories and memorials.

The celebration weekend takes place in Chicago on November 13-15.



June 13, 1882, was Founders' day for Sokol in Saint Paul, the first unit organized in Minnesota. The original name adopted was Sokol Žižka, after the famous Hussite leader. Since 1887, Saint Paul Sokol activities have been held in

the C.S.P.S. Hall, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Sites in February 1977. At one time, there were ten other Sokol units in Minnesota. The Saint Paul Sokol Gymnastic Society membership voted to change its name to Sokol Minnesota in November 1977. In 1978, Sokol Minnesota purchased the Hall from CSA Lodge Czech #51. Personal, unit, state, federal, and Czech and Slovak government funds have contributed to the ongoing restoration of our 128 year-old Hall at 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul.

Sokol Minnesota has represented Czechs and Slovaks at the Festival of Nations in Saint Paul since 1932 with café, cultural, and bazaar booths, plus adult and children's dance groups. *Sibřinky*, children's cultural day camp, Czech and Slovak dinners, as well as gymnastic, language, cooking and craft classes keep our Hall a busy place. Since 1990 we have held a fall Czech and Slovak Festival. Our Sokol Camp at Pine City has a booya and picnic each August.

To honor the 100th anniversary of Antonin Dvořák's 1893 visit to the C.S.P.S. Hall, Sokol Minnesota hosted a musical tribute to the master composer in 1993. Václav Havel visited our Hall in 1999.

We thank the many devoted and hard-working members and friends of Sokol Minnesota who have continued the Sokol traditions for over 133 years in Minnesota.

This page in the commemorative booklet is sponsored by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota and Marit Lee Kucera, Honorary Consul Designate of the Czech Republic for Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

HELP KEEP OUR HISTORIC C.S.P.S. HALL SAFE!

The Fire Inspector requires us to replace our fire escape stairway, plus we have other important projects under way.

**Please donate to the Legacy Fund at www.sokolmn.org
or mail your check (write Legacy Fund in memo line)
or credit card info**

to Sokol Minnesota, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102

All donations are tax deductible. Thank You!

**EVENTS AT C.S.P.S. HALL
ATTEND AND VOLUNTEER!
Sokol Minnesota 2015 Events**

Members' Workday

October 10 , 8 a.m

Contact: trustees@sokolmn.org

Czech Roast Pork Dinner

Sunday, October 25, 11:30 a.m.

Prepaid Reservations: \$16 adult.

651-290-0542

Sokol Minnesota on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota

Check for event updates: **www.sokolmn.org**



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Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* October 2015

Fall 2015 Events at Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota

383 Michigan Street, St. Paul, MN 55102 • 651-290-0542 **Join us!** ~~~ Gift shop open during Sokol events ~~~

● **26th Czech & Slovak Festival: Sunday, September 27, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.**
Live music, folk dancers, gymnasts, children's games, ethnic food, Czech beer, Sokol heritage exhibit, fujara demonstration, vendors, info booths, silent auction. Dance to Slov-Czech at 4 p.m.! Free admission. Accessible facilities. 612-822-6147

● **Family Events: Sundays, September 13, October 11, November 15, 4 -6:30 p.m.**
Potluck supper, family activities for children of all ages.
Mikulášská besídka: December 5, 3:30 - 7:30 p.m.

● **Czech Roast Pork Dinner: Sunday, October 25, 12:30 p.m.**
Traditional menu: roast pork, raised-bread dumplings, sauerkraut, dessert, and coffee. \$16 adult; \$8 child under 9. Cash beer and wine bar.
Prepaid reservations by October 16: 651-290-0542.

● **Pancake Breakfast/Holiday Craft and Bake Sale: Sunday, November 22, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**
\$7 adult; \$5 child under 9; \$20 family of four. No reservations needed.
Pre-order koláče: 651-290-0542. Reserve a craft table: 651-426-2826.

● **Sokol Children's Holiday Party: Friday, December 4, 7 p.m.**
Dancers and gymnasts perform. Visit by Svatý Mikuláš.

● **Membership Holiday Party: Sunday, January 3, 2016, 3 p.m.**
Fun and food. Reservations by December 20: 651-290-0542.

● **13th Annual Candlelight Roast Duck Dinner: Saturday, January 23, 2016, 5 p.m.**
With soup, potato dumplings, sweet and sour red cabbage, and dessert. Limited seating. \$22 per person. Cash bar. Prepaid reservations by January 19: 952-941-0426.



Please check www.sokolmn.org for the latest information on all events. Questions? events@sokolmn.org