

**News from the Czech
& Slovak Club**

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Ethnic Festival Celebrates 25 Years! August 20-22

Submitted by Jirina LaVine and Terry Smitka

The 25th annual Ethnic Enrichment Festival will take place in Swope Park on August 20-22. The entrance to the festival is at the corner of Meyer Boulevard and Swope Parkway in Kansas City, MO. Sponsored by the city's Ethnic Enrichment Commission (EEC), the event features representatives from 55 nations and includes ethnic food, drink and ethnic performers. Admittance to the festival is just \$2 for adults, children under age 12 are free. Parking is free.

Event times are:

Friday, August 20th - 6:00PM to 10PM

Saturday, August 21st - noon to 10PM

Sunday, August 22nd - noon to 6PM

Performances of special interest for our club are the Sugar Creek Dance Group at 2PM on Saturday, sponsored by the Croatians and the Idimo Folk Dance Group; and sponsored by the Czech and Slovak Republics, at 6:30 on Saturday evening. Our club will

participate by volunteering at the gates and in the beer garden. We currently have 18 people represented at the event.

Our club is represented on the EEC by two commissioners, Jirina LaVine and Mike Kalny. The purpose of the EEC is to promote the culture and ethnicity of the many nations represented in the EEC. The EEC also sponsors the Diplomatic Ball in March every year; members of our club participate in that event as needed. The commission also sponsors a variety of cultural events throughout the year in which our commissioners participate. A typical event involves our commissioners wearing traditional costumes, discussing customs, and displaying native products from their sponsoring organizations. Events include the Northland festival in April, the Penn Valley festival in April, AARP events, Baker University Festival, the Camp Chimer summer camp for children with kidney disease, and many others.

For more information on the festival, call 816-513-7652 or visit the website at www.eeckc.org.

CO JE NOVÉHO?

News from the Czech & Slovak Club of Greater Kansas City

Autumn 2004

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St. Wenceslas Pork and Pivo Fest September 25, 2004, 6:00-10:00 p.m.

The Czech and Slovak Club of Greater Kansas City is holding its annual St. Wenceslas event with roast pork, pivo (beer) and music on Saturday, September 25th.

Event Details:

Saturday, September 25, 6:00-10:00 p.m.

6:00 social, 6:30 meal, 7:30-10:00 program and music

Lenexa VFW, 9550 Pflumm, Lenexa, KS 66215

From I-35, take 95th ST exit west to Pflumm, south on Pflumm one block, park and enter building on west side.

Dinner

Roast pork and dumplings with vegetable, salad, rye bread and dessert. Includes ice tea, coffee and lemonade and soda.

Cost is \$15 for adults and \$8 for children age 6-12. No charge for under age 6. Czech and Slovak beer available for \$3, red and white wine available for \$3.

Reservations

Send reservations and payment to Jirina LaVine at 4550 Warwick, Kansas City, MO 64111. Be sure to let us know the number of adults and children. Include phone number so we can reach you if we have questions.



Mayor Barnes and Jim Glover cut the ribbon at Bohemian Gallery.

Arts District Welcomes Bohemian Gallery

Submitted by Mary Lou Nash

Club members Ron Vobornik and Mary Lou Nash formally opened The Bohemian Gallery on May 7. The gallery is located in the heart of Kansas City's Arts District at 220 W. 19th Terrace in Kansas City, MO. Grand opening festivities included a short program recognizing those who made opening the gallery possible followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony with Mayor Kay Barnes doing the honors. Gary Gardner's "In Full Swing" band performed in the street at the gallery entrance for attendees' listening and dancing pleasures. The gallery is open Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM or by appointment.

The Bohemian Gallery is one of nearly 70 galleries in the Arts District area that participate in First Fridays. Galleries open their doors the first Friday of each month for attendees to peruse art and enjoy food and drink.

Every first Friday, The Bohemian Gallery has a new theme. The upcoming schedule is:

Sept. 3 Labor Day

**Oct. 1 American Royal/
Octoberfest**

First Friday hours are 5 - 10 p.m., includes a band and refreshments.

Check the web site at www.thebohemian-gallery.com or call Ron Vobornik for more information at 816.221.1214.

Czechs and Slovaks Raise the EU Flag

Throughout the world, and particularly at the Czech and Slovak embassies in Washington, D.C., officials and guests observed their country's entry into the European Union (EU) with formal flag-raising ceremonies and receptions. Washington's turn was May 3rd. Short speeches were delivered by the ambassadors of the embassies and their guests followed by the raising of the EU flag on newly installed poles. The



ceremonies concluded with the stirring sounds of the official European anthem, Beethoven's Ode to Joy from his famous ninth symphony.

Sharon Valasek, honorary consul of the Czech Republic for the Midwest, was in Washington during that time for a meeting of

Czech consuls and participated in the EU ceremony at the Czech embassy.

Czech Language at Nebraska-Lincoln

(A message from the foreign language department)

Dear Friends:

As the Fall semester at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln draws near, it is the time for students to be deciding their class schedules. The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU) Nebraska Chapter, the Czech Komensky Club, and the Czech Language Foundation (CLF) all want to urge you to encourage young people you know to consider taking Czech at UNL.

(continued on p. 4)

Beseda!

Submitted by Linda Vlasak

The Czech word "beseda" (pronounced: beh-seh-dah) means a "chat." In common usage it means much more, from an informal gathering of friends to a formal "social" event involving refreshments or dance, rather than just an incidental, "over the back fence" talk with one or two neighbors. In every case, it implies an enjoyable time with lively conversation and sharing of ideas and experience.

Organizing a "beseda" circle in Kansas City has been proposed as an activity for our club. We would establish a fixed date (for example, the second Tuesday of each month, from September to May) and reserve a room at a central location in the evening (from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m). We'd meet to exchange information and share the news about Czech and Slovak affairs in Europe and America.

Each meeting could provide some specific information relevant for those who would like to know

more about their Czech or Slovak roots and heritage.

Please indicate your interest by filling out the following form and mailing it to: Linda Vlasak, 1323 Kansas Street, Leavenworth, KS 66048 or by sending the same information by e-mail, with subject marked "Beseda," to lvlasak@msn.com.

Send to: Czech & Slovak Club, Kansas City

I am interested in participating in the proposed "Beseda" activity and I would like more information.

Name (please print) _____

Telephone/Day _____ Evening _____

E-mail _____

Address (street, city, state, zip) _____

EU Enlargement is Beneficial to U.S. Business

The accession of the European Union (EU) of ten new members (including the Czech and Slovak Republics) increased EU's population by 20% and transformed it into the world's largest single market, with 450 million consumers. Not only will enlargement bring more economic and political stability to the new entrants, it will also benefit U.S. companies in Europe and U.S. exporters. It will bring economies of scale and increased competitiveness to EU businesses.

In Central Europe, the economies of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and

Slovakia hold enormous potential for manufacturers of consumer and engineering products and for service providers. A gradual increase of household incomes and spending, easier access to markets and easier movement of goods across borders will be the main benefits. The new EU countries have gradually aligned their legislation with the EU's legal and regulatory framework, making them more transparent and a less risky proposition for American businesses. U.S. business is looking at one set of rules across all the EU member states.

Club Participates in Sugar Creek Slavic Festival, June 11-12

Submitted by Steve Smitka

The Czech and Slovak Club participated in this year's annual Sugar Creek Slavic Festival by operating our own booth at the event. Volunteers from our club sold ice cream, and invited those attending the event to trace and document their Czech and Slovak ancestry on large maps of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

"It was an outstanding opportunity to provide exposure to our club, said Steve Smitka. We were able to meet people with a genuine interest in their heritage, invite them to join our club, and do so while enjoying ethnic food, music and dancing!"

The Slavic Festival honors the heritage of Sugar Creek, which was built on a wave of Slavic immigrants in the early 1900s. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, political and economic tension triggered a wave of emigration from the Slavic nations to America. These hard working people came to the United States and settled in cities and neighborhoods, like Sugar Creek, where jobs and the American Dream welcomed their arrival. Celebrations, like the Sugar Creek Slavic Festival, remind us of those roots and the sacrifices made by those who came before us seeking a better life.

Slovakia GDP Growth

According to a recent prognosis, the World Bank (WB) expects Slovakia's gross domestic product (GDP) to grow by four percent this year. The WB also anticipates Slovakia's GDP to grow by four percent in 2005. The report also suggests that Slovakia will be ready to join the euro-zone as early as 2008 or 2009. (Source: Slovak Spectator)

CLUB NOTES

In recent months, our club marked the following events:

- Katelyn was born to David and Lori Kurovski on May 27. She joins her sister, Rachel. Katelyn was 6 lbs., 11 oz. and 18 inches in length.
- Norma Hajek-Nichols recently moved to Manor Care at 5211W. 103 ST., Overland Park, KS 66207



Steve Smitka, Jerry and Katherine Novak, and Jirina LaVine at Slavic Fest in Sugar Creek, Mo.

ARMSTRONG IN PRAGUE

Possibly the greatest sports star of our time, Lance Armstrong, visited Prague this summer. The six-time winner of Tour de France spent two days in the Czech Republic and participated in the Grand Prize of Prague cycling race on July 30, 2004. The race consisted of one hundred 800-meter laps around Wenceslas Square. Top professional cyclists of Czech lands as well as of Europe competed in this individual trials contest.

Armstrong did not come to Prague just to race, but also as an advocate for cancer research and treatment. He visited the oncological department of the hospital in Motol, where he spent time chatting and playing computer games with hospitalized children. He was received by Prague Lord Mayor Pavel Bem at City Hall, and talked with President Vaclav Klaus before the start of the race. He was accompanied by his friend, singer Sheryl Crowe.

Armstrong finished the race in fifth place, after he dropped back when a group of four broke away in the final sprint. Czech cyclist Ondrej Sosenka was first to cross the finish line, followed by two-time winner of the Giro d'Italia, Gilberto Simoni. In third place was another Czech, Tomas Konecny, and in fourth place was Armstrong's US Postal teammate Jose Louis Rubiera. "You have been super," said Armstrong after the race, thanking all participants, and added that after the three weeks of the Tour, he has had enough. After all, nobody should expect him to win every time! Nevertheless, grateful fans were deeply impressed and gave him the greatest ovation ever. Copies of just published Armstrong's biography were selling briskly among the spectators, as well as yellow bracelets sold by Armstrong's foundation to raise funds to combat cancer.

LOOKING AHEAD

Roma Rising Musical Performance – August 28

Celebrate with the hot music of Clearwater Hot Club as they perform the gypsy jazz music of Django Reinhard at 8 pm in the Grand Hall of the National Czech and Slovak Museum (NCSML) and Library. Tickets are \$6 with membership card and \$8 without membership card.

Roma Rising Photo Exhibit – Aug 28 - Jan 2

Photographer Chad Evans Wyatt shatters the "gypsy" stereotypes of the Roma population in the Czech Republic on exhibit at NCSML. Special tour of works at 2 pm by the photographer.

Upbeat! Concerts – Sept 4 & 11

Sept. 4. NCSML presents Ourania Menelaou. Menelaou is a concert pianist and doctoral candidate at The University of Iowa. Concert is free and will be held at 2:00 p.m. in Grand Hall.

Sept. 11. NCSML presents Leonard Reyman's Accordion Band. Free concert at 2:00 p.m. on NCSML's Garden Stage (in case of rain, the concert will be in Grand Hall). Bring your lawn chair and enjoy this wonderful music.

Sokol South Omaha Festival – Sept 12

Sokol South Omaha Hall, 21th and U Streets. Noon - 5 PM. website: www.sokolsouthomaha.com

Cedar Rapids Ethnic Festival – Sept 18-19

For more information, call Two Star Detective at (319) 364-0001.

St. Wenceslas Dinner – September 25

Hosted by the Czech and Slovak Club of Kansas City. See cover story for details.

Cedar Rapids Concert – Oct 2-3

A grand night of music presents Red Cedar Chamber and the Quartetto Telemann. Hear the first part of a two-part concert on Saturday night at NCSML's Grand Hall, 8:00 p.m. Reception to follow. The second part will be presented on Sunday, 7:00 p.m. at Grand Hall. Tickets are \$12.00 for each show.

Czech Garnets Exhibit – Nov 13 - Mar 6

Collection from NCSML and the national museum in Prague. See the exhibit at NCSML.

St. Mikulas Celebration – December 4

Hosted by our Czech and Slovak Club. Come and teach your children about the Czech and Slovak traditions and heritage.

CGSI Winter Symposium – Feb 11-12

Genealogical Society Symposium in Orange County, Cal. For further information, contact Annette Gathright at anettka@aol.com (714) 970-8935 or Jim Kallal at jj.kallal@verizon.net (714) 846-2238. Early registration is recommended.

Gold medalists ready for Games

A record number of Czech athletes, a military unit and a horse will be in Athens trying to make their mark during the Olympic Games, which begin Friday, Aug. 13.

While the team of 140 athletes will be the largest-ever Czech contingent at the summer games, expectations are not high.

In the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, the Czech team brought home eight medals, including two gold. They failed to match the medal harvest from the Atlanta Games in 1996 where the Czechs won 11 medals, including four gold.

All of the gold medal winners from the previous two Olympics - javelin thrower Jan Zelezny, white-water canoeist/kayaker Stepanka Hilgertova and flat-water canoeist Martin Doktor - will compete in Athens. However, the odds of their grabbing another gold are significantly lower than in previous years.

The hottest Czech gold medal hopeful in Athens will be decathlete Roman Sebrle. Czech Olympic Committee spokesman Zdenek Sestak is maintaining high hopes. He said Czech athletes should bring home up to 10 medals.

"But we don't want to put out some 'official' benchmark of what we'll consider a success and what will be a failure," he said.

"It's clear that the traditional Olympic medal winners such as Zelezny or Hilgertova will be competing for the last time. On the other hand, there are many young athletes on the Czech team who might not win a medal straight away, but the experience that they will get in Athens could

help them in the future."

The Slovak Olympic Committee has nominated 64 athletes to take part to the Athens Olympics. The number of athletes is lower than four years ago in Sydney, chiefly because Slovakia had three teams and now it will have none. They will compete in 11 disciplines including tennis, swimming and rowing.

Security experts set for Olympics

A Slovak civil defense unit specializing in detecting radioactive substances and toxic chemicals will be ready to help guard the Athens Olympics if needed, said the interior ministry on Monday, August 9. With 12 hours notice, the six specialists and a laboratory could be ready to depart for the August 12-29 games in Greece, the ministry said in a statement.

Greece is spending \$1.2bn on security for the games. It has enlisted the help of NATO to patrol the sea and skies, and is being helped by a seven-nation advisory group on security led by the United States and Britain.

The Czech Republic's biochemical units are considered some of the best in the NATO alliance. Czech soldiers serving as part of a multinational chemical battalion will make their first-ever appearance at the Olympics. Some 100 troops from the Liberec-based NATO rapid-response unit will be on guard in Athens at the request of the Greek government. The troops will monitor the possible use of chemical or biological weapons by terrorists. Czech soldiers in Greece will cooperate with troops from Italy, Hungary, Spain and Poland. The troops' activities in Athens will be co-

financed by NATO, the Greek government and the Czech government.

Two years before Czechoslovakia split into Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the country's specialized troops were the only ones to detect traces of nerve gas in the Saudi Arabian desert during the 1991 Gulf War.

Czech language

(continued from p. 2)

The classes have been offered since 1907. They are supervised by Dr. Mila Saskova-Pierce, one of the finest teachers of foreign language in the United States. The classes offer not only language, but also teach Czech culture and the history and culture of Nebraska Czechs.

As an extra added incentive, the Czech Language Foundation provides free textbooks for the first year of Czech, and the CLF has just recently begun a matching scholarship program which means \$300 of the class cost can be paid for the student.

If you need further information, please contact:

Dr. Miluse Saskova-Pierce,

(402) 472-1336

Cathleen M. Oslzly, UNL

402/472-3121