

CZECH AND SLOVAK CLUB

NEWSLETTER

February 2008

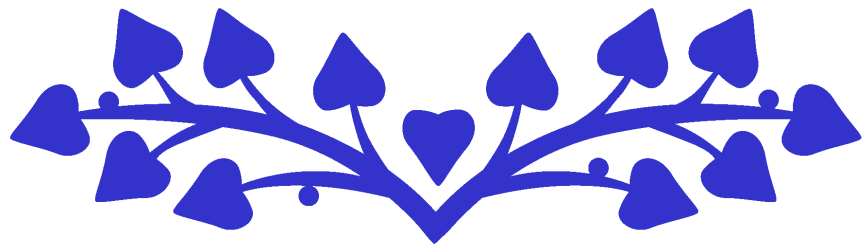
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CZECH & SLOVAK
CLUB OF KANSAS CITY

Annual Club Meeting

Come Join the Fun!

The Czech and Slovak Club of Greater Kansas City is holding its annual meeting on **Sunday, March 2**, beginning 1:30 at the downtown Kansas City library. We will have a potluck dinner and a program featuring a very entertaining Czech or Slovak movie.

Activities include the announcement of club officers and other club business. Admission is free but we ask all attendees to bring food items as listed below. The club will provide eating utensils and soft drinks. Beer and wine will also be available for purchase. Parking is available in the covered garage on the west side of the building.

Location and Time

Kansas City Public Library
14 W. 10th Street
Kansas City, MO 64105
March 2
1:30 P.M. to 4:30

Potluck Assignment

Bring a dish to share based on the first letter of your last name.

A through J – appetizer or dessert

K through R – meat or main course

S through Z – salad or other side dish

Save the Date!

Slavic Fest - Sugar Creek, MO - June 6-7, 2008

The 23rd annual Slavic Festival has exciting entertainment planned: **Don Lipovac**, a local favorite performs Friday evenings; and **LynnMarie and the Boxhounds** perform on Saturday night.

LynnMarie has been dubbed the “The Dixie Chick of the Accordion” by Jay Leno. She is a Nashville recording artist who plays a unique style of music. This engaging and talented button accordionist is an energetic four-time Grammy-nominated entertainer who blends traditional polka with rock and pop music. Polka will never be the same.

Czech Bagpipe Performance Draws More Than 200

by Sharon Valasek

More than 200 attendees packed the Helzberg auditorium of the downtown Kansas City Public Library on January 10, 2008 to learn about the rich tradition of bagpipe music in the Czech lands and see how this centuries-old tradition is being kept alive today. Michael Cwach, a Czech-American from South Dakota who completed a Fullbright study on Czech bagpipes (and the larger Bohemian folk tradition), played the bagpipes. He was accompanied by Alice Janotova' from Strakonice, CZ, who played the violin, sang and danced to the traditional bagpipe music. Following the 45-minute performance, event producer Jefe Brown showed a documentary film, *Call of Dudy*.

The film described the history of bagpipes ("dudy" in Czech). Dudy are generally associated with the Celtic Fringe of Europe, but one of the richest and most

ethnically diverse bagpipe traditions can be found in Central Europe. In the Czech Lands and in neighboring Bavaria, this tradition once became marginalized and almost disregarded. However, this historic musical form has survived and even managed to renew itself, to develop further on a regional scale – crossing national and linguistic borders.

Jefe closed out the evening with a grand prize drawing - two nights in the Hotel Sladka at the Chodovar brewery in the Chodov region of the Czech Republic, including a visit to the hotel beer spa! Congratulations to the lucky winner, Jim Koren! We wish Jim and his family an enjoyable visit to the Czech Republic. Many thanks to all to braved the cold weather to attend Call of Dudy.



Kolache Baking Demonstration

by Mike Kalny

Sponsored by the Czech/Slovak club, the first community outreach class was a big success thanks to Jirina Lavine and her friend Hana Buric. Jirina and Hana introduced the old world secrets of preparing this wonderful pastry to the twelve students attending. Among the twelve was Barbara Vratania, owner of Barb's Kolache Bakery in western Shawnee.



The small size of the Roanoke Community Center's kitchen prevented us from offering a larger class. In the future, the class may be offered for club members only. In the meantime, Mike

Kalny videotaped the demonstration and plans to show it at a future club event. Many thanks to Jirina and Hana for their time and talent devoted to further preserving Czech/Slovak heritage. If you're interested in learning to bake kolaches, contact Mike Kalny at MikeKalny@aol.com.



Annual Dues Reminder!

The deadline to pay annual Czech/Slovak club membership dues was January 1st. If you have not yet paid for 2008, please mail your payment to club treasurer:

Jana Rooney

6425 Valley Road

Kansas City, MO 64113

If you're not sure if you've paid, check the mailing label on this newsletter. The date on the label is the "paid through" date.

Czech and Slovak Heritage Project

Share your stories about your heritage

by Joyce Cox

Most of the members of our Czech and Slovak Club know and love to tell (and others love to hear) some very interesting stories about their ancestors and their immigration. Why did they decide to leave the old country? How did they make a new life for themselves in the new country? How did their descendants (including you) make a life as 2nd, 3rd and later generation Americans?

The Czech and Slovak Club Board wants to collect these stories and to begin with, put them in a notebook to share with others. When we receive enough stories, we will decide how to make the collection into a more permanent type book to compile or publish and make available to members of the club.

Just think what a wonderful Czech and Slovak legacy for your children as a reminder of their heritage, one that is all too often not passed on in any detail to the younger generations. If you think you don't know very much about your ancestors, just remember that it is more than your children will know unless you write it down for them.

Write your heritage story in any format you wish but include all the information you have that you want to pass on. Telling your story in chronological order is usually the easiest. Start your story wherever you can. If you know about your ancestors long before immigration to America, tell what you know about them. An interesting part of any heritage story is the information about the person or family who actually left home for another country, why they left, and how they fared during the journey and after their arrival in their new country.

It is always of interest when and how couples meet and marry. If you have information about other branches of the family, include that. If not, give the information you can about your family. If both of you have Czech or Slovak heritage, it might be easier to write about each one's heritage separately but be sure to include your own marriage, children and grandchildren.

If you don't have a lot of family history, write about what you do know, even if it is only about you, your spouse and children. By also including something about your parents, you could easily have a 3 or 4 generation story. Do you have stories that someone else has written to tell you about your family? Or, have you shared genealogical information with others? Would you share this correspondence with us?

Have you already written or researched your family history? What form have you used to record it? The new trend is to write stories about each family; many people preferred this method all along. Is your family tree in the form of Family Charts? Would you use those as a guide and write up your family story even if all you can tell us is who the members of your ancestral line were and when and where they lived.

Of course, we would like to include pictures that can be easily identified and newspaper articles about weddings, births, obituaries and others that tell of important events in a family's history. Please send your stories to **Joyce Cox, 201 Woodbridge Lane, Kansas City, MO 64145**. Call her at **816-942-6307** or email her at joycecox@att.net with your questions.

Calendar:

Save the date for:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Mar. 1 | Diplomatic Ball, Hyatt Regency |
| Apr 14 | Grand Boulevard of the Americas
Dedication, Barnes Plaza/Sprint |
| June 6-7 | Slavic Festival, Sugar Creek, MO |
| July 15-19 | Sister Cities International
Conference (details on p. 7) |
| Aug 15-17 | Ethnic Enrichment Festival,
Swope Park, K.C., MO |

Miss Czech-Slovak USA

August 2-3, 2008 Pageant

The 22th annual Miss Czech-Slovak USA pageant will be held during the 47th Annual National Czech Festival Days August 1-3, 2008 in Wilber, Nebraska.

Contestants in the 21st annual pageant were a special group of young ladies with superb personalities and talent along with being extremely proud of their ancestry and ethnic background. **Michelle Wiedel, Miss Nebraska, of Lincoln, Nebraska** was crowned Miss Czech Slovak USA 2007, along with winning the Talent Runner Up award and a special scholarship award. Michelle is a student at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Other awards: **Leah Sticha**, Miss Minnesota, 1st Runner Up and Talent Winner; **Elizabeth Klasek**, Miss Missouri, 2nd Runner Up and Americanized Kroj Winner; **Rachel Svaty**, Miss Kansas, Authentic Kroj winner; **Lindsay McKee**, Miss Oklahoma, Oratory Winner; **Katelyn Adams**, Miss South Dakota, Spirit of Czech/Slovak Heritage Award; and **Amanda Johaneck**, Miss Wisconsin, Miss Congeniality.

Without the support and representation of so many states, the pageant would not be a success. This pageant was founded by John and Lois Fiala of Lincoln, Nebraska twenty-two years ago in partnership with Doris Ourecky of Wilber, Nebraska. Many hours devoted by volunteers, along with the contributions of donors and sponsors, contribute to the success of this non-profit ethnic pageant. The pageant continues to grow because of the continuing pride, culture and heritage tradition of Czechs, Moravians, Silesians and Slovaks in the United States.

The 2008 pageant will be held on two nights at the beautiful Wilber Outdoor Community Theater. Kansas and Missouri were well represented in the 2007 pageant. The Czech/Slovak Club would like to see our region represented again in the 2008 pageant. If you are a young woman or know one who is between the ages of 16-26 (and meets eligibility requirements), please share this information with them and encourage them to participate in this very special ethnic event. It is an entertaining, adventurous and educational experience for all who participate. Many awards are available to participants including up to \$7800 in cash, savings bonds and a trip to the Czech or Slovak Republic. For additional information, go to the official pageant website at www.missczechslovakusapageant.com or contact Terry Smitka at 816.480.4227. Applications are due to pageant officials by June 1, 2008.

Where Are Your Roots?

by Linda Vlasak

When trying to trace their family history, Americans with some Czech or Slovak blood face challenges unknown to those who came to the New World in a straight line from the British Isles, Scandinavia, or Western Europe. To begin with, how can you start your search when the name of the village where your grandmother was born does not appear on any map?

Was it in Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bohemia, Poland, or Moravia? It's vexing enough that names of even large cities can appear in different forms, such as Bratislava/Pressburg or Budějovice/Budweis. Names of smaller towns and villages are even more baffling – how on earth do you locate Taus when you don't know that your map of Czech lands calls this place Domažlice ?

In the attic there might be boxes of old family papers, -- letters, journals, personal documents -- that could provide leads and information about the lives of preceding generations. If the language barrier keeps you from making some sense of it, do not give up! Help is at hand, through volunteers among the members of the Czech & Slovak Club of Greater Kansas City.

Direct your questions by e-mail to lvlasak@msn.com and identify the subject as C&S Roots in order to clear the junk-mail filter. We'll be glad to assist you with unraveling some mysteries of language and geography, or direct you for further assistance with specific research projects to one of several Central European genealogy organizations.

A Unique Opportunity

Jirina LaVine, Commissioner for the Czech Republic to the Ethnic Enrichment Commission is interested in stepping down from her position as commissioner. It is a position she's held for more than 20 years. This is a unique opportunity for an individual passionate about contributing to keeping their Czech heritage alive. Contact Jirina at 816.753.2540 or jirinal@yahoo.com to learn more.

Czech and Slovak Cultural Items

Many of us have Czech or Slovak cultural items that could be shared with others if there was a proper venue. The club is currently discussing the possibility of gathering these items and loaning them to a local museum so that they can be enjoyed by in community. While there is currently a Slovak room at the Strawberry Hill museum, no agreement has been reached with the museum for a Czech room or to share space in the Slovak room. We hope to have the details worked out soon so that our members can loan items of interest which we can control and manage. Should you have something you think would be of interest to other Czechs and Slovaks, please let one of our officers know so that we can compile a list. We hope to have final details worked out in the next few months, so please stay tuned.

2008 - Anniversary of Historical Czechoslovakian Events

The number “8” is important in the history of the Czech and Slovak Republics. The years 1918, 1938, 1948 and 1968 have a strange, yet important significance in modern Czech and Slovak history. To summarize: Czechoslovakia celebrated its independence in 1918; Hitler seized the Sudetenland in 1938; the Communists took over Czechoslovakia in 1948 and the Soviet tanks rolled into Prague in August of 1968, the year of the Warsaw Pact Invasion.

Sharon Valasek and Ross Marine, along with the Czech/Slovak board, are planning a symposium to commemorate those important events. Stay tuned for additional information as plans are finalized.

What is the Society of Arts and Science, Společnost pro Vědu a Umění (SVU)?

By Linda Vlasak

The SVU society was founded in 1958 by a group of Czechs and Slovaks living in the West, at a time when the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia was suppressing the country's democratic traditions, making impossible free research in science, and persecuting free expression in the arts. The original mission of SVU was to preserve, support, and coordinate scientific, scholarly, artistic, literary, and educational efforts and achievements of Czechs and Slovaks in exile. In addition, it seeks to make the world aware of Czech and Slovak democratic cultural traditions.

Over the years and since the fall of the Communist regime, the SVU redefined its mission as an organization open to all persons interested in fostering Slovak and/or Czech culture. Above all, the SVU is interested in encouraging and assisting young people, whether they are Czechs, Slovaks, or students of other nationalities, to make the Slovak and/or Czech culture the focus of their professional careers.

As an independent non-profit, non-political,

international cultural organization, the SVU brings together scholars, scientists, artists, writers, students, business people, educators, and citizens from all over the world. In addition to its local chapters in the United States, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, it has active chapters in Canada, England, Germany, Switzerland, South Africa, and Japan.

Every two years, a world congress makes it possible for SVU members and their families to meet and to present papers and reports of their work on a wide range of artistic and scientific disciplines. In 2008, SVU World Congress commemorating the 50th anniversary of SVU founding, will take place in Ružomberok, Slovakia, September 8 –14. In addition to academic presentations, artistic and cultural programs and touristic excursions are planned.

Several of our Czech/Slovak club members are also members of SVU and many have attended at least one of the world congress events. Board member (and SVU member) Linda Vlasak is interested in starting a local chapter of SVU in Kansas City. She would like to hear from you. Are you interested in the arts and sciences? Would you be interested in being part of an SVU chapter? Do you need more information about SVU? Contact Linda Vlasak at lvlasak@msn.com or 913-682-1648. You can also check out the SVU web site at www.svu2000.org.

In the News:

Ross P. Marine Reappointed as Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic

Club member Ross Marine announced that the Consular Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic reappointed Ross for a period of five years from January 1, 2008 until December 31, 2013. In addition to his current jurisdiction of Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska, the Minister of Foreign Affairs approved the addition of the states of Arkansas and Oklahoma to Marine's consular jurisdiction. The head of the Consular Section of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic, Marcel Klimo, indicated that Marine is one of the best honorary consuls in the United States.

In addition to his consular duties, Ross Marine was elected as president of the International Visitors Council of Greater Kansas City (KCIVC) – Board of Directors for the year 2008. The KCIVC coordinates professional exchange programs in western Missouri and the State of Kansas in partnership with the U.S. Department of State.

The International Visitors Leadership Program participants are established foreign leaders in varied professions. They are selected by American embassies through out the world to visit Kansas City and the U.S. to meet and confer with their professional counterparts and to experience this country firsthand. The emphasis of the program is to increase mutual understanding through communication at personal and professional levels. The KCIVC is one of 91 chapters of the National Council of International Visitors based in Washington, DC.

Kansas City to Host Sister Cities International Conference

Sister Cities International [SCI] of Washington, DC has selected Kansas City, Missouri to host their world wide annual conference to be held July 16-19, 2008. The City of Kansas City, Missouri International Affairs and Trade Office and the Sister City Association of Kansas City are organizing, fund raising, and coordinating the conference in cooperation with SCI.

The theme of the conference is "Sustainable Peace through Sustainable Communities." It is anticipated over 700 delegates from Sister City chapters around the world will attend the conference. A variety of venues and events are being planned to showcase the best of Kansas City and the region during the delegates stay in Kansas City. Sharon Valasek, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic and Ross Marine, Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic are chairing two major events at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and the Westin Crown Center Hotel.

The 2009 SCI conference will be held in Belfast, Ireland. For more details about the conference, go to the SCI web site at <http://www.sister-cities.org/sci/sciprograms/Conference/KansasCity/index>. or contact Ms. Cathy Lee at the KCMO International Affairs & Trade Office at Cathy_Le@kcmo.org or by phone at 816-513-1360.

Announcing - The Czech and Slovak History and Culture Conference

The National Czech & Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids, Iowa presents a conference entitled, "*The Czech and Slovak 20th Century in Retrospect: 1968-1980, Prague Spring, Normalization, and Charter 77.*" The conference will be held March 6, 7, & 8, 2008 at the Marriott Hotel and Convention Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The conference will focus on the twelve volatile years in Czechoslovakia from 1968 to 1980.

- Dubcek and socialism with a human face
- Prague Spring remembered
- The Warsaw Pact Invasion
- Normalization, the anticommunist movement that culminated in Charter 77.

These topics and more will be examined by top scholars and through first-hand accounts. For more information contact the NCSML at 319-362-8500 or visit their web site at www.NCSML.org.

The Czech and Slovak Club of Greater Kansas City Officer Candidates for 2008

President Terry Smitka
1st Vice President (Membership) Jana Hubbard
2nd Vice President (Social/Programs) Susan Zvacek
3rd Vice President (EEC Commissioner) Jirina LaVine
3rd Vice President (EEC Commissioner) Mike Kalny
Secretary Sharon Short
Corresponding Secretary John Brungardt
Treasurer Jana Rooney
Historian Gene Simon
Board Emeritus..... Joyce Cox
Board Emeritus..... Linda Vlasak

Check box for entire slate, or enter write-ins for specific office exceptions:

Your signature and date

Please bring your ballots to the annual meeting or mail them to club Treasurer Jana Rooney, 6425 Valley Road, Kansas City, MO 64113. Contact Terry Smitka at 816-480-4227 if you have any questions. Ballots must be mailed by February 26, 2008.

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News from the Czech & Slovak Club
c/o Terry Smitka
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Liberty, MO 64068
Address service requested