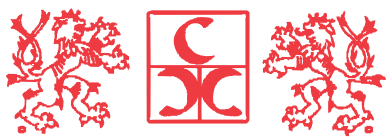


THE NEWS OF THE



CZECH CENTER

Czech Cultural Center

Houston, Texas

(KULTURNÍ CENTRUM ČESKÉ)

It is not what we have *it is what we do with what we have.* **THE BEST WAY TO WAIT IS TO SLOW DOWN** AND FIND THE GOOD THAT SURROUNDS US. *Pride and impatience are the trials* **WE MUST FACE** *in order to experience free will.*

Wisdom by Reverend Troy Gately

Leos Janáček

Leos Janáček is today one of the best-known figures in Czech music. His works are thought-provoking as well as being an object of admiration. The listener is compelled by his thematic contrasts and by the whole of his creative development, in which he soon overstepped the bounds of traditional thought and established ideas on the art of music. He had found his “musical expression in composition,” today admired by the whole world, and in it he achieved an inimitable originality. His music resounds with life and all its beauties and marvels; evil, grief, joy, compassion, strife and reconciliation; it echoes with humane love. The music is his, it is his nation’s, it belongs to the people, to the world. It grew out of the fertile soil of his Lachian home.

He was born on 3rd July, 1854, in Hukvaldy by Příbor, a small village below the ruins of a castle of the same name. He was the ninth of the thirteen children of Jiří and Amálie Janáček. Since his father - like his grandfather - was a schoolmaster, he was born in, and spent, literally, the first years of his life in the local school. The Hukvaldy school, situated in the former ice-house of the feudal landlord, was cold and damp, and the schoolteacher’s family was crammed into a single room. In these insalubrious surroundings four of the Janáček children died, and in 1866 the composer’s father also became a victim of the harsh living conditions with his premature death. In 1865, at the age of eleven, Janáček came to Brno to study. His father sent him to a foundation of the monastery of Old Brno which took poor but musically gifted boys and trained them in music, so that they could take part not only in the monastery’s productions but also in concerts. The monastery provided the foundation scholars, known in Brno as “bluebreasts” because of their uniforms, with bed and board. Books, fees and all other expenses had to be met by the pupils themselves. Their timetable was strict, but thanks to this Janáček became accustomed to working discipline from an early age; the effects stayed with him for the rest of his life, for he was diligent and assiduous. At the foundation the fact that Janáček acquired a practical knowledge of musicianship was mainly due to the efforts of his teacher, the prominent choral composer Pavel Křížkovský, who nourished Janáček’s talent.

The roots of Janáček’s Slavonic orientation can also be found in the earliest period of his life, when his “own world was being formed,” which he fought his way through with much toil and trouble, and where he soon met with social injustice, but in which he grew into a conscious and aware person. He was aware of the isolation of Czech cultural life in Brno, and in his Slavism he found recourse from the world around, and set out on the path to his later Russophilism.

After matriculating at the pedagogical institute, he tried to get the best

possible musical education; he successfully completed two years’ work in one at the Skuherský organ school in Prague, and with ambitious zest studied at the Leipzig and Vienna conservatories.

Though he still loved his native Hukvaldy, his entire activity was centered on Brno. Here he gave himself over to pedagogical work. He became a music teacher at the pedagogical institute, and founded an organ school. He acquired experience as a choirmaster of the Svatopluk Guild, and further extended it in the Philharmonic Society of the Brno Guilds Association, where he built up the great tradition of that musical body. He was a cofounder of the Russian Circle and the Friends of Art Club in Brno; he was also Conservator of the museum. He edited the magazine *Hudební Listy* (Musical Folia), was musical editor of *Moravské listy* (Moravian Folia), contributed to *Lidové Noviny* (People’s News), and published theoretical studies and articles. He wrote down, collected and harmonized folk songs and dances. He took a psychological interest in studying and recording common speech -- his *Melodies of Speech*, which he studied not only for their musical content, but with an eye for all which might affect the speaker: environment, age, experience of life, grief, joy, a hard life. “Each spoken word has a piece of life attached to it” he said. And he composed.

“Teaching thirty, thirty-five, or even forty hours a week, conducting the singers, presenting concerts, leading the Queen’s Cloister choir; at the same time composing *Jenufa*, getting married, losing children -- one had to forget about oneself.”

But in private Janáček never lost interest in mankind, was unable to be indifferent to the human plight, to pain and injustice. When in October 1905 the worker František Pavlík was killed during a demonstration for the establishment of a Czech university in Brno, Janáček, moved by this event, wrote the piano sonata “From the Street -- I/X/1905”, in which he expressed his



(Continued on page 3)

From the Chairman

Effie M. Rosene

"Building the future...remembering the past...leaving a legacy."

"May the work I've done speak for me!"

Our month of March here at the Czech Center Houston can truly be entitled "March Madness Month!" For the month truly tested our resolve with parties, wedding receptions, a Presidential reception, a Members and Friends Dinner, installing a major art exhibit in our Third Floor Loft, arranging for the visit of the award winning Czech group Makabara, each of which took countless hours of our staff for preparation and execution and then to top it off our Board of Directors gave us the approval to purchase the tract of land, a former flower shop, behind us for our long range expansion needs. Some might say it is going out on a limb. We say it is envisioning and planning for the future! Thanks to our volunteers and staff all our activities occurred exceptionally, but in retrospect, we were really ready to enjoy a bit of quiet time.

April seems to be starting in the same mode and our efforts are made doubly so due the necessity of preparing for our biannual trip to the Czech Republic. We will close on the property on April 17, 2007 and start the marketing to rent or lease the property in order for it to pay for itself. It is a parcel containing 12,500 square feet of land that has a steel and glass building formerly used for a floral business which are prevalent along Fannin Street leading to the Medical Center. Our Museum District area is rapidly developing town homes and in fact the parcel across Wichita street will soon become a condominium high rise of twenty condos and two floors of covered parking, which will join a larger high rise two blocks from us. Our area is becoming more dense with this type of housing transitioning from single family units. There is a lack of service businesses to all of these newcomers so our tracts positioning would support a restaurant, coffee shop, deli or some other business catering to our burgeoning area as well as, of course for other events!

Since our last issue, I can't fail to mention two wonderful happenings in our Musical Series of Concerts here at the Czech Center. In November, we were fortunate to present from the Czech Republic, the Wallinger Quartet. Sponsored by the Czech Education Foundation of Texas (CEFT) and brought to us by Professor Thomas Sovik of the University of North Texas; although we were not present, being in the Czech Republic, we had reports of a concert and reception that was well received. Dr. Sovik promises more concerts using the Czech Center as a venue. Next was a concert on January 21, 2007 of the music by our very own composer Robert Dvorak. Robert worked with a group of performers from the Symphony and Grand Opera led and accompanied on the Petrof piano by Dr. Crista Miller, music director of Sacred Heart Co-cathedral to present a stellar program of his works and he even did the accompanying on the piano of several. All in all a fine program of his music and a full-house reception following obviously enjoyed by all.

We received notice of a planned Folklore Festival to be held in Prague November 5 – 11, 2007 featuring performing groups of the Czech Diaspora. I responded thanking the festival manager for the invitation to this exciting and first time Festival and the recognition of what the Diaspora are accomplishing in keeping their heritage alive we conveyed the Czech Center Houston is gaining recognition of its efforts to preserve the customs, the language, the music, not strictly that of folklore, but classical and contemporary as well. I complimented them on presenting a Folklore Festival, the mission of which focused on the folklore of the Diaspora. I suggested that perhaps in time it could be called a "Heritage Festival" instead of folklore. We, at the Czech Cultural Center Houston take seriously the goal for all persons to be proud of who they are, to know about the ancestry of their heritage. After all, it is truly who you are that is your very own. If you don't know, you can't tell your children and grandchildren or others and be a good citizen of the world, rather than just a place. Case in point: In the last month we have had two high school Czech exchange students, Marcela and Magda, visit our Center with their American friends. They were amazed that we would spend twelve to thirteen years of our life volunteering giving long hours and raising funds to build a 4 1/2 million dollar project, all volunteer and open to the public for a beautiful Czech Cultural Center in the Museum District of Houston to perpetuate and remember those who came, stayed, made a difference and to those still coming. Houston Grand Opera Guild held an Opera Night Live party here where we promoted Janacek's opera "The Cunning little Vixen." The two girls came again with their friends and afterwards they thanked us for making them feel proud of their own ancestry and heritage. When they departed after seeing this beautiful symbol of their country they related to me, **"Before, we wanted to be someone else, not Czech. Now, we are going home in May very proud to be Czech!"** We Americans are of many heritages and we, at the Czech Center, believe they are all important. So you see it is important to know who you are, to know who others are and for us all to be good citizens of the world, not just a village. We believe this embodies what President Havel espouses in a "Civil Society" and we believe that means a society of many heritages, living in peace and harmony and respecting the background of every person. This little story of making a difference in two people's lives makes all our efforts here worthwhile and we believe this goes for many others as well.

We have recently enrolled another Club 200 Member, **Edie and John Stavinoha, MD**, which reminds me to remind you we are actively soliciting membership in this elite group of individuals who have given a minimum of five thousand dollars to this organization. Please consider joining with the now eighty-two individuals or families that have made this a lifetime commitment. (Easy payment plans are available!)

Na Schledanou and S panem Bohem, Effie M Rosene



The News of The Czech Center

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From the Chairman, Member Updates,
Czech History, Letters to the Editor,
Briefs, Outstanding People Profiles and
Happenings.

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Send articles and activities well in advance to the above address, attention Editor.

The opinions expressed in *The News of the Czech Center* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Czech Cultural Center Houston.

Please make note of the Czech Center's new address and telephone number:

Czech Cultural Center Houston

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Houston, Texas 77004

Telephone: 713 528 2060

OUR MISSION

The Purpose of the Czech Cultural Center Houston is to unify the Czech/Slovak American Community around issues of importance and provide a central focus for all things Czech related, serving as a clearing house for information useful for members, visitors, individuals, organizations, and the media. The CCH will:

Promote the Czech Culture and Heritage by preserving, recording and celebrating the language, scholarship, and the arts of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Silesia;

Sponsor activities and events to accent special persons, places and provide a forum for lectures, concerts, exhibits and interaction with citizens visiting from the Czech and Slovak republics; Provide Czech language instruction, a museum, archives, genealogy research facilities, and a library for history and contemporary research of the Czech peoples;

Perform works of charity and mutual aid which include granting scholarships to promote the continuation of our cultural heritage.

"The white marble of the steps of the Brno Guildhall -- here the bloodied worker František Pavlík falls -- he came only to protest about university teaching, and was struck down by brutal murderers. From the Silesian Songs of Petr Bezruč he chose three poems -- Maryčka Magdonová, Schoolmaster Halfar and Seventy Thousand, and set them to music as a protest against social and national oppression. "Your words came as if summoned, and I provided them with a tone storm of wrath, desperation and pain" he later wrote to Bezruč. But for many years Janáček remained a composer whose creative activity could be followed only by the Brno public. At first he lacked the necessary contact with the musical life of Prague, and the performance of his works in Brno, whatever the enthusiasm and love with which they were prepared, usually fell short of the standard necessary for him to put the results of his work fully to the test. The opera "Jenůfa" was nearly nine years (1894-1903) in the making, inspired by Gabriela Preissová's play of the same name. At that time he sought "his own musical expression in composition", studied the melodies of speech, worked long hours on the opera, and finished it under extremely tragic circumstances, when his young daughter Olga was dying. The later fate of the opera was also dramatic. Because the Prague National Theatre refused to produce it, Janáček had to be satisfied with a Brno production (Jan. 21st, 1904), produced on a shoestring by the conductor C. M. Hrazdira. The head of the opera section of the Prague National Theatre refused the work for twelve years; when, finally, and thanks to the considerable efforts of Janáček's friends, he decided to produce the opera, he did so splendidly, and thus at least partly compensated Janáček for his undeserved disappointment during the most painful years of his life. For up to the time of the Prague premier of Jenůfa (1916), Janáček was able to rely on the artistic support only of Ferdinand Vach and his Moravian Teachers' Song Group, which masterfully rendered Janáček's choral works in concerts both at home and abroad, and of a few of his most faithful friends, who helped to propagate his works.

At sixty-two, Janáček, encouraged by his Prague success, for the first time really began to compose. He wrote one work after another, at tremendous speed, but always personal and original. After the success against the odds which Jenůfa brought, he finished the opera "The Excursions of Mr. Brouček", in which he poked fun at the triviality of the bourgeois character.

In the opera Katja Kabanová, based on a play by Ostrovsky, he gave expression to Katja's lyrical world, to the ardour and tragedy of her love, to her frankness, and to the contrasting hypocrisy of society, which drove her to self-destruction.

The opera "The Cunning Little Vixen", after Rudolf Těsnohlídek, is attractive in the unusualness of its theme and the humane philosophy of life. The inspiration for "The Makropulos Case" came from Karel Čapek's sparkling conversational play, in which the composer uncovered a

deeply human basis. Janáček's creative development was crowned by his final opera "From the House of the Dead", a work which combines a deeply tragic theme with a highly adventurous composition: the opera has no main characters, but Janáček transformed Dostoevsky's desperately oppressive world into a disquieting collective drama that is perhaps without parallel.

Notable among the chamber compositions are the two piano cycles "On the Overgrown Path" and "In the Mists", the cantata for chamber orchestra "The Diary of One Who Vanished", the two string quartets, the First "Inspired by Tolstoy's Kreutzer Sonata" and the Second "Intimate letters", the Concertino, the Capriccio, and the sextet for wind instruments "Youth". Of the symphonic works the most outstanding are the "Lachian Dances" and the rhapsody "Taras Bulba", the most beautiful legacy of Janáček's Russophilism. In "The Fiddler's Child" he contributes to a social theme, while in the "Ballad of Blaník" he expresses his joy at the emergence of the republic. The "Glagolitic Mass", written to an Old Slavonic text, shows up best his Slavism, his temperament, and his faith in human life. "A blare of victorious trumpets" opens and concludes his "Sinfonietta", a composition which, unlike the others, was not based on any work of literature, but which took its inspiration from Janáček's ties with and love for the town of Brno, where he spent his youth, where he rose in artistic stature up to his final victory, a whole sixty-three years of his life.

The last years of Janáček's life were imbued with a fever of creative activity, a vitality, and a sense of happiness; he received public acclaim, was nominated the first honorary doctor of Brno University, Professor at the Prague Conservatoire; his organ school was also made into a conservatoire, his works came to be known abroad. He was granted the satisfaction of seeing his work appreciated.

He died unexpectedly, in the midst of his work of correcting the proofs of his last opera, "From the House of the Dead", on 12th August, 1928, in the sanatorium at Ostrava, where he had been taken in a fever from his native Hukvaldy. Even today the world may find originality of thought, a sense of the dramatic, and new values in Janáček's work. And the stimulus which the interpretational challenge of his works gives ensures that his creative legacy will live on, and that his name will not be without honor.

The Cunning Little Vixen

Opera by Leoš Janáček

The Cunning Little Vixen (Czech: Příhody Lišky Bystroušky, lit. The Adventures of Vixen Sharp-Ears) is an opera by Leoš Janáček, with a libretto adapted by the composer from a serialized novella (daily comic) by Rudolf Těsnohlídek, which was first published in newspaper Lidové noviny. It was premiered on 6 November 1924 in Brno.

Conception

When Janáček discovered Těsnohlídek's comic-strip and decided to turn it into an opera, he began work by meeting with the author and beginning a study of animals. With this understanding of the characters involved, his own 70 years of life experience, and

an undying, unrequited love for the much younger, married Kamila Stösslová, he began work on the opera. Writing his own libretto, he transformed himself into the forester, and Kamila into the vixen and Terynka. He also transformed the originally comedic cartoon into a philosophical reflection on the cycle of life and death by including the death of the vixen. As with other operas by older composers, this late opera shows a deep understanding of life leading to a return to simplicity.

Synopsis

Act I: In the forest, the animals and insects are playing and dancing around. The forester (baritone) enters and lies down against a tree for a nap. The Vixen (soprano), in baby form (usually sung by a young girl), inquisitively chases a frog right into the lap of the surprised forester who forcibly takes her home as a pet. Time passes (in the form of an orchestral interlude) and we see the Vixen, now grown (to full size soprano), tied up in the forester's yard with the conservative old dachshund (mezzo). Fed up with life in confinement, the vixen chews through her rope, attacks the chickens, and hops the fence to freedom.

Act II: The vixen takes over a badger's home and kicks him out. In the inn, the pastor, forester, teacher and schoolmaster drink and talk about their mutual infatuation with the gypsy girl Terynka. The drunken schoolmaster leaves the inn and mistakes a sunflower that the vixen is hiding behind for Terynka and confesses his devotion to her. The forester, also on his way home, sees the vixen and fires two shots at her, sending her running. Later, the vixen, coming into her womanhood, meets a charming boy fox (soprano), and they retire to the badger's home. An unexpected pregnancy and a forest full of gossipy creatures necessitate their marriage, which rounds out the act.

Act III: The poacher Harasta (bass/bass-baritone) is engaged to Terynka and is out hunting in preparation for their marriage. He sets a fox trap, which the numerous vixen cubs mock. Harasta, watching from a distance, shoots and kills the vixen, sending her children running. At Harasta's wedding, the forester sees the vixen's fur, which Harasta gave to Terynka as a wedding present, and flees to the forest to reflect. He returns to the place where he met the vixen, and sits at the tree grieving the loss of both the vixen and Terynka. His grief grows until, just as in the beginning of the opera, a baby vixen unexpectedly jumps in his lap. This reassurance of the cycle of death leading to new life gives his heart a deep peace.

Music

This is Janáček's lightest opera, and, despite the titular vixen's death at the end of the work, it stands in contrast to the often brutally serious nature of operas such as Jenůfa and Káťa Kabanová. In The Cunning Little Vixen, the composer moved away from the more conversational style of previous and subsequent operas in favor of a more folk-like style, and wove into its fabric some of his most experimental opera concepts (ballet, mime, and orchestral interludes).

At Janáček's request, the final scene from The Cunning Little Vixen was performed at his funeral in 1928.

In 2003, an animated film version was produced by the BBC.

While I am busy with little things, I am not required to do greater things!

St. Francis de Sales

Member Update (November 1, 2006 to May 1, 2007)

New Memberships

Velke Kolo

Lorraine Rod Green
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Individual

Czech Catholic Union
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Ruth C. Dougherty
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& James Doubek
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& Theodore A Hajdik
Geraldine & Donald Hamil
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118 more needed to be a Club 200 member!

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If you are not on this list you need to be here! We invite you to join this distinguished group of members that have made a lifetime commitment to the Czech Center Houston.

Fund Raising 101: Can Fund Raising Actually Feel Comfortable?

Notes from a Museum District Business Alliance meeting we attended

Step 1 Be passionate about the organization you are representing. **Believe** in it. Your feelings must be **authentic**. **Feel good** about it. Others need to feel your passion. **Philanthropy is a business of passion.**

Step 2 Learn about the organization you are representing. Know the facts. Keep a one page organizational fact sheet handy for reference. **Know who you are helping and why.**

Step 3 Get involved with the organization. **Participate** in a meaningful way.

Step 4 Make you own meaningful financial **commitment** to the organization. Yes, your time is one kind of donation; but a financial commitment is important as well. If you are a board member or committee chair, remember that your gift needs to reflect a leadership giving level. Many boards will ask, in advance, for a minimum contribution, say \$500 - \$1,000, or more depending on the organization. Give yourself, before you ask others to give.

Step 5 Recruit your **friends** to volunteer with you. Stuff envelopes, attend events.

Step 6 Talk about the organization over lunch, coffee... whenever it's comfortable and natural. For example, you might say, "I'm involved in such an exciting project... I really need to share this with you." Share information with people who care about you and your interests!

Step 7 Help the organization **expand** their **mailing list**. Share names and addresses of your friends, colleagues, family with the Development staff. **Write personal notes** on fund raising appeals or other mailings. Explain that the organization is **important to you**... please join in!

Step 8 Every organization is complicated in some way. If the organization really means a lot to you and you're frustrated by something, call the executive! Share your concerns, be constructive, **volunteer to help rectify the problem**. Help make the organization a better place!

Step 9 Do not over commit. Do not join more boards or committees than is reasonable. It's impossible to feel truly passionate about an abundance of causes, and be able to help solve challenges.

Step 10 Return phone calls and **RSVP to meetings and events in a timely fashion**. It is very costly for staff to make repeated phone calls to well meaning volunteers.

FINALLY: ASK FOR A CONTRIBUTION! - i.e. "Please join me in supporting this worthy organization that helps many people be knowledgeable about their ancestry; teach the young about heritage and its geography, share traditions, become a citizen of the world and know other cultures for a civil society."

Effie M. Rosene

Ed: Our best representatives are members and friends of our organization and word of mouth is our best advertisement, better than media or any other form. So be vocal and let others know of us!

Cullen Home Fundraising Event for the Czech Center Houston

The Czech Cultural Center Houston will not forget Wednesday evening May 2, 2007 when we were honored and privileged to be feted with a dinner and wine fundraiser by Houston's most gracious Mary and Roy Cullen in the grandeur of their Georgian style home. The home featured in the April issue of Architectural Digest was the setting for an evening not to be forgotten by the fifty guests assembled.



Mary Cullen has assembled a world-class collection of Czech art which is displayed in several rooms of her home. Mary's brilliant commentary on Czech modern art was truly awesome proclaiming her, indeed, a visionary in this field. Beginning the collection at such a historically significant time, the return of a

democratically elected Czech government, was opportune to introduce the world to this long-hidden Czech art and artists of central Europe and she seized the moment.

The combination of delightful, interesting and interested guests who attended were the ingredients that made it a memorable evening. To the guests who made a contribution to attend this event the Czech Center Houston appreciates your caring and your contribution toward its capital campaign to finish our third floor for an additional venue to present other exciting events such as art exhibits, concerts, forums, seminars and visits of dignitaries from around the world.

Effie M. Rosene

HOUSTONMUSEUMDISTRICT

May 1, 2007

Effie Rosene
Chairman & President
Czech Cultural Center Houston

Dear Effie:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Houston Museum District Association, I am pleased to inform you that at its April 4, 2007 meeting, the District voted to extend an invitation to the Czech Cultural Center Houston to become a member of the Houston Museum District Association.

The Museum District Board of Directors has elected you, Effie Rosene as Chairman & President of the museum, to serve as a voting member of the Board. Our next meeting will be held in July in hopes that you can join us for that meeting. The Museum District has several committees in which we hope you will participate - the Public Relations Committee; the Educators Committee; and the Retail Committee.

Welcome to membership in the Houston Museum District Association. Czech Cultural Center Houston is a wonderful addition to the educational and enrichment opportunities the District offers to visitors and Houstonians. We look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

/s/ Susan Llanes Myers
President

/s/ Susan Young
Executive Director

ED: (Excerpted from the invitation letter.) The Czech Center has accepted the invitation to join this prestigious association.

Czech Art Exhibit



Hosts Mary and Roy Cullen



Bill and Effie Rosene



Gabriela and Daniel Dror



Mary (center) with Rosie Jowitz and Matthew Van Besian



Janell and Wesley Pustejovsky



Gabriela Dror, Bill Rosene, Marianne Ivary



Cathy Anderson, Host Roy, Effie Rosene



Sisters Shery Rosene Pierce and Cathy Rosene Anderson



Robert Dvorak, Effie Rosene, James Ermis



Mary and Frank Pokluda



Rev. Paul Chovanec

Czech Architecture — Our Grand Cultural Legacy!

Introduction

When one considers the culture of the Czech lands, probably what first comes to mind are Czech music and film. The works of great Czech composers, like Smetana, Dvorak, and Janacek have been part of the standard repertoire of symphonic and operatic companies since the early twentieth century. Many excellent Czech films produced by the Barrandov Film Studios have been exported over the years, and we have seen gifted producers like Milos Formann recognized by the Academy of Motion Pictures. What is less well known, but an equally important player in the realm of Czech culture is architecture.

One may ask why architecture has not had more prominence in Czech culture, considering the Czech lands possess one of the most important collections of historic architecture in the entire world. To begin with, music and film travel a lot better than architecture. After the Communist take over in 1948, and the subsequent building of the "Iron Curtain," the Czech lands became extremely isolated from the western world. Travel to Czechoslovakia was complicated, and for those who braved it, not always a pleasant experience. Only if one could get past the virtual police state atmosphere or depressed mood of the population, could one perhaps begin to appreciate the architecture. That was made more difficult, too, by forty years of coal soot and scaffolding everywhere that looked like it had been in place since the Middle Ages. For over two generations, the historic architecture of the Czech lands remained one of the traveling world's best kept secrets.

With the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the gates of the Czech lands were finally reopened and the region returned to life once again. In the ensuing years buildings have been cleaned, and most of the scaffolding has been removed. The world is now visiting the Czech and Slovak Republics en masse, and getting to see what many of us have known and appreciated for years: the great architectural heritage of the Czech lands. This article serves as an introduction to that golden heritage, describing the most important and historic periods and styles, as well as providing some background as to how each evolved. Because every major style of architecture can be found in the Czech lands, this piece is not meant to be a comprehensive discussion on the entire body of Czech architecture. It would take volumes to adequately address any single style, let alone regional variations of style that took place over the long, complex history of the Czech lands.

Any exploration of Czech architecture will naturally revolve around the capital city of Prague. This may seem an unfair bias, as one finds an abundance of castles in the

countryside, and outstanding architecture in Bratislava, Brno and other cities. Nevertheless, the collection found in Prague is so vast it simply overshadows the rest of the region, unmatched even by many of the great art cities of Europe. Please note also, the use of the term "Czech lands" in these passages, is a general reference to the regions of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and the eastern Carpatho-Ukrainian region. So, as this exploration of Czech architecture begins, it is first important to understand the key conditions and events that led to the genesis of this great architectural legacy.

Origins of the Legacy

The Golden Age of Charles IV. During the reign of King Charles IV in the fourteenth century, Prague was elevated to being capital of the Holy Roman Empire and grew to become one of the largest cities in Europe. Charles IV summoned the best architects of his day to construct the New Town, build St. Vitus's cathedral, and countless churches, schools, monasteries and houses in the Gothic tradition. Contributing to Prague's importance as a developing metropolis was its strategic location in the center of Europe on the path of important continental trade routes. As power and wealth became



Courtyard in Cesky Krumlov

concentrated in Prague, the economies of Bohemia and Moravia flourished, resulting in what is referred to as The Golden Age.

Succession of

Royals.

Despite centuries of political and ethnic turmoil between Slavic and Germanic inhabitants of the Czech lands, Prague remained a major focus of royal power in Central Europe up through the Hapsburg era, which ended in 1918. Many of the Charles IV's successors repeated his pattern of urban rejuvenation, building cathedrals, palaces and estates across the Czech lands. They could afford to hire the best architects who were in touch with the latest trends and developments in architectural design. Thus, the great architectural heritage begun by Charles the IV continued to prosper during each wave of new building undertaken by his successors. The Baroque period of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in particular, was another time of prolific building.

The Industrial Revolution. The political and social reforms instilled in the eighteenth century by the Hapsburg Queen, Maria Theresa, planted the seeds for Bohemia's great Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century. With their strategic location and natural resources, the Czech lands soon became the industrial heart of the Hapsburg Empire. This industrial might and resulting economic

strength persisted through the First Republic and World War II. Even during the stagnant years of the Communist occupation, Czechoslovakia maintained one of the highest standards of living in Europe. This high standard of living is reflected in the high quality of architecture and infrastructure built over two centuries.

An Embarrassment of Riches. What distinguishes the collection of historic, Czech architecture most is its enormity. In contrast to the other major culture capitals of Europe, like London, Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw or Budapest, so much of ancient Prague and other Czech cities has escaped the destruction of war. Today, if one wants to visit the Baroque masterpieces of Berlin, Warsaw or Dresden, he would have to read about them in books, because most were lost during the Second World War. Incredibly, during World War II in Prague only the City Hall received minor damage, which was later repaired. Fine examples of every major architectural style exist today in the Czech lands, not as ruins or restorations, but as living buildings that have been functioning continuously for hundreds of years. Prague is often called a living architectural museum.

Early Efforts at Preservation. Because the civilization of the Europe is so much older than that of the New World, the importance of preserving historic monuments has been recognized by society much longer than here in the United States, for example. The various governments of the Czech lands have enacted laws protecting historic buildings for generations, while restoration of older buildings has been a specialty trade for centuries. Even the preservation efforts by the Communists, however feeble, helped to protect the most important historic architecture during the destructive twentieth century.

Silver Linings in Communist Clouds.

Probably more significant than their preservation efforts, was the financial bankruptcy of the Communist system. By the 1950's Modern architecture flourished world wide, and the old architecture of the past fell out of favor, becoming associated with urban decay. As governments and the private sector razed blocks upon blocks of older buildings in the name of "urban renewal", much of our architectural heritage worldwide was lost forever. Although the Communists did embrace Modernism, and undertook some urban renewal, they did not have the economic means to carry out the massive scale of urban renewal that occurred in the many Western cities. Fortunately, much of the ancient architecture in the Czech lands was spared from demolition.

(Grand Cultural Legacy - to be continued next issue)

Compiled by Chris Hlavinka, AIA

You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.

Folksongs - Links to Our Ancestors Past

The songs of our ancestors provide glimpses into their lives. Let us look at this topic from several perspectives—historical, sociological, developmental and musical.

Historical perspective for understanding the songs of our ancestors

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Czech nation almost ceased to exist. Under the Habsburgs, Germanization was a mandated attempt to try to make the Czechs believe they had no right to exist and were just Czech-speaking Germans. The Czech language was outlawed for three hundred years; it became the exclusive property of the people in the countryside. It continued as a culture of songs, fairy tales, ancient rites and customs, proverbs and sayings.

During the mid-to-latter 19th century, there was a revival of Czech literature and music using the Czech folksong as a point of departure. It was the era of collecting tales and songs from the people which resulted in published editions by Erben, Bartos, Foerster, Janacek, Seidel, etc. Folksongs were the only link with the unbroken tradition of the Czech language as is evidenced by the dialectical variations from one geographical area to another from which the songs were collected.

In his writing, Milan Kundera has said, "What you hear in them (the folksongs) is the sap that kept Czech culture from drying up. It was the music of the folk that injected a supply of fresh vigorous blood into the veins of European classical music; cf. Smetana, Dvorak, Janacek, and Bartok."

During the era of socialism and communism, 1948 - 1989, it was believed that capitalism destroyed the collective way of life, cut people off from each other, and so governmental plans tried to merge the private and public lives of people once again. It was further believed that religion was the opiate of the people; atheism was promoted instead by persecuting religious followers. All attempts were made to remove the meaningful rituals from people's lives which connected them to birth, life, marriage, death, etc. by secularizing their religious practices.

Human beings, however, cannot live without ritual. Rituals interpret, shape, and give expression to and even control our social existence with one another. If symbolism attached to religious rituals is not what gives meaning to people's lives, then that meaning will come from non-religious substitutes i.e. Super Bowls, political conventions, cocktail parties, and televised sitcoms. For our ancestors, former collective customs were the harvests, carnivals, dances, and work.

Under communism, it became May Day Parade, rallies, Liberation celebrations, meetings. Secular substitutes were created for the religious sacramental experiences the people cherished which were baptism, confirmation and marriage. Literally, these policies starved the spiritual lives of the people; they prevented contact with clergy and religious for education, counsel, and even sacramental ministry when they were dying. As a consequence,

small groups gathered to learn study and enjoy the folk arts and these occasions became the spiritual source blood, those times of communion with each other, during these difficult years. In short, the era provided for state supported revival of the folk-art through clubs, publication and performance of music, dance, art, poetry, and teaching of crafts such as lace making, wood and culinary arts. Folklore associations were established in all cities, towns and regions.

A sociological perspective of folksongs

The traditional village lived a collective lifestyle in which folksongs emerged organically from all phases of life. The Roman calendar was based according to the seasons then the Christianized calendar or Liturgical calendar marked off the communal rites, feasts days of all saints so people could celebrate their name's day, etc. Folk arts were an expression of beauty, love and respect of their homes, village, way of life and each other. Folksongs brought people together who were bonded by blood and sharing life's burdens together.

Songs were passed from one generation to another, oftentimes having singers adding something new. Therefore, it is not uncommon for a song to have many creators. No song existed purely for its sake - it had a function! There were special songs just for weddings, harvesting, Shrovetide, Christmas, and Easter, for haymaking, dancing, and funerals. Even love songs existed within the framework of certain recurring festivities - evening walks, serenades under a maiden's window, marriage bartering and proposals, loss of a love going to the army.

Development perspective of folksongs

Oldest songs from pagan times were based on the oldest known musical system, the 4-tone, tetra-chord system. These included mowing songs and harvest songs, plus those songs tightly bound up with the rites of the patriarchal village. The first 9th century Slav dominion, the Great Moravian Empire which included Slovakia, South Moravia, Hungary and Croatia besides Bohemia and Moravia, remains untouched on the oldest level of folk music even though its borders were swept away over a thousand years ago.

There is a connection beyond the Slav world to classical antiquity, i.e. ancient Greek music. The structure of the oldest folksongs is analogous to that of ancient Greek music. They use the same Lydian, Phrygian and Dorian modes and tetra-chords. Our oldest Czech songs belong to the same era of musical thought as the songs in ancient Greece. They preserve antiquity for us. All in all, the folksong is a tunnel beneath history, allowing us to look into the past. Through them we can see, sense and feel something of the ancient Slav world and its

We have printed this saying before but it needs reiteration: *Time goes by so fast, people go in and out of your life. You must never miss the opportunity to tell these people how much they mean to you!*
Anonymous

future generations, a past destroyed by wars, revolutions, and brutal civilizations above ground.

A Musical Perspective of the Folksongs from the Czech and Slovak Lands Bohemian Folksongs

Prague musicologists claim that the European folksong originated in the Baroque era when the village musicians played or sang in the orchestras of the nobility who then introduced their musical culture to their people. From this they conclude that the folksong is not an artistic form on its own, but a derivative of art music. This can definitely be disputed and does not hold true for Moravia and Slovakia.

Baroque and Classical music use major - minor keys, 3/4 and 2/4 tempi, the use of the major 7th to establish order, simple chords, melodiousness, and was mastered by the tonic! In Bohemia, civilization developed to a higher level due to greater contact between city and country, castle and land. Charles University was founded in the 13th century. Prague was the capital of Bohemia as well as the seat of the Roman Empire under the Habsburgs. Here there developed lots of accompanied music with the use of the dudy (Bohemian bagpipe), fiddles, wind ensembles, guitars, accordions, and keyboards. Distinct dialectical differences were noticeable between regions, e.g. Chodsko, South Bohemia, and Northern Bohemia.

Moravian Folksongs

Moravian people used a wide range of tonality, that is, moving from minor to major and modulating several times in between. They used modes that the castle orchestras never dreamed of, like the Lydian mode with the raised 4th which evokes the pastoral idylls of antiquity such as Pan and his pipes. Their music also utilized the minor 7th in the Aeolian, Dorian and Mixolydian modes which produces the melancholic and pensive sound making this music distinct and enjoyable by contrast.

Rhythmic ambiguity is definitely characteristic of many Moravian folksongs. This rubato-type singing was not accompanied but sang right from the heart! Variances were due to the fleeting moods of the singer who reacted to the color of the random flowers, to the weather, to the surroundings or to the joy or ache in his heart. The primitiveness of the villages and means of travel kept the people isolated to a greater extent from the castles. Here there was no consideration of having country musicians playing in the castle orchestras. This helps to explain why the Moravian people could preserve folksongs from the oldest times. They were the least tainted with the art music created for and in the castles. Commonly used instruments were the cimbalom, fiddles and wind instruments. Dialectical differences exist in the texts from different regions, e.g. Valassko, South Moravia, and the Moravian-Slovak areas.

Our thanks to Sister Anita Smisek, OP for this article. www.apimusic.org
Ed: *Installation one of a two part series.*

Pittsburgh Agreement

In Passaic, New Jersey fifteen years ago, John Holy traveled some 400 miles on a mission for his cultural organization to collect a document that helped change world history. Now, he's preparing to give it up. "It's going where it belongs," said Holy, 85, glancing at an accord signed in 1918 between Slovaks and Czechs living in America. The document, called the Pittsburgh Agreements, has lived in a century-old vault of the Slovak Catholic Sokol, a membership organization in Passaic, since Holy brought it there for safekeeping in 1992. But in September, the page of looping Slovak script will permanently move to a museum in Pittsburgh, where it was first signed before some 20,000 Slovaks and Czechs in one of the city's largest political gatherings.

"It's very exciting," said David Grinnell, chief archivist for the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center. "We will exhibit it as soon as we can." The document helped rally international support for the birth of Czechoslovakia after Austro-Hungarian Empire broke up in World War I. Czecho-Slovakia, as the 29 signatories called it, was to unite the two culturally aligned groups, neither of which had numbers great enough to form independent states. The accord promised gradual autonomy for the Slovak minority.

Many ethnic alliances were forming then, but it was unprecedented for émigrés to declare a state's birth, according to Owen Johnson, a national expert on Slovak history at Indiana University. Thousands of Slovaks fled to America in the 19th and early 20th century after years of oppression. Many settled in Clifton, Garfield and Passaic to work in the area's textile mills, and worship in the Catholic and Lutheran churches. Nearly 4,000 people of Slovak ancestry lived in Bergen and Passaic counties in 2000, the Census found.

Slovaks are known for establishing strong fraternal organizations, including the Slovak Catholic Sokol of Passaic. Forty-six Slovaks founded the Sokol (or falcon) in 1905, later constructing a stately building on Madison Street for their society.

In 1918, leaders from similar organizations gathered in Pittsburgh to proclaim the fate of their kin overseas.

One of the signatories became Czechoslovakia's first president. Another was the family pastor of Daniel Tanzone, the current editor of a weekly paper still produced by the Passaic Sokol. "They feared they would be treated lesser," said Tanzone, 59, about the Slovaks. "Their fears proved to be true."

Many Slovaks gained in Czechoslovakia. Communism took hold of the country after World War II, and the Czechs controlled the centralized state. Religion was banned, and Slovaks continued to flee. After she left Czechoslovakia in 1948, W. Nina Holy would hide rosaries and religious robes under her clothes when returning to her village. In this way, she and her family were able to provide complete vestments for the parish priest with the religious contraband. "I felt so proud," said Holy 74, who lived in East Rutherford for many years. Her future husband, John Holy, was banned from the country because of his political leanings. The couple became involved in several Slovaks groups such as the Sokol. In 1992, Holy agreed to transport one of the original Pittsburgh Agreements to Passaic from Cleveland, where it had been stored in a monastery.

After arriving the document mostly remained stored among a mountain of papers in the Sokol's vault. Communism fell in Czechoslovakia in 1989, and Slovaks were overjoyed. John Duch, a Clifton lawyer and former deputy mayor of Garfield, traveled to the country just as leadership was peacefully changing. He almost didn't leave.

"The opposition was forming the government in a back room, and asked me to stay," said Duch, 46, whose wife protested.

When Slovakia gained independence in 1992, Tanzone and the Holy's traveled to the new nation with the Pittsburgh Agreement for a viewing.

In September, they will again transport the document, this time for good. Grinnell, of the Heinz History Center, had searched for one of the Agreements for years. "I've always had my eyes on one," he said. While John Holy's attachment to the documents is strong, he's glad to see it return to its birthplace. "It's going home," he said.

Passaic County *Herald News*

Pittsburgh Document Finds Its Way Home

So it wasn't signed at Independence Hall, and Thomas Jefferson didn't write it. But for Czechs and Slovaks, the Pittsburgh Agreement -- signed in 1918 at the former Loyal Order of Moose Building, Downtown -- means as much as the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

And it's coming home. The Slovak League of America plans to donate its original copy to the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center in September.

"It was a big deal for both nationalities," said John Holy, the league's honorary national secretary. "I would compare it to the Declaration of Independence because that's where the independence was declared formally."

The one-page document cleared the way for Czechs and Slovaks to form their own democratic country, free from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, at the end of World War I. The uneasy alliance of the groups ended in 1993. But the agreement has value for both nationalities, said Dave Muhlena, librarian of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

"It involves a certain measure of politics, religion and patriotism," he said. "You had the American democratic ideals involved."

An estimated 20,000 people turned out for a Downtown march and rally that proceeded the May 31, 1918, signing. At the time, the United States and its allies were at war with Austria-Hungary, Germany and Turkey. Austria controlled the Czechs, while the Hungarians had hold of Slovakia.

If the 29 signers had attempted to make their case at home, they would have been shot as traitors, said Joe Bielecki, president of the Czechoslovak Nationality Room at the University of Pittsburgh.

Too weak to form their own independent countries, the Czechs and Slovaks pooled their resources. Pittsburgh, with a large Slovak population, served as a central meeting place.

Today, Allegheny County's 1.2 million residents include 53,314 Slovaks and 7,523 Czechs, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"(The agreement) was developed through a network of both Czechs and Slovaks," said Carol Hochman, honorary consul of the Czech Republic for Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio. "People of some stature at the time came together here in Pittsburgh."

The Heinz History Center plans to make a "big deal" out of the document's arrival, said CEO Andy Masich. The agreement likely will go into the museum's permanent archives or special collections gallery.

"That was a world-changing kind of event that Pittsburgh and Pittsburghers played a seminal role in," said Masich, whose father's family emigrated from Eastern Slovakia. "They wanted to change their old world from their new headquarters in the new world." For about the past decade, the document has been stored in a safe at the Slovak League's offices in Passaic, N.J. Before that, the agreement spent some time in Cleveland, and it traveled to the former Czechoslovakia on the document's 20th anniversary in 1938.

Members of the Slovak League, a civic group that turns 100 this year, nearly voted to send the agreement to Slovakia permanently. But by a slim margin, they decided it belongs in Pittsburgh, Holy said.

"That's where it was signed, first of all," he said. "Secondly, we feel that it should be preserved professionally. It belongs in a museum now."

Tribune Review, Saturday, February 24, 2007

The origin of Prague

The origin of Prague goes back to the 7th century and the Slavic princess Libuse, a woman of great beauty and wisdom who possessed prophetic powers. Libuse and her husband Premysl, ruled peacefully over the Czech lands from the hill of Vysehrad. A legend says that one day Libuse had a vision. She stood on a cliff overlooking the Vltava, pointed to a forested hill across the river, and proclaimed: "I see a great city whose glory will touch the stars" ("Vidim mesto velike, jehoz slava hvezd se dotykati bude."). She instructed her people to go and build a castle where a man was building the threshold (in Czech *prah*) of a house. "And because even the great noblemen must bow low before a threshold, you shall give it the name Praha." Her words were obeyed and some two hundred years later, the city of Prague became the seat of the Premyslids.

Letters

Too funny that I am reading this email right now because we were discussing this book over the Christmas holiday. I rushed out and bought a copy for myself and one for my niece Susan Petter for Christmas. Then I find out that several cousins also had gone out and purchased the book so I hope the sales continue. This was my first visit to the Czech Cultural Center's new building and I was breathless. The paintings were beautiful and the inventory was great. I bought mom a Czech music CD for Christmas and a Charodenice for myself. I didn't make the trip to the 2nd floor to view the chandelier but maybe another time. I hope all had a great Christmas. We sent Sr. Dorothy Susil back to Incarnate Word Academy today so our visits are winding down.

There is a buchtý recipe in the new cookbook and how to cook every innard in every kind of animal so Steve start heating up the grill.

Lois Petter Periera

I saw the article about Klima cookbook and I thought it was really good and well done. By the way, I must tell you that my friends and I really enjoyed the string quartet concert a few weeks back. We need more of this in Houston. And, what I really like is that it is so easy to get to your facility.

Isabel Mermelstein

Dear Houston!

Sorry we are so late with our renewal. Time goes faster and faster! It is because we topped the hill and are on our way down?

Some day we will visit!

Your newsletter is excellent. I marvel at the research that must be done.

Dean and Sally Teresinski

Effie, Bill, Everybody,
Stayed at the Monastery four days! No talking!
Had a wonderful time in Prague! Celebrated
ordination of seven priests. Remembering all
of you! Peace, Love, Joy

Father Joe Hybner

The celebration last night was wonderful!
You two – along with many others – have
done a magnificent job. The facility is elegant
and beyond beautiful!

We hope you have happy and relaxing
holidays. Please know how much you are
appreciated by so many people – your gifts
will live on and provide an on going
appreciation of our Czech heritage through
the years.

Much love to you and yours.

Jim and Jeanette Mallory

Dear Bill and Effie: The Texas Czech Physician Exchange Program has had another successful year. Since its inception in 1991, 133 physicians have now come from the medical school of Charles University to the Institutions of the Texas Medical Center. This program sponsored through the Houston Academy of Medicine is one of the most outstanding one of its kind. It has been a big plus, not only in

medical education, but also in international relations.

Currently for this three month period, we have a married physician couple, Drs. Tomas and Gabriela Grus, both of whom are at the Texas heart Institute.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your past support, which has been so crucial to the success of the program. We would also like to ask for your continuing support so that this educational endeavor may continue. Contributions may be made to:

*Texas – Czech Physician Exchange Program
c/o Houston Academy of Medicine Memorial Education and Research Foundation*

1515 Hermann Drive #5E, Houston, Texas 77004

Again many thanks and much appreciation

Sincerely, Arthur M. Jansa, M.D.

Dear Effie and Bill: On behalf of the Czech President Vaclav Klaus, I would like to thank you for the exceptional welcome you extended to us at the Czech Cultural Center in Houston during his presidential visit to Texas on March 4, 2007. The reception at the Czech Cultural Center Houston was the first scheduled event for President Klaus during this recent visit to the United States. President Klaus immensely enjoyed his time among Czech friends from Texas at your Center. Moreover, the President and the members of his delegation were very touched by your warm welcome and impressed with not only the event but also the beautiful Czech Culture Center building itself.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the wonderful job you are doing in Houston. Though our time with you was brief, your generous hospitality made a lasting impression on all of us. We look forward to future collaboration with you and the Czech Cultural Center Houston.

Sincerely yours,

Petr Kolar, Ambassador of the Czech Republic

Dear Effie and Bill: Enclosed are some photos from the Cernin Palace award presentation. I believe Dr. Klima was extremely pleased to be selected for this prestigious award.

Thanks again for another beautiful event (13th annual Members and Friends Dinner) at the Czech Cultural Center Houston.

Our best to you and Bill and we pray that God blesses you both with continued good health and happiness.

Ray and Clarice Snokhous

Dear Effie and all friends at the Czech Cultural Center, Houston:

Thank you so much for including me in the opportunity to attend the Reception for Czech President Vaclav Klaus. The building with its elegant interior was the perfect setting for the occasion, and it was clear that it was also an unexpected surprise for President Klaus. Thank you, too, for including me in your invitation list for the Thirteenth Annual Members and Friends Dinner this evening, March 24 with cocktail reception beginning at

6:00 PM. I would love to attend and visit with my friends and Czech and Moravian cousins in the lovely Center. Unfortunately, I have a commitment here in San Antonio and one tomorrow in Cuero, and on Monday I leave for Corpus Christi for a week of meetings.

Please accept my deep regrets for having to miss this event. I am certain that those who are able to attend will add another lovely memory to their memory bank, of the Czech Cultural Center.

Peace, blessings, God's Love and Wisdom in all things.

Sr.Elizabeth Riebschlaeger, ccvi

Prezident

Republiky

Prague, 13 March 2007

Dear Madam President,

Dear Effie

I would like to thank you for the friendly welcome which you extended to me during my recent visit to the Czech Cultural Center in Houston.

I am glad I had the opportunity to visit for the first time the American South, to get acquainted with its politics and culture and above all to meet the numerous Czech community. I was truly impressed by its size and significance and I'm confident that it can play a major role in the further enhancement of the mutual relations between the Czech Republic and Texas.

I appreciate everything that you've been doing for the Czech Republic and I would like to thank you for that once again.

With best wishes

/s/ Vaclav Klaus

Dear Effie and Bill: You did it again! What a lovely event Sunday. You two are amazing. I think everyone had a good time and I hope the President and Ambassador come back – they should want to.

Love, Sally Miller

About the Czech Center Houston

Founded in 1995 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational cultural organization, it provides community services to the public for language classes and other educational programs, concerts, meetings, lectures, luncheons, dinners, weddings, social and charitable events. The Center exists to celebrate the culture, language, scholarship and the arts of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and Silesia preserving Czech and Slovak history and heritage espousing the significance of knowing one's ancestry that all roots are important to help one be a citizen of the world. It is the Center's belief that education and charity are the cornerstone of enhancing civil society in these challenging times. This is accomplished with lectures on aspects of historical, contemporary and cultural interest, various arts and musical programs. The Center is also committed to the regeneration of the Houston community at large. As an example, college scholarships and opportunities for docent and other volunteer experiences for high school, college students and others is provided. The Center donates to charities and local schools and collaborates with other museums and cultural institutions.

Blahoslav Smisovsky

Music teacher, composer

Blahoslav "Slávek" Smišovský was born March 8, 1931 in Dolní Cerekev in Vysočina, the highlands of the now Czech Republic. Interested in music all his life, he was ten years-old when he composed his first song *Šípkový květ* – the Flowering Rose. He learned to play violin, piano and accordion.



Viera and Slávek Smisovsky

His destiny led him to Uherský Ostroh to Slovácko the warm colorful part of Moravia. He found he was a big fan of Slovácko and its music, and met his wife, Viera, as well as his second home.

Slávek composed for brass bands *Bojaré, Mistí anka, Moravanka, Stíbr anka* and his *Frajarka*. He wrote many original lyrics but his meeting poet František Kožík was an important moment in his music career and personal life.

His music is appreciated not only in the Czech Republic but abroad as well. It has played in concerts in the USA, Holland, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and New Zealand.

Slávek Smišovský is an uncrowned king of *Slovácká dechovka* (Moravian Czech Brass). He composed such memorable songs as *Falešná frajárka, Zahrada Moravy, Za tichú Moravú, Boršické panenky* and many other polkas and waltzes songs all happy and poignant. He says: "I compose because it makes me happy and I believe that my songs make other people happy too." On completing a new composition he signs it at the bottom of page and adds date and two letters, *DB*, for "*Diky Bohu* (Thank God), that I managed it and hopefully people will like it." Now at the age of 76 he has received many awards in his



Jaroslav Vinklárek, Slávek and Viera sing to Bill and Elfi Španem Bohem on their departure

life including Honorary Citizen of Uherský Ostroh, 1996 and Dolní Cerekev, 2001. The communist era did not serve him well as a professional as it did not many others.

Ed: The Czech Cultural Center Houston proudly awarded musician composer Slávek Smisovsky a Comenius award for his dedication and lifetime work of making persons happy through song, teaching and believing in good works.

Humor

It has come to the attention of the Department of Environmental Quality that there has been recent unauthorized activity on the above referenced parcel of property. You have been certified as the legal landowner and/or contractor who did the following unauthorized activity: construction and maintenance of two wood debris dams across the outlet stream of Spring Pond.

A permit must be issued prior to the start of this type of activity. A review of the Department's files shows that no permits have been issued. Therefore, the Department has determined that this activity is in violation of Part 301, Inland Lakes and Streams, of the Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Act, 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.30101 to 324.30113 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, annotated.

The Department has been informed that one or both of the dams partially failed during a recent rain event, causing debris and flooding at downstream locations. We find that dams of this nature are inherently hazardous and cannot be permitted. The Department therefore orders you to cease and desist all activities at this location, and to restore the stream to a free-flow condition by removing all wood and brush forming the dams from the stream channel. All restoration work shall be completed no later than January 31, 2005.

Please notify this office when the restoration has been completed so that a follow-up site inspection may be scheduled by our staff. Failure to comply with this request or any further unauthorized activity on the site may result in this case being referred for elevated enforcement action. We anticipate and would appreciate your full cooperation in this matter. Please feel free to contact me at this office if you have any questions.

Sincerely, David L. Price,

District Representative Land and Water Management Division.

The response

Dear Mr. Price: Your certified letter dated 12/17/04 has been handed to me to respond to. I am the legal landowner but not the Contractor at 2088 Dagget, Peirson, Michigan. A couple of beavers are in the process of constructing and maintaining two wood "debris" dams across the outlet stream of my Spring Pond.

While I did not pay for, authorize, nor supervise their dam project, I think they would be highly offended that you call their skillful use of nature's building material "debris." I would like to challenge your department to attempt to emulate their dam project any time and/or any place you choose.

I believe I can safely state there is no way you could ever match their dam skill, their dam resourcefulness, their dam ingenuity, their dam persistence, their dam determination and /or their dam work ethic.

As to your request, I do not think the beavers are aware that they must first fill out a dam permit prior to the start of this type of dam activity.

My first dam question to you is: are you trying to discriminate against my Spring Pond Beavers, or do you require all beavers throughout the state to conform to said dam request? If you are not discriminating against these particular beavers, through the Freedom of Information Act, I request completed copies of all those other applicable beaver dam permits that have been issued. Perhaps we will see if there really is a dam violation of Part 301, Inland Lakes and 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.30101 to 324.30113 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, annotated.

I have several concerns. My first concern is; aren't the beavers entitled to legal representation? The Spring Pond Beavers are financially destitute and are unable to pay for representation – so the state will have to provide them with a dam lawyer. The Department's dam concern that either both of the dams failed during a recent rain event, causing flooding, is proof that this is natural occurrence, which the Department is required to protect. In other words, we should leave the Spring Pond Beavers alone rather than harassing them and calling their dam names.

If you want the stream "restored" to a dam free-flow conditions please contact the beavers—but if you are going to arrest them, they obviously did not pay attention to your dam letter, they being unable to read English.

In my humble opinion, the Spring Pond Beavers have a right to build their unauthorized dams as long as the sky is blue, the grass is green and water flows downstream. They have more rights than I do to live and enjoy Spring Pond. If the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection lives up to its name, it should protect the natural resources (Beavers) and the environment (beavers' Dams). So, as far as the beavers and I are concerned, this dam case can be referred for more elevated enforcement action right now. Why wait until 1/31/2005? The Spring Pond Beavers may be under the dam ice then and there will be no way for you or your dam staff to contact/harass them then.

In conclusion, I would like to bring to your attention to a real environmental quality (health) problem in the area. It is the bears! Bears are actually defecating in our woods. I definitely believe you should be persecuting the defecating bears and leave the beavers alone. If you are going to investigate the beaver dam, watch your step! (The bears are not careful where they dump!)

Being unable to comply with your dam request, and being unable to contact you on your dam answering machine, I am sending this response to your dam office.

Thank you,

Ryan Devries & the Dam Beavers

Ed Note: We regret we do not know the status of this dam issue at this time.

The Smallest good deed is better than any grand intention!
Source Unknown

Czech President Vaclav Klaus Visits

All pomp lured the President of the Czech Republic to this privileged circumstance when he visited the Czech Cultural Center Houston on March 4, 2007. His first stop in Houston, in Texas, and in the United States was here early Sunday evening and it was an honor that we accepted with glee. We think he scheduled his initial footing in Texas for the year which marked a tribute to us because four years ago, June 18, 2003 then Prime Minister Spidla and his wife Viktorie Spidla visited our Palatial home to examine the mammoth construction underway.



He must have talked about us when he returned to the Czech Republic for Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, JUDr. Cyril Svoboda to present the Jan Masaryk Gratias Agit Award to the Czech Center in 2003 for promoting the good name of the Czech Republic. One should realize that the opulent award was the only one of its kind given to any United States recipient in 2003.

President Vaclav Klaus came to Houston to strengthen ties between the Czech Republic and the southern states of the United States where Czech heritage is prominent. His desire was to show support to the Czech Texans who keep their culture alive within American culture. His purpose was also to inform Houstonians of the post Communist transition and the Czech Republic's involvement in the European integration process. "I suggest redefining the whole concept of the European Union...I suggest minimizing political intervention in human activities. Where intervention is inevitable, (which means at the level of municipalities, regions, and states), not in Brussels." Mr. Klaus would speak to the Houston World Affairs Council the day after his reception.

Preparing for an ambassador, vice consul, and governmental delegation is a serious task, now enter the President of a Nation and double the stress and workload of people involved behind the scenes. Mrs. Rosene embedded with the Czech Embassy in Washington D.C. on safety and protocol. She and Mr. Rosene could have housed the Secret Service agents on the third floor in form of bed and breakfast since the Secret Service in collaboration with the Houston Police Department were at the Center on a daily 9 am-5:30 pm basis one week before His Excellency's arrival. Every nook and cranny was excavated to warrant a safe visit for the Czech President. Then, they designed the invitations, printed them, and mailed-out invitations to a distinguished guest list of President and Chairmen of Czech Organizations in Texas plus the Members of the Czech Cultural Center Houston and other dignitaries. Mrs. Rosene selected a menu for an intimate gathering of one-hundred fifty persons who were to sit down for dinner

with President Klaus. By mid-afternoon Day 2 of answering the buzzing phone, the menu changed from formal sit-down to heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages in a mostly standup reception. In charge of contacting the press, Mrs. Rosene consulted with Beverly Maurice and her son, Robert Maurice II to publicize the event. Margaret Klecka of Dallas, Texas and the Czech Consul's wife, Clarice Snokhous of West, Texas promoted news of President Klaus' visit to the Czech Center Houston so loudly that the phones rang from 9 am until 7:30pm. Administration had to create a wait list spreadsheet since the confirmed guest list filled its places quickly. Volunteers received unexpected R.S.V.P.'s from Austin and West, and all of Texas. Administrative assistants at Czech Cultural Headquarters Houston had to respond to email

tion of hors d'oeuvres and beverages. There she jotted an alimentary list on her notepad to show to Mr. Rosene. Without hesitating, she ordered three cases of Czechvar beer, two cases of Pilsner Urquell, wine, soft drinks and water. Due to the growing number of guests, a meeting between the Chairman and Vice President resulted in the decision to order Deli po-boys, individually wrapped chocolates, and a cornichon to serve at the reception. Duties for the event coordinator included contacting the wait staff and procuring social security numbers from them for Secret Service. She also procured valet service to manage event parking. The sound system was managed by Sharon and at the same time she made signs for the bar. Under the supervision of our dynamic-duo, things seemed to be coming together. What would a productive work week be like without interruptions?



President Klaus and Mary Cullen talk Czech Art in Houston

The abounding phone calls, emails, walk-ins on-top-of the daily workload shifted our speed from fifth gear to third gear when changes had to happen in the middle of the week. We felt as though we were peddling and peddling and not going far fast. Mrs. and Mr. Rosene had to re-assess the lay-out in Prague Hall to accommodate the ever-growing 'Confirmed Guest List', and Mrs. Rosene nodded a sincere 'yes' to the Secret Service agents and Houston Police Department Safety Inspectors, assuring them that every person attending the reception would indeed be on the guest list and that we would not open our doors to anyone who wasn't on the list. Perfunctorily, out of respect for protocol, the Czech Center Headquarters didn't do anything without double checking with our new brother-in-laws, the Secret Service and Houston Police Department Inspectors. Even re-assuring the Secret Service agents that no strange packages would be handed to President Klaus. Minute detail took much longer than minutes as the last couple of days approached and the landscaping looked fabulous thanks to staunch members, Jerrydene and Rudy Kovar. All volunteers and staff spent their work day constantly answering the phone, taking messages, and questioning when to stop adding names to the guest list so that we would not get into hot water with the Fire Marshall. Having already reached full capacity of how many people could comfortably fit into Prague Hall, there were angry guests on the "Wait List" demanding to be transferred onto the "Confirmed Guest List." Mrs. Rosene felt impelled to contact the Czech Embassy on this account. A sigh bellowed throughout the administrative offices at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 3, 2007. Only the final stretch awaited and that was the day of the Czech President's tour of the Czech Center.

Lenka Facinikova added names to 'The Confirmed Guest List' while Valerie Kerschen removed names from the "Wait List." As soon as the list was complete, Lenka began to make the name badges. The invitees and hopeful invitees tied-up the phone lines and in between answering the lines, Valerie would call invitees for the names and addresses of their guests because Secret Service warned everyone that no one

would be permitted to enter the Czech Center on the day of His Excellency's stop at the Czech Cultural Center Houston unless their names and addresses had been recorded prior to the reception. Meanwhile, our Event Coordinator, Sharon Lott, headed to Sam's Club in specula-



Effe Rosene admires President Klaus' hat

tion of hors d'oeuvres and beverages. There she jotted an alimentary list on her notepad to show to Mr. Rosene. Without hesitating, she ordered three cases of Czechvar beer, two cases of Pilsner Urquell, wine, soft drinks and water. Due to the growing number of guests, a meeting between the Chairman and Vice President resulted in the decision to order Deli po-boys, individually wrapped chocolates, and a cornichon to serve at the reception. Duties for the event coordinator included contacting the wait staff and procuring social security numbers from them for Secret Service. She also procured valet service to manage event parking. The sound system was managed by Sharon and at the same time she made signs for the bar. Under the supervision of our dynamic-duo, things seemed to be coming together. What would a productive work week be like without interruptions?

The abounding phone calls, emails, walk-ins on-top-of the daily workload shifted our speed from fifth gear to third gear when changes had to happen in the middle of the week. We felt as though we were peddling and peddling and not going far fast. Mrs. and Mr. Rosene had to re-assess the lay-out in Prague Hall to accommodate the ever-growing 'Confirmed Guest List', and Mrs. Rosene nodded a sincere 'yes' to the Secret Service agents and Houston Police Department Safety Inspectors, assuring them that every person attending the reception would indeed be on the guest list and that we would not open our doors to anyone who wasn't on the list. Perfunctorily, out of respect for protocol, the Czech Center Headquarters didn't do anything without double checking with our new brother-in-laws, the Secret Service and Houston Police Department Inspectors. Even re-assuring the Secret Service agents that no strange packages would be handed to President Klaus. Minute detail took much longer than minutes as the last couple of days approached and the landscaping looked fabulous thanks to staunch members, Jerrydene and Rudy Kovar. All volunteers and staff spent their work day constantly answering the phone, taking messages, and questioning when to stop adding names to the guest list so that we would not get into hot water with the Fire Marshall. Having already reached full capacity of how many people could comfortably fit into Prague Hall, there were angry guests on the "Wait List" demanding to be transferred onto the "Confirmed Guest List." Mrs. Rosene felt impelled to contact the Czech Embassy on this account. A sigh bellowed throughout the administrative offices at 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 3, 2007. Only the final stretch awaited and that was the day of the Czech President's tour of the Czech Center.

Waking up with a smile on their faces, the Rosenes came early to execute the final touches in regards to clearing Secret Service and Houston Police Department's regulations. Mrs. Rosene had to walk a step further and clear the Czech Embassy's regulation for presidential protocol. Lenka typed, printed and placed rib-

(continued on page 13)

Czech President Vaclav Klaus Visits *(continued from page 12)*

bon on the name badges as Valerie called questionable invitees who would soon be transferred to the "Confirmed Guest List". The two ladies paired off to triple check spelling of names, phone numbers, addresses, email addresses in order to have a complete check list for Secret Service. Moving up the wrought iron and gold staircase upstairs into Prague Hall volunteers spoke to Mrs. and Mr. Rosene who stood drawing up last minute chair and pub table arrangements beside Sharon who was setting up the bar. Robert Dvorak, Allen Livanec, Elsie Pecena, Anna Schindler, Leslie Cobden, Thea Curry, Aimée Kerschen, Nancy Kerschen, Julian Ong, and Andrea Villareal deemed floating help, answered the door, sliced the deli purchased po-boys (chicken salad, tuna fish salad, pimento cheese, and salami-ham), placed the hors d'oeuvres onto the buffet tables and acted as ushers for reserved-seating guests. Designated foyer greeters registrars included The Rosene Family Team comprised of the Andersons and Pierces while Matthew and Christopher Anderson operated the elevators and took care of crowd control at behest of the Secret Service agents. Mrs. and Mr. Rosene looked forward to meeting his Excellency at Ellington Field, however, changing details left them staying at the Center to ensure a perfect welcome.

The wind blew fiercely on his arrival whilst Mrs. Rosene took President Klaus down the street to view our Baroque Palace in full gleam from the front entrance. With a 'Texas Howdy' salute from the Rosene Family Team, Mr. Klaus and Czech delegation were then taken upstairs to Prague Hall. We applauded upon introduction of President Klaus and his delegation on fanfare from Libuse as provided by Dr. Klima.

The chairman of Czech Cultural Center Houston introduced Robert Dvorak, and Vocalist Julia Foster of Moore's School of Music at University of Houston, Doctoral Candidate to play and sing the *Czech Anthem, Kde Domov Muj*, and the *Star Spangled Banner*. When the instrumental and vocal pleasure ceased, Mrs. Rosene introduced Czech Consul General of Texas Raymond Snokhous who introduced Ambassador Petr Kolar, and he then brought the Czech delegation into light. He nicely introduced President Vaclav Klaus to all of the guests. In turn, President Klaus made a few remarks about his fifty trips to the United States and his first time ever in Houston, Texas where many descendents of the Czech Republic reside. He said that he was happy to be here and had intentions of solidifying ties between the Czech Republic and United States, moreover including the southern states in his United States tour because of the cultural identity. A brief comment before handing the microphone over to Honorary Consul Raymond Snokhous so that we could prove that the best do come from Texas. Mr. Snokhous gave His Excellency a Stetson Ten-Gallon Cowboy Hat, that he donned for a few photos and Mrs. Rosene embellished the friendly Texan welcome with a gold-enameled Czech bell from the gift shop, in addition to a just published book, *The Accultura-*

tion of Czechs in Texas. Mrs. Kathy Posednik proceeded by honoring the Czech President with gifts presented from Miss Czech-Slovak U.S.A., Sarah Middleton and her court. The pageant princesses smiled throughout the reception expressing their awe of this historical moment in their young lives.

In brevity, the Czech President agreed to a Question and Answer forum. Considering the difficulty of a couple of questions posed by Shelley Sekula-Gibbs and Sister Elizabeth Reibschlaeger, the President made an 'A' and is considered by most to be a grade 'A' leader. Texas Czechs eagerly awaited the moment to mingle with the President and his delegation. Some of whom took pictures next to President Vaclav Klaus early on deemed not doable for their personal remembrances of the night. A firecracker herself, Mrs. Rosene asked the crowd if they would be interested in buying the auctioned book written by Vaclav Klaus at \$1,000 per book. Proceeds would go directly to the Capital Campaign to fund the much needed air conditioning for the third floor and expansion of offices, storage space, and a permanent library. His book, "On the Road to Democracy", sold five times at \$1,000 dollars per autographed book. It is worth its weight in gold because this man is not only President of a well-culti-

ated nation, but also an economist. In 1989 he became Minister of Finance, then co-founded the Civil Democratic Party in 1991, and went on to become Prime Minister of the Czech Republic in 1992. Congratulations Your Excellency. Closing remarks by Mrs. Rosene included acknowledging the Swedish and German Consuls present as well as a member of the mayor's administrative staff and the Center's representative City Council Member, Ada Edwards. She also noted to the president that the room contained members representative of all the Czech organizations in Texas including the Center's own Board and Honorary Board Members, all V.I.P.'s worthy of introduction but inability to do because of the president's timeline due to his grueling day of travel.

Lasting sentiments from guests and the Presidential Entourage was that the Rosenes fueled inspiration into us all. Tedious but necessary work functions to earn *savoir-faire*, and having goals in life whatever they may be unveils a sense of accomplishment. Concerning the whereabouts of President Klaus, he will be wearing his new Stetson hat to the Houston Rodeo and Livestock Show. He met with the Houston World Affairs Council at Omni Hotel on Woodway on Monday, March 5, 2007 to address the challenges of the current era.

Post Presidential Reception duties entailed its share of myriad housekeeping matters. Mrs. Rosene dealt with the "thank you for in-

cluding us" correspondence as well as the numerous phone calls from the Czech Embassy and Texas Czech Organizations. Mr. Rosene commanded the maintenance of Czech Center grounds. Press release was the task of Mrs. Rosene as well as others. The next week's Society column noted the President, "talking Czech Art" with member Mary Cullen, which notice was forward by Beverly Maurice. Lenka was great at finding publicity from the *Mlada Fronta* newspaper, *Adnes* online newspaper, and Czech news from television pertaining to President Klaus' reception at the Czech Center. The heartening recognition of the event was a thank you letter written by the Czech President to Mrs. Rosene and soon afterward she and Mr. Rosene received a thank you letter from Ambassador Kolar. A date in time, a historical event for Texas on a timeline of Texas History; it was a truly significant souvenir for me, a native Texan and world traveler.

Valerie Kerschen, Czech Center Staff



President Klaus and delegation addresses full house at the Czech Center Houston



Matthew and Christopher Anderson with Granddad Bill Rosene



HPD Officers James Sobota, Wayne Pate welcome the President



Charles and Betti Saunders and Love and Earl Beard, MD



Petr Janecka, Elfe and Bill Rosene, Lenka Janecka Facinikova, Jemylene and Rudolf Kovar

Members and Friends Dinner Celebrates Thirteenth Anniversary

If you were not here, then you should have been. The annual Members and Friends Dinner was held on Saturday, March 24, 2007. Our museum-gallery-library is home to Volunteers, Members, and Friends of the Czech Center. If you were here, then we thank you for coming to celebrate with us the vision that has in twelve years been our sweat and tears. We are grateful to each one of you who bring forth your ideas, your panache, your hands to till our shrubbery and potted plants, your caring dispositions to break through the red tape to continually expand our vision that was born February 28, 1995 in Hillje, Texas. Several of you were on the front lines fighting beside us for endorsement from the start, others of you marched with us later. Whether you aided us in the beginning of the Czech Cultural Center's development, the middle, or have just begun to see what a worthy cause this is, we are standing proud for the sake of Czech Culture and Pride.

Our evening commenced at 6 p.m. with the award-winning piece of vibrant art and literature, *The History of the Brave Czech Nation* artist's maze by Lucie Seifertova of Prague. This historical literary work won the 2003 Magnesia Litera Prize for best children's and young people's book, the Gold Ribbon Prize for Non-Fiction and Popular Educational Literature for Children (2003), and the Golden Seal for Print Design. Her recognized pop-up book revived the pop-up book in the Czech Republic. In the Czech lands centuries ago the pop-up book was the conventional pedagogical reading tool. To do this, then is to acknowledge the heritage and reinstate history of the Czech Nation employing literary elements in present day.

Lucie Seifertova's information is accurate and her cartoon characters illustrate history with tongue-in-cheek humor. In doing so, her prerogative is to impart knowledge of Czech history to the reader in an attention-grabbing manner. This mode applies to holding onto the reader's interest so that young people especially will actively pursue reading, and moreover have something to get excited about when they study their own history. Her exhibit places the person in a time travel scenario where in the debut one walks through the exhibit in the Pre-historic times up to the Modern democratic Czech society. Those of you who walked through the art maze should have learned something, it was an educational thrill. She really sought to promote our Czech heritage for inward solidarity of the Czech Republic to outward allure of giving people a reason to learn more about *The History of the Brave Czech Nation*. Its U.S. tour premiered in Washington D.C., is currently in Houston here at the Czech Center and will continue on its U.S. tour. It was our pleasure to have some 150 plus persons of you who viewed it here the night of our Members Friends dinner before we show it to our neighbors and visiting tourists.

Following the Loft Reception you descended to listen to the *Makabara* Trio in Prague Hall.

A slight detail can make the most inviting event even more so, just like the potted white Easter orchids that were rounded on the bottom with stems of rosemary placed on shimmering taupe tablecloths. No surprise was it to me, just pleasure when I walked into the hall because it looked stunning. The Czech Trio made their group name by comprising their first names: **MARIE** Vostatkova—first soprano, **KATERINA** Ulicna—second soprano, and **BARBORA** Janova—alto. Their clever idea of putting the three names together to make **MAKABARA** epitomizes the Czech people: clever and talented. An example of what talent this young group of girls possesses is their consistent voice technique leading, unflinching intonation, and based on interesting voice colors. The Makabara Trio under the direction of Marie Kozakova at the Jan Deyl Conservatory and Secondary School for the visually impaired in Prague, Czech Republic sound sensational. Kozakova passes on her artistic expression into the formation of the trio's voices by teaching St. Wenceslas choral, folk Czech music and compositions of Czech composers Zdenek Sestak, Zdenek Lukas, Jiri Doubek, and Jiri Pavlica. Makabara recurrently performs concerts at behest of Prague Municipal Library and Olga Havlova Foundation. Ema Gallova is Director of the Jan Deyl Conservatory in Prague and spoke briefly on the music school's development. Accompanied by pianist Barbora Kozakova, the Makabara Trio has acclaimed honors such as the St. Vitus Chapel in St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague Castle under the aegis of the Czech Cardinal Miloslav Vlk. At 7 p.m. the Makabara Trio led a spirited rendition of the *Star Spangled Banner*. *Kde Domov Muj & Nad Tatrou sa Blyska* harmoniously lifted the room into an enthusiastic calm. If you didn't listen to their songbird voices when they graced us with a handful of folklore songs then you should support them by purchasing a c.d. when available. These young ladies had just performed at Kennedy Center in D.C. two days prior to their arrival in Houston and their singing made our Members Friends Dinner even more prestigious. During the savory meal catered by *Culinaire*, Honorary Czech Consul General of Texas, Raymond J. Snokhous presented Dr. Tomas Klima with *The Czernin Palac Award* for Dr. Klima's perpetual counsel, support, and international relations between the two countries—in particular his organization of the Texas Czech Physicians Exchange Program associated with Prague's Charles University Medical with Houston's Texas Medical Center for orientation purposes. Some 133 physicians have visited here three months at a time and all done on private contributions. Other honorable members and friends recognized at the 2007 Annual Members Dinner by Czech Cultural Center Houston and Thelma Maresh Scholarship were: Krista Knight from Richmond, Caroline

Gottfried from Brookshire, and Sarah Pierce from Houston. All of whom indubitably deserve recognition for their achievements in community service and university scholarship. The Comenius Award (Father of Education, Teacher of Nations) given to those who disseminate knowledge was awarded to Blahoslav (Slavek) Smisovsky, Composer musician of Uhersky Ostroh, Moravia, Czech Republic. (see related article page 11)

Father Paul Chovanec and Reverend Henry Beseda said the invocation and the champagne toast spilled congratulations on the Czech Cultural Center's thirteenth year. I do not think that I was the only attendee who wished to ask the caterers for more of the red cabbage with apples and spinach salad oozing with creamy dill vinaigrette. The Yukon Gold potatoes were delicious and I heard friends at my table complimenting the chef on the braised pork in a mushroom cream cognac sauce. Nibbling on the strawberry-rhubarb butter cake with almond streusel had to be done before leaving this evening of enchantment. Gift shop volunteers articulated their opinions on the subject at hand, "We were very pleased with the evening. The vocal group was very talented and we only wish that we could have heard more." To every member and friend we raise our glasses to you for your outpouring generosity,

Na Zdravi! (To your good health).

**Valerie Kerschen (a newcomer)
and Effie M. Rosene**



Honorary Czech Consul General Raymond Snokhous presents the Czernin Palac award to Tomas Klima, MD while Effie Rosene looks on



Pam and Whitney Bank V.P.
Chuck Butler



Honorary Board member
Marta Latsch



The Makabara Ensemble from Prague

HGO Guild's Top Volunteer Believes Education Essential

"Science educates the brain and arts educate the heart. When I take the opera to the schools, some might not like it, but you never know who will. It reaches so many areas of our lives." Adelma Graham

In September 2006, Adelma Graham was awarded the Houston Grand Opera Guild's Volunteer of the Year Award. She believes that children are the future. Growing up



in Corpus Christi, Texas during the Depression, Adelma saw the value of education. Her parents, Val and Frank Chernosky, cared for their family of five with their earnings as a bookkeeper and independent contractor, respectively,

with Texas Gulf Sulpher. She earned her bachelor's of sociology and psychology and masters' degree in education from the University of Texas. Upon graduating, Adelma Graham joined the Air Force to teach with the Air Force Dependent School System.

Her love of travel took her to England, Germany, Spain, India, and Japan where she signed one year teaching contracts. She returned to Corpus Christi, but anxious to see more of the world, she flew to Turkey, Germany again, Ethiopia, and Madrid to further enhance her love of culture and teaching.

Cultural diversity played a role in her expansive teaching styles in Houston Independent School District. She taught at River Oaks Elementary School and Concord, Fairchild and Port of Houston Elementary Schools.

She plays the flute, piccolo, and piano, which ignites her passion for the Opera. Graham became a docent with the Houston Grand Opera Guild in 1992.

A charitable spirit, Graham has volunteered with the Texas Institute for the Arts in Education, the Houston Grand Opera Guild, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Houston Area Retired Teachers, and the Houston Council for World Affairs.

Ed: Excerpts from Houston Chronicle article by Valerie Sweeten. The Czech Cultural Center Houston is grateful for her membership and support, recognizing her as a role model and high-flying citizen for other members.



Charlie Waligura, Adelma Chernosky Graham, Minnie Petrussek Dining at the Czech Center

Czech Art Exhibit (continued from page 6)



Charles and Etti Saunders



Sally and David Miller, MD



Barbara and Henry Hermis



Cora Sue and Harry Mach



Effie Rosene and Stan Marek



Tomas Klima, MD



Clarence Snokhous, Robert Hindman and Beverly Maurice



Irene D'Atelio and Guillermo Leguizamon



Astrid and Gen VanDyke



Jacqueline Hamilton and Masaiko Kutrya



Sandi Ramirez and brother Alex Ramirez



Charlotte Hill, Host Roy Cullen and Stratton Hill, MD



Betty and Jess Tutor



Mary Anne and Carrington Weems



Gabriela Drot, Mary Cullen, Effie Rosene



Meredith Cullen, Delise Ward, Craig Lidge



David Rockoff



Donna and Frank Dixon At the Cullen Event



Rory and E.J. Johnson and Mom Christie Rosene Johnson



Petr Kavan, Czech Embassy the Ambassador's front man



Gabriela Drot



Drahomir Strnadel with fellow mayors from Wallachia Moravia Visit the Czech Center



Matt Anderson, Leslie Cobden, German Vice Consul, Martin Gunther



Zahava Haenosh



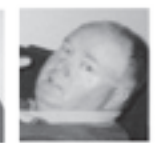
James Ermis, Bill and Effie Rosene, Rev. Jos. Hybner



Cousins Maxine Sliva Rudloff and Effie Rosene



Alice Bily



Eric Johnson



Magda Guckihomova (Bmo), Marcella Holovska (Prague), John Dolard and Linda Demaray (Houston)



Marilyn and Charles Sikora



Laveme Huml Nash and siblings

Slice of Life - The Wine Time

As the end of August approaches, vintners in South Moravia grow edgy with anticipation. After months of waiting, the time has come to pick and prune the voluptuous clusters of succulent grapes, bursting with wine-making potential, that have made the area famous.

While the vintners worry about the first indications of the quality and volume of the harvest, villages in the region are overcome with a more frivolous emotion. Almost as if a magical spell had been cast on the sleepy towns, inhabitants become lively, festive, and exuberant; this is the time of *vinobrani* - the wine festival - and everywhere the air is enlivened with cries of "Burcak!"

Burcak - that murky, burnt-orange-colored elixir more reminiscent of a hearty, freshly squeezed juice than wine - begins to flow after the first grapes have been crushed.

Sipping a glass of 1995 Modry Portugal in his cavernous *vinoteka* (wine shop) inside the Valtice chateau, local wine expert and vintner Jiri Kopecek talks about the two-fold tradition of the wine festival.

"*Vinobrani* is first and foremost the actual grape harvest, the work to be done in the vineyards," he says. "Secondly, it is a celebration that kicks off the harvest season with *burcak*."

Vintners the world over share their secrets only among a small coterie. The same is true of the makers of *burcak*, even though the actual tricks of the trade vary among growers in the region.

"Some believe that *burcak* should be warm when drunk, but this is absolutely not true," says Kopecek, who attended and once taught at the Valtice Wine School. "Adding warmth only speeds up the fermentation process and the warmer it the grape juice is, the shorter amount of time it will remain *burcak*. So the natural cellar temperature should not be altered."

Regardless of which grape is used to produce *burcak*, the alcohol content is usually about five percent - compared to a full wine's normal 11 to 12 percent. But there's a catch. "*Burcak* continues to ferment inside the body. After three or four hours of continuous drinking, its strength matches that of full wines," says Mikulov vintner Ladislav Stolarik. So don't be fooled. Many have been left to find out the curse of *burcak* the hard way, says Stolarik, waving a finger and adding a thunderous *pozor* (watch out!) to his good-natured reproach.

Only the vintner, his family and friends are allowed into the *vinny sklep* (wine cellar) during the mysterious build-up to *burcak* season, sometimes staying up all night - even two nights - waiting for the magical one-to-three-hour period when the vintner officially declares that *burcak* flows. Then, the fun starts. Those on hand usually down a good liter of the

juicy stuff once the thumbs-up is given. High in Vitamin B complex, essential minerals and sugars, *burcak* is believed by many to possess the life-giving energy of sun and soil - the secret of good health.

Local superstition has it that one should drink at least seven liters of *burcak* during the season to ensure good luck until the next harvest. Thus, while the pleasures of drinking the sweet stuff are fleeting, quaffing enough may be the key to a prosperous year.

While some difference of opinion exists as far as preparing the perfect *burcak*, most cellar men in the region agree about its place in the wine-making process. Vintner Ladislav Stolarik learned his trade through years of hands-on experience with his father, rather than attending the Valtice School. His cozy cellar-restaurant, which faces the 16th-century castle that dominates the landscape of the town of Mikulov, is carved into the side of a large limestone cliff.

"After the grapes are crushed, there is a high-fructose *most* (juice) which then ferments to *burcak* for a short time before becoming *rezak* (a mixture)," says the husky, soft-spoken Mikulov native. "The *rezak* stage continues until it becomes a full wine."

The length of time before the juice becomes a full wine "depends on the grape," adds Stolarik. It is the variety of grapes harvested that allows for the long *burcak* season, which lasts from early September until the end of October. More than 20 types of grapes are harvested in the region, and some ripen earlier than others.

"Muller Thurgau and Modry Portugal belong to the earliest bunches to be crushed," says Kopecek. "Ryzlink Vlassky, Ryzlink Rynsky and Frankovka are among the last."

Several villages in the 14,500-hectare wine region observe *vinobrani* in some way: from parades in folk costume through historical districts to outdoor concerts. The largest, best-known events are held in the towns of Znojmo, Mikulov and Valtice.

Of these, Valtice's celebration is the most low-key and clings more to the old folk traditions. According to town custom, vintners gather with the mayor at the Valtice Wine School to recognize the year's ten vineyard guards - students chosen from the local school who vow to protect the surrounding vineyards throughout the harvest. After an induction ceremony, the mayor and other town officials, on horseback, lead the vintners and new guards through the town to herald the start of the wine harvest.

While the event has recently grown in popularity, locals shrug their shoulders when asked about the official date of the first *vinobrani*. Most suspect that some type of grape-harvest celebration dates back to Roman times, when winemaking was introduced to the region. The area boasts a list of famous guests who have

visited the region over the years: the great pedagogue Comenius visited on several occasions; even Napoleon once stayed in Mikulov, where he celebrated his Austerlitz victory in 1805 with a south Moravian vintage.

In the more recent past, *vinobrani*, like other events in the country, carried the stamp of the former Communist regime. Stepan Kopicak of Mikulov remembers *vinobrani* well during the Normalization period of the 1970s - he served on the planning committee for the Mikulov event. "The official name came to be Okresni slavnost hranicarů, or the District Celebration of the Border Patrol - on account of Mikulov's location on the Czech-Austrian border." But the official decree had little impact. "Everyone still referred to it as *vinobrani*," he says.

During the *vinobrani* festivities, south Moravians, renowned for their relaxed pace of life and warm hospitality, throw open their wine cellars to neighboring provinces as well as to visitors from around Europe. Unlike fine aged wines, *burcak* is meant to be drunk almost immediately, as it goes sour after about four hours. The short shelf life and the need to throw one's glass back quickly help explain the sense of *carpe diem* that pervades the *vinobrani* celebration. The significance of the local adage "Age only matters if you are a wine" comes to life as young and old share in the festivities.

Though *burcak* is the focus of the festival, there is more to the celebration than drinking. "The atmosphere makes *vinobrani* special," says Stolarik, wielding a traditional *kostyr* (tasting pipette) full of his homemade vintage. "Old friends catch up, taste the young wine and enjoy taking part in the traditions of the event." These traditions include the dulcimer music that echoes through the narrow Mikulov streets during the festival. Ornately clad musicians belt out traditional song-and-dance numbers, frequently joined by festival goers decked out in folk costumes.

"It's a time to remember where you are from, for young and old to come together," says Jan Machander of Brno, whose dulcimer quintet performs yearly at Mikulov. He adds with a smile that the pace of the singing and dancing noticeably picks up as the day progresses and the *burcak* imbibing increases.

The Valtice celebration, organized by school officials, is free of charge, but the larger Mikulov and Znojmo festivals are organized by local firms and charge an admission fee. Znojmo, the last of the three festivals, is centered on the simple joys of sipping *burcak* among friends and enjoying the musical traditions. Most celebrants simply stroll around the streets, refilling their glasses at various *burcak* booths around town. Costumed jugglers, sword fighters and dancers on and around the main square in Znojmo create a festive, Renaissance-style extravaganza, capped off with a massive fireworks display. Last year, approximately 10,000 guests visited Mikulov and more than 30,000 celebrated in Znojmo

(continued on page 19)



Pruhonice Park

A gorgeous destination for tourists that is not at all out of reach, a mere fifteen minute bus ride from Prague. If you love long romantic walks,



soft landscapes full of leafy forests, quiet streams, and virgin meadows, Pruhonice is a must. The park's long history is tied to Pruhonice's castle, the earliest foundations of which date back to the 12th century. Throughout its history the castle has changed from the Gothic to a Renaissance Palace, then recast in the Empire style, and finally, in the Neo-

Renaissance. Set on a promontory, the castle overlooks a sloping path leading into the park, and forms a dominant portion of the skyline. In your mind's eye you can almost imagine lords and ladies in their nicest Sunday finery, promenading along the castle balustrade. Of the castle's owners over the years, the most important was arguably the Portuguese Count Ernst Emanuel Silva-Tarouca, who married into the Nostitz-Rhineck family in 1885. Silva-Tarouca was an amateur botanist most passionate about landscape design, and it was he who most greatly influenced the layout of Pruhonice Park. Under his supervision it became a veritable oasis, with rare trees, flowers, plants, and alpine cliffs all set in a painterly tableau. Ivan Stana, of the Pruhonice Park authority, explains: *"The history of Pruhonice Park is similar to that of most castle grounds: before the 19th century it most certainly would have contained an orchard as well as a beautiful garden to show to guests. But, at that time that would have meant grounds closest to the castle itself. It was when it was bought by Jan Nepomuk Nostitz-Rhineck that first steps towards enlarging the park were considered, and only under Count Silva-Tarouca that it became reality. He threw all his energy into creating what is today a 250 hectare park with 40 kilometres of paths."* Ivan Stana points out that Silva-Tarouca received advice from expert dendrologists - that is, specialists in trees and plants. Painters and the art world also had a strong influence on Silva-Tarouca's way of seeing: *"Silva-Tarouca had very refined sensibilities: he and his family were friends with musicians, artists, and above all, painters. The Count was friends, for example, with Josef Manes, who taught him to paint, one of the people who influenced his eye in designing Pruhonice Park."*



Taking care of such grounds is no easy task. Underlying principles include maintaining compositional elements

designed by its most dedicated owner. As such the park contains a series of winding paths, wooden bridges, weather-chiseled rock gardens, moss patches, and trees so tall at times the sunlight hardly filters through. A stroll on the path along the pond you will see many ducks, some preening their feathers, none of them offering the stroller the slightest bit of attention. This is a very large, large pond, around which there are trees of all different kinds, dominant evergreens, and beyond that - the castle itself.

Visiting on a weekday is recommended as the park is truly pristine. One wonders if the sheer size of it must take enormous effort to keep it balanced between the cultivated and the slightly wild. What's even more remarkable - though a definite burden - is how few full-timers are actually employed to care for the extensive grounds for there are only 15 - 20 full-timers employed here, which is far less than in the 1960s when there were a hundred, which is closer to the number of people we could use. Funds, though are limited. Another problem is that many visitors fail to respect park rules: cutting across meadows where visitors are not meant to tread. Worse, spinning mountain bikes on trails and bends that break the ground, dig up roots, and destroy rare plants. Those are definitely not welcome. The number of visitors yearly is around 100,000 and that

is bound to have an impact. And that's not all: growing satellite cities outside of Prague are also having an impact: eventually Pruhonice will become a literal oasis among new towns.

As wild animals are gradually hemmed in, they too move into the park, which doesn't necessarily have a positive effect. However: *"Pruhonice is a classic hunting ground and gamekeepers are required to keep the numbers down, especially deer, who have a negative impact eating rare young plants in the spring."*



Under the circumstances the park's keepers do an admirable job. Whatever the future may bring, Pruhonice still looks beautiful. What else should you look out for? Quite literally hundreds of different flowers, trees, and plants that include: An amazing collection of rhododendrons - some 8,000 separate plants - and different types of azaleas, irises, peonies, water lilies and much, much more. All kinds of trees of rare wood are also on view, as well as evergreens. You'll want to take the better part of the day to see it all, if you really want to get to know this park. There is even a Chinese redwood *Metasequoia*, along one of the main routes, introduced in 1949.

One down side is that visitors do not get to see the inside of the castle: housing offices for the Academy of Science's Botanical Institute: it is - unfortunately - off-limits. But there are still plenty of other things to see: in the spring and autumn the park regularly holds concerts - of both classical music and other forms to attract music fans. Pruhonice regularly ranks among the top visiting sites for both those from abroad and famous Czechs: actors, actresses, and even presidents. Neither former president Vaclav Havel, nor Vaclav Klaus, are strangers to Pruhonice: both visit fairly regularly throughout the year. At different times both stop by for short walks, to gather their thoughts, and to meet with others. Some, like Mr. Klaus' son even had his wedding there, which is also a possibility offered to visitors. You can have a ceremony under the open sky: one of the areas of financial activity where funds received go back into the park.

If you're new to Prague but want to take a day to get out of the city with a friend or loved one, you'll do well to consider Pruhonice. In the spring it's especially recommended, when its famous rhododendrons are in bloom. *Ed: There is a Castle Hotel and Conference center a part of the complex, one well worth visiting for an overnight stay.*

Members Celebration Dinner



Robert Dvorak playing vintage piano, third floor loft



Staff, Lenka, Valerie and Sharon



Margie Bubenik with sons Charles & Robbie Suttle



Lynn Chemosky Sautfar, Consul Snookhous, Dorothy Chemosky Hon. Bd.



Karen Kratochvil at the Loft Exhibit



Bmo Gallery dressed for the occasion!



Valerie Kerschen, David Hornbuckle



Daniel and Gabriela Dror



Lenka and Petr Janecka



Lindsey and Sherry Pierce

Brief Obituaries *The Czech Center loses some dear friends!*

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Thelma Burnett Maresh

May 5, 1905 – January 17, 2007

Thelma Burnett Maresh was the oldest living Past President General (1947 – 1949) of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, a founder of the Houston chapter of Edna Gladney Auxiliary, a past president of the Harris County Medical Society Auxiliary, a past president of the Women's Council of Christian Life Service and past president of the Parliamentary Club of Houston, Texas.

Mrs. Maresh had a deep passion to further education throughout Texas and established numerous scholarships to assist future generations in their pursuit of higher education. She funded scholarships at The University of Texas at Austin, The University of Houston, Texas A & M Kingsville, Houston Baptist University, Houston Community College and San Jacinto College. She also donated rare books, documents and Texiana from Dr. Maresh's extensive collections to the libraries of Rice University, The University of Texas, Houston Public Library and the SPJST Library in Temple, Texas.

She accompanied her husband, Dr. Maresh, in the early 1930's on his travels gathering information from interviews with surviving Czech pioneers of the Southwest. This information was used in collaboration for the book, which is regarded as one of the most accurate and informative accounts of the Czech people in Texas. She was an early benefactor of the Czech Cultural Center Houston, wishing to honor her late husband's heritage. Mrs. Maresh established a college scholarship program with the Czech Center for students of Czech parentage in memory of their granddaughter, Mary Karele Milligan, and a scholarship in memory of her son, Harlan R. Maresh.

Ed: One of her latest notes to the Czech Center state, "My prayers are for your success with the Czech Center. Your correspondence is always beautiful and educational." – Thelma Maresh. She helped us set our sail early on! On January 21, 2007 she was honored at the Meet the Composer Robert Dvorak Concert at the Czech Center Houston. When the Czech Cultural Center was a fledgling organization, with meager funds and only high hopes for the future, Mrs. Maresh provided a generous grant to the organization, which was the impetus and gave us the courage to pursue our mission, which became her goal also. The Center owes her our everlasting gratitude for her enthusiastic support.

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Naomi Anna Kostom Spencer

July 4, 1905 – December 20, 2006

Born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, to Emanuel Daniel Kostomlatsky and Anna Vejl Kostomlatsky. She was a member of SPJST Lodge #88 in Houston, Texas, a member of the Central Presbyterian Church in Houston,

and an Honorary Board member of Czech Cultural Center Houston. She was preceded in death by her husband Arnold Spencer, and numerous brothers and sisters. *On January 21, 2007 she was honored at the Meet the Composer Robert Dvorak Concert at the Czech Center Houston. On March 24, 2007 Robert Dvorak, board member, played the hour of Reception Opening of the Art Maze Exhibit from Prague at the Members Friends Dinner on Naomi's earlier gift to the Center, a 1929 baby grand piano!*

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Margaret Agnes Vasek Wakeman

July 11, 1929 – November 6, 2006

Margaret Agnes (nee Vasek) Wakeman, of Pinckney, Michigan was the daughter of James and Marion (nee Brown) Vasek. After graduating from Coal City high school, she earned her R.N. from Presbyterian St. Luke's in Chicago. On October 6, 1950 she married William Marta Wakeman. She later attended both Joliet Junior College and Olivet University, earning a BA in Education and a Masters Degree. She taught in both the Wilmington and Crete-Monee school districts. Mrs. Wakeman was a former member of the New Hope Presbyterian Church, Coal City, where four generations of her family attended. She and her late husband were members of the White Star Chapter of the Eastern Star, Braidwood, Illinois. Her love of travel took her to many countries and in recent years she did extensive genealogy research on her Czech, Irish and Scot heritage, as well as her late husband's Italian heritage. She enjoyed staying in touch with her many friends in Illinois after moving to Michigan through letter writing and cards. She is survived by Alice Roderick, of Pinckney, Michigan and Alan (Ann) Wakeman of Indianapolis, Indiana.

Ed: As a long distance Czech Cultural Center Houston members, we shall never forget when following heart surgery in 2005, Margaret and daughter Alice booked the Warwick Hotel nearby for overnight to attend the Czech Center's Gala. She wanted to see the project she so believed in! Next morning early they flew back to Michigan!!

+

Velma Fordtran Chernosky

August 23, 1917 – March 5, 2007

Born in Rosenberg, Texas to Edwin E. Chernosky and Wilhelmina Henrietta Jasper, Velma was a woman who reached out lovingly to all. She was an inspiration, embracing life cheerfully and completely. A graduate of San Jacinto High School in Houston she was invited to attend Rice University, but chose business college instead. In 1936 she became secretary to a young businessman William R. Archer, III, who was later to become a U.S. Congressman. She was then chosen to be executive secretary to a young oil man, W.B. (Tex) Trammell, son-in-law of W.W. Fondren, a position she held until she retired decades later. Throughout her life she gave of herself

to others by teaching Sunday School, singing in her church choir, and then she served faithfully for many years in the "Meals on Wheels" program. Among her many passions were traveling the world, attending the opera, the ballet, the theatre, and sharing life with her dear kitties.

Velma was one of 32 first cousins (*Ed: The huge Chernosky clan*) who were raised to be like sisters and brothers to one another, and she is survived by a few of them.

She is survived by daughter, Nancy Eileen Preston and son Thomas Gray Fordtran.

+

Charles Heyda

- March 17, 2007

Charles was living close to his daughter in Georgia when he passed having led an accomplished life. A 35 year resident of Houston and for over 40 years, employed with the American Can Company, rising from a tool and die maker to plant manager. He spent the first years of his career in the Chicago area, then transferred to St. Louis and, later, to Houston. His most rewarding experience with the Can Company took him to South Wales, UK, for the five years preceding his retirement. The years in Wales enabled Mr. Heyda and his wife, Ann, to travel frequently all over Europe, including Czechoslovakia, from where his ancestors came. Although Mr. Heyda's parents had emigrated to the U.S. in 1900, they maintained their ties with the old country, and Mr. Heyda was able to locate and visit many relatives during his trips there. His first language was Czech, and when he retired, he decided to relearn his native tongue, enrolling in night classes at a local high school, but became so proficient that he was soon persuaded to teach the Czech classes himself. In the mid 1980's, he began leading student trips to Czechoslovakia and forged many happy links between his students and the Czech people.

Mr. Heyda is survived by his sister, Agnes Heyda of Chicago, IL; a daughter, Marilyn Brandenburger of Decatur, GA; two sons, Charles Mark Heyda of Bethesda, MD, and Lawrence Heyda of Hillsborough, NC; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

A funeral mass was held at St. Cecilia Catholic Church, Houston, Texas. **In lieu of flowers, the family requested donations be made to the Czech Cultural Center Houston, an organization which Mr. Heyda had been an active member and supporter**

In response to a number of contributions made to the Czech Cultural Center Houston in his honor, Marilyn Brandenburger wrote, "*Dear Bill and Effie, It was so good to meet you at the funeral. Thank you for being there. I appreciate you keeping me apprised of the people who are making gifts in my Dad's honor. It feels wonderful to think of how many people remember him so fondly!*"

Surprising Nymburk

Nymburk's history goes back to the early 13th century. It was in 1275 that it was given the status of royal town by the famous Premyslid King Otakar II. Local historian Pavel Fojtik:

"Premysl Otakar II had a huge impact on the founding of new royal towns in the Czech lands - and Nymburk - at the time a growing site located on the Elbe River in the lower Elbe basin - was no exception. It had everything going for it to become a vibrant medieval town. Its fortunes grew under the Premyslids, and continued under the Luxembourgish, including King Charles IV."

As a royal town Nymburk gained the usual privileges but also responsibilities: it was a requirement to build fortifications. They once stretched around the town's historic core - though only parts survive to this day. It may surprise you to learn that Dutch and German colonists had a very marked influence on their final design.

The fortifications truly are magnificent. What sets them apart from other royal Czech towns, other medieval towns, is almost anywhere else such structures would be built of stone. Here, they are made of brick; in this, Nymburk is different.

"The Nymburk fortifications are unique for a number of reasons: first, the fact that they are made of brick is very unusual, a tradition brought by the Dutch colonists. To this day, the orange brick sets Nymburk's surviving ramparts apart. Then, Nymburk has a kilometer and a half of moats in front of the fortifications that are absolutely unique. Along with a nearby English park, the area makes for a truly beautiful walk. The fortifications are a pride of the town."

Fortifications were an important aspect of any royal town and a necessity for the protection of its inhabitants. Town burghers were a new class that could own property and travel freely; in addition Nymburk benefited from fortifications given it lay on low ground and lacked a strategic promontory or hill.

Nymburk soon prospered and played an important part on trade routes to Polonia and the north. But its good fortunes wouldn't last. It suffered a period of relative decline in the mid 1500s. Then, in the 17th century, the town - like much of Bohemia and Moravia - suffered the consequences of the political and religious conflict that came to be known as the Thirty Years' War. According to historian Pavel Fojtik "Royal towns' importance had of course peaked in the mid 1500s and

Nymburk was no different. There had been a decline but the Thirty Years' War had a much more devastating effect. Nymburk, which lay

on the path to important Imperial locations like Pardubice and Pödebrady was repeatedly surrounded and sacked. Twice, armies from Saxony and Sweden held the town at siege: once in 1631 and then again in 1634 when Nymburk was almost completely plundered and destroyed, with records saying that only eleven buildings were left standing. There was also an infamous massacre which is remembered to this day: inhabitants took refuge inside the church, but were all killed by Swedish soldiers. The side gate to the church was closed and has remained closed ever since."

It would then take the town of Nymburk almost two centuries to recover. In that, industrialization in the 19th century was instrumental.

The 1800s saw Nymburk turned into an important railway hub and the Elbe River saw the production of new factories, as well as hydro-electrical facilities that slowly but surely brought the first electric power to surrounding villages. Nymburk was on its way to becoming a modern industrial and agricultural site.

"The main impulse was through a rise in agricultural production: there were dairies with milk and cheese production, sugar refineries, and all manners of agricultural facilities. Rail arrived, playing a massive role in transportation and this helped the town prosper, in building new schools as well as a system of locks on the Elbe that facilitated transport and travel on the river."

Today, roads and highways have long overtaken transport through Nymburk though, to its detriment. Daily traffic is non-stop, and that takes away much from the town's allure cutting through the town's historic centre, only a few hundred meters away from the town's beautiful parks. Still, there are buildings and walks that are highly notable - much, Pavel Fojtik says, of which one can be proud. "Nymburk does not have the attraction of many Czech towns, for example some south Bohemian gems, and there is much that might even be seen as unattractive, such as newer buildings marring the landscape built under communism. But, there are exquisite sites to be discovered and many. At first, Nymburk was known for its Gothic architecture, but it has grown increas-

ingly recognized for modern buildings too: a number of Cubist or Functionalist houses that are truly unique. One other famous Nymburk claim-to-fame: the town's connection to the great Czech writer Bohumil Hrabal. Hrabal moved to Nymburk with his family as a five-year old child and later in his work he often reflected on life there and its local characters. "Cutting it Short" or "Postriziny" as it is known in Czech, is the first in a trio of books also including "The Town Where Time Stood Still," forming an ode to the area. Today, it's no mistake that the Nymburk brewery carries the Postriziny name. Pavel Benak is the facilities' director.

"We agreed with Mr. Hrabal in 1992 on the Postriziny name and the various beer labels were based on characters from the books. Mr. Hrabal lived here from 1919 and his step-father the caretaker at the brewery. He lived here until 1947 and he wrote a trio of novels based on his experience including Cutting it Short. Here in Nymburk it's said that it's not only from Hrabal's writings that we get a sense of his ideas, but that there is a bit of his inspiration also in the Postriziny beer to discover."

Thanks to Radio Prague

Slice of Life (continued from page 16)

over the course of the events. "No one toasts young wine until St Martin's day," says Kopecek, repeating a local proverb that has taken on a greater significance in recent years - now that he and other vintners in the region are just beginning to push the sale of young Czech wine, similar to that of young Beaujolais in France. While a French saying refers to the third Thursday of November as the start of the young wine season, St Martin's Day is always November 11th. For this reason, Kopecek has marketed his first wine of the season as Sv. Martinsky z rodu Modreho Portugalu. Kopecek says 2000 individually marked bottles were produced last year. These are mostly sold to restaurateurs around the country. While some larger wine firms have ignored the St Martin's Day start in hopes of pulling in a larger profit, Kopecek scoffs at their poor etiquette. "It is the natural end of the harvest season - not only for wine but for all agriculture," he says. As to marketing the new wine abroad, he calmly says it is just a question of time - but then again, most things are in south Moravia.

Jeffrey Brown



Konarik Siblings: Mildred Cobden, Marjorie Hromadka, Shirley Westbrook, Victor Konarik



Welcome to the Czech Cultural Center Houston

The following is a brief description for an available tour given by the Docents of the Center of the incredible Museum pieces that have been acquired by the Czech Center housed in the various rooms of the Czech Center, which rooms in themselves are worthy showpieces. As you read you will note that most were the generous donations of hundreds of donors without which we would not have this beautiful representation of Czech heritage and culture. Please come and enjoy!

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational cultural organization first envisioned on February 28, 1995, incorporated as an entity in the state of Texas on March 8, 1996. A \$4.5 million dollar capital campaign is still in progress. We have raised \$3.5 million and began construction of our 3 ½ story beautiful Baroque typical European style palace building in March 2002 with monies at the time to build and shell out completely the floors, but only finish out the first floor having purchased the land in the Museum District in 2000. A \$900,000 gift from member Louis Hanus and family in 2003 allowed us to finish out the second floor and to receive our occupancy permit with a move in on September 1, 2004. Our earliest and long time supporter was Thelma Burnett Maresh helping us set our sail in memory/honor of her late husband Dr. Henry R. Maresh who wrote the legendary book *Czech Pioneers of the Southwest*. We have been an all volunteer operated organization since inception of a much needed center to leave a legacy recognizing the people of Moravia, Bohemia, Slovakia, and Silesia in Texas, the United States and indeed the world at the same time open to the public as a museum and venues.

Our main entry includes a low-boy credenza, one of three fine antiques from palaces/castles of Europe, a rose marble topped gold/wood sculptured table holding the CCH International Community Service Award from the Czech Government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2003. The Center also received an award from the Houston Museum District Business Alliance in December 2003 for building a significant asset in the Museum District for the City of Houston and state of Texas.

The "partner" desk is a historical replication hand painted and holding a beautiful world globe made of various gemstones conveying our international status as we are closely identified with the Czech Embassy, the Slovak Embassy and the lands of our ancestry, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The pottery collection is old-world fine art authentic to Biblical times painted by a Moravian academic artist Karel Hanák in the Czech Republic. The small étagère filled with antiques is a gift from members now deceased. The foyer walls will be utilized to hold marble gold engraved names of contributors of \$5,000.00 plus commencing with the Club 200 Group a beginning endowment for the Czech Center operation.

The main hall is the Brno Art Gallery under-

written primarily by Mrs. Maresh (Brno is the second largest city in the Czech Republic). It includes a winding brass and wrought iron scrolled grand staircase. A mahogany baby grand "Klasik" Petrof Piano made in the Czech Republic for hundreds of years invites music to be played. The grand chandelier and three others are made in Kamenický Šenov, north of Prague of 35% fine Bohemian lead crystal. Other furnishings include the round hand painted table, three lighted mirrored etageres and a Viennese military officer antique desk with art from the Czech Republic including a music festival scene at Janáček Music Conservatory in Brno.

Appointments above the antique desk include a known Moravian artist Rudolf Gajdoš, a graphite art of Young Girl in Kroj (regional folk costume) by artist Antoš Frolka and Prague in needlepoint.

The Prague International gift shop is comprised of beautiful collectible gift items of Czech garnets, jewelry, enameled art-pieces, crystal and pottery from several countries especially the Czech Republic. The very top shelves hold Museum pieces depicting various glass and ceramic artifacts. A Reading Corner holds many informative books and opposite, collectible porcelain patterns all for sale. The Christmas shop makes merry all year round. Art work for sale hangs on the walls.

The Presidents Room holds three additional etageres of Czech crystal and an incredible collection of the pottery made for export between the world wars 1918 – 1939. Other etageres include folk art, dolls, blown glass, figurine collection, Smetana porcelain, a toy collection and nativity collection. While holding art pieces on easels and / or exhibits on tables, this is a meeting room or party room as all our spaces are multifunctional for rental purposes and most efficient use of space. The Presidents Room holds painting commissioned from a fine contemporary Moravian artist Jiří Grbaví of President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, he who negotiated in 1917 – 1918 to allow the Czech lands sovereignty and the second President Dr. Edvard Beneš who lived out his office term in exile in London. President Václav Havel, writer, poet who led the movement against communism to freedom in the then Czechoslovakia leading to the Velvet Revolution on November 17, 1989 also is pictured here.

Wenceslas Chapel is ecumenical, showcasing the good King Wenceslas patron of the Czech lands in the year 900. He holds the banner of the time – the two tailed lion of Bohemia; the checkered male Moravian Eagle and the gold female Moravian Eagle. The black eagle represents Silesia a country no more as it was incorporated in the Czech and Polish regions eventually. The bull and fortress represent Lusatia, located on west border of Czech and east border of Germany, also a country no more. Wenceslas Chapel also holds vari-

ous interesting artifacts. This King Wenceslas painting is a sculpture on Wenceslas Square in Prague in front of the National Museum. The chapel holds three very fine hand cut, blown crystal vases signed by the artist and dated representing Moses at the Burning Bush, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. Books on the altar table are a Czech Catholic Hymnal/Prayer book, Czech Protestant Bible and a Jewish Torah in Hebrew and English. A Jewish Menorah is also present noting the long history of Jewry in the Czech Land. Artwork includes a painting of the first Czechs on íp Hill and the Holy Spirit Dove in Rome (purchased in Brno), the Infant Jesus of Prague, Jan Hus on the Square, a Russian icon several hundred years old and the Greek Brothers Cyril and Methodius important to establishing Christianity and the Slavic language. Also present is a rendition of great, great grandfather leading the Slavs from the East to íp Hill where they established the "Hrad any" or government seat of Prague. The young lady depicts one of the known characteristics of the Czech or Slavic People the love of music. The Czech Bohemian wedding chest is an authentic antique. The hunt-board is one of the three important castle antiques donated from the Charles and Betti Saunders family. It holds pieces of Karel Hanák old-world art. The third major antique is the mirrored door hunt-board located on the gift shop wall, which holds a fine famous sculpture of a bust, a little Czech rascal "rošák" and a bust of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk.

The rest of the first floor holds one of two catering kitchens, another public facility the Comenius Library/Conference Room also rental space and a small administrative work area. There are two of four public restrooms present which contain fine art work and state of the art totally automatic fixtures.

Also on the first floor one walks out to the beautiful Honor Memorial Courtyard housing outdoor furniture, plants, sculpture and a wall of beautiful black granite gold engraved tiles. Mary's Gate gift of Mary and Frank Pohluda Jr. in black and gold wrought iron opens an artistic entrance to the street.

We take the elevator to the second floor the Prague Hall (ballroom) underwritten by the Louis Hanus family very adaptable to wedding receptions, family reunions, business meetings or for any other grand occasion (Prague is the most charming medieval city in the world and located in the Czech Republic). It too holds a walnut baby grand Petrof piano from the Czech Republic, two lovely Bohemian crystal chandeliers and a collection of beautiful Alfons Mucha artworks from the Czech Republic purchased by the contributor at a private Mucha exhibition of famed Czech tennis star Ivan Lendl. Czech artist Alfons Mucha became famous in Paris, commissioned even by American actress Sarah Bernhardt and

(continued on page 21)

numerous industrialists. He is known as the Father of the Art Nouveau Movement in late 1800's early 1900's. His magnificent floor to ceiling paintings depicting the Slavic Epic is located in an ancient castle of *Moravský Krumlov* near his home village. It is very worthy of a memorable visit. The large painting of a beach scene woman and child is a fine art donated by Brandon's Designer Furniture, which was our resource for all the contemporary fine furnishings purchased. All these furnishings are the result of pooled contributions from various members and friends. The second floor also holds a small executive dining room or Bridal changing room furnished with pieces from the estate of a deceased member. On the second floor are American, Texas, Czech and Slovak Flags reminding us of our ancestry and heritage. This floor also holds two fine restroom facilities, the women's being especially large and beautiful and a large catering kitchen. A permanent art exhibit of Moravian Antonín Vojtek is opposite the elevator.

The four hundred fine Banquet chairs and fifty plus tables are the gift of Julie Hale Kloess who also provided for the grand chandelier, a Petrof baby grand, etageres and crystal collection. Julie is our third largest contributor. Please know however, that some 6000 individuals and several organizations have given to the Czech Center Houston through almost twelve years, either through membership, Gala donations and memorial/honor tile and of course through volunteer's hours. Each and every one of those contacts helped make what the Czech Center Houston is today, a one of a kind entity in the city, in the state, in the United States – a grand palace open to the public.

The quality of wood molding and solid mahogany doors were all negotiated for the best quality for the best price throughout the building.

Our third floor at this time is only for storage but greatly needed for additional exhibit space, additional rental venue, a permanent Comenius Library, offices, storage and small catering kitchen. It awaits funding for this construction build out.

We teach the Czech language here as we have always; award three \$1000.00 scholarships annually, and present Comenius awards (the Moravian born Teacher of Nations, father of Education to the world) for educational recognition. The Houston Grand Opera books us for their Opera Night Live pre opera parties.

We provide venues for concerts, lectures, socials, weddings, interact with local museum Colleges/Universities. With the general community as a whole we interact to teach our mission of good citizenship in the world instilling pride in ones roots whatever they may be.

We hope you have enjoyed your tour with us and that you, your family, friends and employers might wish to enjoy this palatial history based building as well. Please know that this is an all volunteer organization without whom the Czech Center Houston would not be today. We hope that you or someone you know might consider volunteering with us.

Effie M. Rosene

Cedar Rapids born John Kuba presents speaker Effie Rosene to an attentive large Mikulov Hotel Management Class; Instructor Kuba and Rosene present Klima Family Cookbook to CR School's Director and Professor; The Hotel School prepared American Thanksgiving Dinner for friends Vlasic, Hrebacek, Pekarek, Fabicovic, Slichtas and Rosenes in Kuba home.

Drs. Pospisil and Hlavnovska also attended

Hlohovec Wine Village

Border Castle on Lake Hlohovec

Moravian Historian, past Comenius Awardee, 93, Hermína Drobníková

A small Villa flies the colors of Czech, U.S.A. Texas

Moravian Palava Poppies Vineyards, Lake

Monet's Givomey Garden look-a-like

The Palava Biosphere

Wine Cellars Na Kopci

Lovely Artistic Wine Cellar

The Palava landscape

Slichtas celebrate a Master's Degree

Polak brothers welcome to the May Festival

The Festival Procession

Pani Andula Sluska and Friends

Festival Procession

Another Monet-like Garden;

The Young and Beautiful

New neighbors, the Hejdas, Karin, Isabela Stuttgart born, and Mirek

Effie and Isabela dine in the Cellar.

Hlohovec new Mayor Jana Vikova

former mayor Marie Michalíková

Valtice Mayor Terezie Lvova

Uherský Ostroh Mayor presents book to the Czech Center Houston

Discovering the new Lednice Spa "Taking the waters" Iodine/Bromine

David Hornbuckle, Petr Janečka, Valerie Kerschen Martin Gunther, Almee Kerschen, Joe Stiles at Members Friends Dinner

Rosene "Czechs out" an ancient Cedar Tree

The Local Beekeeper begins Honey Center Jaromíek Styblo

Robert Dvorak's Brilliant Concert participants

Composer Dvorak and publisher, Anita Smisek

Shelley Sekula Gibbs, MD Robert Gibbs, Ted LaFesh Georgiana Repal

Violin Virtuoso David Dror practices

Czech Republic's Location Leads To Distribution Center Boom

A boom in industrial services in the Czech Republic is turning the nation's formerly provincial logistics sector into a potential pan-European distribution hub.

Attracted by the country's central location, companies including Japanese tire maker Bridgestone Corp. and the DHL Worldwide Express Inc. unit of Germany's Deutsche Post AG are setting up distribution and warehousing operations around Prague, spurring development and lifting industrial-property prices. Bridgestone uses its hub at Bor – an industrial park 100 kilometers west of Prague – to distribute tires to Germany, Austria, northern Italy, the Benelux countries, and central Europe.

DHL Worldwide Express handles toy maker Lego Group's European distribution from its 50,000-square meter warehouse 20 kilometers east of Prague built by closely held U.K. developer Parkridge. The Czech unit of Swedish construction firm Skanska Ab, which focuses on office and residential development, is building its first Czech logistics site near Prague airport. Swiss logistics company Panalpina Welttransport AG and Tech Data Corp. of the U.S. have operations in the Czech Republic.

The country's main selling point is its infrastructure, says Martin Vaclavik, industrial-property consultant at Prague's King Sturge real-estate agency. The Czech Republic has more than 55,500 kilometers of roads, according to the country's Road and Motorway Directorate. According to national government

data, Poland, which is four times the size of the Czech Republic, has just over 18,000 kilometers of national roads, expressways and motorways, while Hungary, around a fifth larger than the Czech Republic, has half as many roads.

But since the Czech Republic's entry into the European Union, the nation's transit trucking is up by more than 20% creating huge traffic jams, according to the Czech Logistics Association.

The Czech transport ministry planned 630 kilometers of new motorways by the end of 2006 and an additional 770 kilometers of expressways. It is introducing a per-kilometer electronic high-way-toll system for trucks in 2007 in a bid to ease congestion and generate more cash for continued highway construction. As much as seven billion koruna, or about \$318 million, is expected to be raised annually, compared with 840 million koruna generated in 2004 by prepaid highway stamps for trucks, said Transport Minister Milan Simonovsky.

Dutch developer Remon Vos is one of several builders keeping up with the booming demand for Czech warehousing. His latest project is the Bor industrial park, with around 160,000 square meters of warehouse space. He is a partner and chief executive of closely held development company CTP Invest SRO, which plans to invest 170 million, or \$219 million, to build three more warehouses at Bor by 2009 and has six other Czech industrial parks.

As demand for bigger parks continues, investment outlays in Czech logistics parks are increasing. A few years ago developers would invest 20 million in a typical park; today, developers are devoting as much as 50 million to each one, according to Ferdinand Hlobil, partner and director of the industrial property practice at real-estate agency Cushman & Wakefield in Prague.

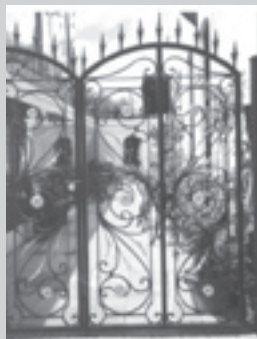
In the Czech Republic, 270,000 square meters of warehousing space was leased in 2005, up 50% from 170,000 square meters in 2004, according to Cushman & Wakefield data. Land prices have followed, rising 10% in 2005 to between 20 and 50 per square meter.

Western investors are targeting Central and Eastern Europe. Merrill Lynch & Co., via its Global Real Estate investment arm, teamed with Prague-based warehouse developer Pinnacle SRO on December as an equity partner in two Czech and Slovak logistics projects.

Two units of U.K. insurer Aviva PLC have undertaken projects in central Europe. Aviva's Morley Fund Management launched a Central European Industrial Investment Fund in September, while insurer Norwich Union Life teamed up with Parkridge to build several central European industrial parks last year.

Morley has bought several properties and is targeting 50 properties in seven countries in the region. Of the fund's total investment of 500 million, 30% will be placed in the Czech Republic,

Honor and Memorial Courtyard



We are now in the third phase of the installation of Honor and Memorial Tiles. The first phase was completed in time for the Grand Opening Festivities. The gold inscribed tiles, numbering 387 in all sizes, is a magnificent tribute to those honored and those honoring their friends or loved ones. The contributions made to etch these tiles has been a significant factor in our fundraising along with a major gift by **Keith and Norma Ashmore** applied to the construction of the courtyard and the contribution to underwrite the beautiful "Mary's Gate," by **Mrs. Frank Pokluda**. The courtyard has been furnished with a Bronze Little Mermaid sculpture fountain, a gift of **Marta**



Bill and Effie Rosene and the authentic Czech *Sto Listy* (100 leaves) Rose

Latsch, wrought iron tables and chairs, a gift of **Bessie Pekar and family** proves to be a restful area to view the tiles. A second phase added fifty-four etched tiles with the contributions being applied to the finishing of the third floor of the building, which is vitally needed. A third phase is now underway, so it is not too late to honor a friend or loved one. Celebrate your contribution to the Czech Center by honoring someone important in your life or your association with this organization. Inscribe your name or your honoree's name on a tile as a lasting and meaningful memento of thoughtfulness and support of the mission to provide a unique new site to celebrate the culture, language, scholarship and the arts of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Silesia.



A Place for Meditation

The tile sizes and contribution levels are as follows: 4" x 12" - \$250.00; 6" x 12" - \$500.00; 8" x 12" - \$750.00; 12" x 12" - \$1,000.00; 12" x 12" - \$5,000.00 and up framed in gold leaf and enjoys a prominent position on the top row.

Prospective purchasers may request a form which displays the number of letters that may be used for each denomination tile and can be found on the Czech Center's website at www.czechcenter.org by pointing to *Support your center*, point to *Honor Wall* and mail the form to us. If you do not have Internet access we would be happy to mail a form to you, or if you need assistance, please call 713-528-2060.



The History of the Brave Czech Nation - The Biggest pop-up in the World!

And a few (insignificant) world events

The Czech Cultural Center Houston, In the Museum District in cooperation with
The Embassy of the Czech Republic - Presents the unique exhibit
March 24-June 1, 2007 - Third Floor Loft - Viewing M - Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Larger groups by appointment please.

This English version of the blockbuster exhibit, visited in Europe by more than 250,000 people is a one-time opportunity for Houston and Texas communities to see the life-sized magic of Czech writer and artist Lucy Seifert. Come walk through Czech History in a full-sized-cartoon—choose your favorite historical period amid the 230-foot long and 7-foot high panels!

This larger-than-life version of the successful award-winning pop-up book by Lucy Seifert, printed in both Czech and English is not only for Czech history fans. The History of the Brave Czech Nation exhibit will thrill all those who love original, humorous, and tongue-in-cheek illustration in eye-catching color. The exhibit will be displayed in the Czech Center Houston from March 24 until June 1, 2007. On its U.S. tour, the display premiered in Washington D.C., currently in Houston, Texas where on March 24 at its private opening some 150 plus persons enjoyed this unique art maze.

This "family" book for children and adults is meant not only for persons who didn't pay attention in school (who will learn some surprising information about human history), but also for the entertainment of history buffs and nerds (the more erudite reader can enjoy the reverse pages with more detailed information and points of interest). If you unfold the book like an accordion, opening before you is a 27-foot-long landscape full of small scenes from prehistoric hunters to the present. Facts, information, and chronological tables are included for each period, and the comic texts and cartoon characters provide a humorous, ironic view of the Czech past.

The History of the Brave Czech Nation won the 2003 Magnesia Litera Prize for the best children's and young people's book, the Gold Ribbon Prize for non-fiction and Popular Educational Literature for Children (2003). The book is in English and available at Prague International Gifts at the Czech Cultural Center Houston. Call 713-528-2060 for telephone orders.

Czech African - Americans - From the archives of a Czech newspaper

In 1949 a lot of our Czech countrymen have nice farms in the USA. It is possible to find second or third generation of our people working and living on the farms. Some of them employed African - Americans who learned Czech from their employers easily. Especially when parents worked on the farms and Czech and African - American children grew together. Czech was for them like mother tongue. In Fayetteville in Texas almost everybody had Czech heritage. No wonder that all workers - practically African - Americans spoke Czech to each other. When they worked for Moravian they spoke with Moravian dialect and when they worked for people from Bohemia, their Czech had Bohemian dialect. One day a Czech professor drove through Fayetteville, he stopped on the plaza and looked for a drug store. Suddenly somebody asks him, "What are you looking for, Sir? (Co hledáte, pane?)" The professor was so surprised - a African - American stood in front of him. "Are you Czech? (Vy jste ech?)," he asked open mouthed. The African - American replied disapprovingly, "No, no, I am Moravian (Ne ne, já su Moravák)" and then he pointed to another African - American and said: "He is Czech from Bohemia. (On je Čech)"

Foreigners in the Czech Republic

More than 300,000 foreigners live in the Czech Republic "A total of 310,000 foreigners lived in the Czech Republic at the end of September 2006, including foreigners who have applied for asylum in the country," Bohdana Hola from the Czech Statistical Office (CSU) told journalists. The number of foreigners in the country has grown by almost 30,000 in the first nine months of last year. "Foreigners thus make up about 2.5 percent of the country's population," Hola said. "Although most foreigners live in Prague their number is growing in all regions", she said. "Initially, the Czech Republic was a transit country for foreigners, but it is now becoming a country of their destination. Foreigners come here to remain and they are led not only by political, but also economic reasons," CSU deputy director Stanislav Drapal said. Czech society is ageing and is gradually dying off. Fewer children have been born in the past years compared to the number of deaths. The decrease is made up by foreigners, Ukrainians are the largest group of foreigners in the Czech Republic, 98,438 of them have legally lived in the country by the end of September. Almost 98,000 foreigners have come from European Union countries. Slovaks are the third largest group of foreigners, about 56,000, followed by Vietnamese, with 39,000.

Although the number of foreigners living in the Czech Republic is slowly growing it is still low compared to other advanced EU countries. In neighboring Austria, foreigners make up one-third of the population and in Switzerland one-fifth.

Prague Hall Brno Gallery



Beautiful, Versatile, Affordable and Newest Venue in Houston! Your event may be held in the first floor Brno Gallery or spacious Prague Hall. Come see this charming very affordable site for all special occasions: Weddings, Receptions, Corporate Events, Birthdays, Private Parties, Galas, Reunions, Lectures, Seminars, Meeting Rooms and Private Dining Room.

Prague Hall and Brno Gallery offer elegance and warmth to make yours an unforgettable event!

Call to reserve your venue in our beautiful Baroque building reminiscent of European castles and palaces. In the Heart of the Museum District, south of downtown, five blocks north of the Museum of Fine Arts. In renting the facility you will be surrounded with unique antiques and objects d'art from around the world based on 2000 years of European culture.



This award winning Baroque Palace is a proud addition to Houston's Museum District.

A spacious facility, it is fast becoming known for its accommodating staff to arrange your affair from a simple reception to a full dinner service with DJ or orchestra for dancing. We

can provide all the accoutrements and amenities to support your function.

Prague Hall will seat up to 250 for a plated or buffet dinner with a dance floor. Ecumenical Wenceslas Chapel may be used for wedding vows and the first floor Brno Gallery will seat 125 for a dinner, 200 for a reception.



We can provide you with a list of licensed and approved caterers or your own is welcome with prior approval.

Open for tours 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. M - Sat.

The Czech Center Houston
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Telephone: 713-528-2060 - Fax: 713-528-2017
czech@czechcenter.org Web: www.czechcenter.org
Please call to arrange a visit for we look forward to seeing you!

Calendar of Events

Conversational Czech Language Classes for Adults. Twelve weekly sessions on Mondays 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Beginning TBA. Enjoy the challenge and have fun! Members donation of \$30.00 and Non-members \$70.00. *Comenius Library and Presidents Room.*

Beginners Children's Czech language class. Eight weekly sessions Saturday mornings 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Beginning TBA. Donation \$30.00.

Language Students are requested to pre register by calling 713-528-2060. For information contact instructors Glenn Sternes, 713-516-7721, Sternesg@HAL-PC.org or Marie Mann, 713-246-6099, cesvys@yahoo.com.

August 18, 2007, Czech Center's Thirteenth Annual Fall Charity Benefit Gala in Prague Hall, Reception and Silent Auction in Bruno Gallery. The Grand Prize Drawing, a sumptuous dinner and champagne toast will crown a festive and rewarding evening. 6:30 p.m. Prague Hall

Summer 2007 Musical Series –Noel Martin, violinist and UST professor will present a concert of Czech music of Dvorak, Smetana, Janacek with an ensemble of ten musicians. Date, time TBA. Reception follows.

September – 2007 – Annual Sts. Cyril and Methodius Slavic Festival, the longest running festival here in Houston! Date, Time, Location TBA.

October 10, 2007 - Fall 2007 Musical Series, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. Moravian Cimbalom Orchestra from Hodonin presented by CEFT, University of North Texas and Professor Thomas Sovik. Reception follows

December 6, 2007 – Saint Nicholas Day, 7:00 p.m. Annual Members and Donors Family Traditions Christmas Dinner Party. Come, enjoy Christmas Carols and Fun.

Events require RSVPs 713-528-2060 or e-mail czech@czechcenter.org
Check our website www.czechcenter.org for notice of events scheduled.

The Czech Cultural Center Houston



"When we build let us think that we build forever. Let it not be such for present delight nor for present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will think of us for. And Let us think, as we lay stone upon stone, that a time is to come when these stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as they took upon the labor and wrought substance of them, 'See this our father did for us'."

John Ruskin

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Museum • Library • Archives

Spring/Summer 2007

THE NEWS OF THE CZECH CENTER

Czech Cultural Center Houston, Texas (KULTURNI CENTRUM CESKE)

The News of The Czech Center

Czech Cultural Center Houston

In the Museum District

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Tel: 713-528-2060

Prague International Gifts: 713-528-2060

Email: czech@czechcenter.org

Webpage: <http://www.czechcenter.org>

www.houstonreceptions.org

"The Czech Cultural Center Houston belongs to all of Czech heritage, not just a few of us and everyone needs to be reminded of that. We know no one who can not give something. Everyone can give to the level of their capacity so that the Center represents all of Czech heritage."

John R. Vacek

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