



# OST THE BRIDGE

News of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library



Volume 12, Number 3 — Winter 2002

## Gail Naughton Named NCSML President



In September, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library welcomed Gail Naughton as the organization's new president and CEO. She replaces Dan

Baldwin, who led the museum for six years before leaving this past June to become the

president and CEO of the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation.

A graduate of Creighton University, Naughton was an administrator at Clarke College in Dubuque, IA for 15 years. She served as the institution's Vice President for Institutional Advancement after holding leadership positions in public relations and development. During her tenure at Clarke, she was responsible for fundraising, marketing, communications, and publications.

Naughton has traveled extensively in

the Czech Republic and Slovakia with her husband Dennis, an attorney, who in 1993 was the first Iowan to incorporate a business in the Czech Republic after the Velvet Revolution. They have three children.

"We are very happy to have Gail on board and believe she will continue to develop the NCSML's role in Czech and Slovak communities," stated NCSML board chair Gene Machacek.

Naughton was officially welcomed to the museum at the annual fall dinner on November 7.

## Milestone Agreement Signed with Czech National Museum

On November 7 the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library became the only museum in the United States to establish an agreement of mutual cooperation with the National Museum, Prague. This marks a new era of cooperation between the institutions built on several years of increasing partnership, extending from the 1997 blockbuster exhibit *1000 Years of Czech Culture* to the 2002 exhibit of illustrated books from the library of the National Museum, *Roads to Understanding*.

General Director Michal Lukeš and Director of the Department of History of the National Museum, Vera Prenislova, met with President/CEO Gail Naughton and Curator Carmen Langel to discuss opportunities for the future. Possibilities include the long-term loan of artifacts for enrichment of the *Homelands* permanent exhibit, textile conservation assistance,

visiting scholars, more frequent exchange of experts and knowledge, and the travel of exhibits between the two museums.

"This partnership is a significant landmark in the history of the NCSML and the future of the organization," commented Naughton. "The agreement encompasses the full scope of the museums' operations including collections, scholarship, expertise, exhibits, and programming. This mutually beneficial relationship will enhance the quality of the visitor experience at each of our institutions for many years to come."

The National Museum of Prague was founded in the late 1700s, and is the oldest museum in Bohemia and the most distinguished and largest museum in the Czech Republic. Today, the National Museum houses over 13 million items in departments of history, music, library, natural science, and Asian, African and American cultures in over 100 buildings.



Gail Naughton, president/CEO, Michal Lukeš, general director of the National Museum, Prague, and Gene Machacek, chair of the board of directors, signed an agreement of mutual cooperation in November.

## National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

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Dr. Peter Maraky  
*The National Museum in Bratislava*

Thank you to everyone for their gracious welcome to the NCSML family. Life has been a whirlwind since I joined the team at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library on September 9. Actually my involvement began with the Kroje Symposium the weekend before, when I attended the presentations and even joined in the parade of kroje. It was a wonderful event, attended by persons from 19 states, which opened my eyes to the excitement and interest in the Czech and Slovak heritage and folk traditions.

With a full week and a half under my belt, I went to Washington, D.C. to attend the dedication of the Tomas Garrigue Masaryk memorial. It was a unique opportunity to meet many of the people across the country who are supporters of the Czech and Slovak Republics and of the NCSML. I was fortunate to hear addresses by Czech President Vaclav Havel, former Slovak President Michal Kovac, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Slovak Ambassador Martin Butora, Astronaut Eugene Cernan, and many other prominent persons associated with the event. The reach of the museum is extraordinary. Everyone I encountered knew the NCSML and was most complimentary and appreciative of its exhibits and programming and, more than that, of its role in preserving and promoting Czech and Slovak history and culture. I was also very pleased to meet many of the embassy officials and honorary consuls who are so important to what we do. I look forward to continuing to work with them on cooperative ventures to further our missions.

Back at the museum in Cedar Rapids, I have been getting acquainted with the staff, board members, volunteers, and members of the NCSML. You are so numerous, I haven't met you all yet, but I intend to do so. Every day people share a new story or reason for supporting the museum, many with family histories going back generations. I especially have



President/CEO Gail Naughton meets with Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic Joseph T. Senko (left) and His Excellency Martin Palouš, Ambassador of the Czech Republic, at the 100th anniversary celebration of the Council of Higher Education in Oak Brook, Illinois.

enjoyed learning more about the inception of the museum and library. It is an amazing story! What has been accomplished is extraordinary! And what is ahead can be even more so. Each of you, as a member, is supporting something you believe in, and I thank you. It took an enormous effort to build what is here and it continues to take a tremendous investment to run this place year after year with the quality of programming and exhibits which make you proud. The museum and library couldn't exist without you.

As I settle into my role at the museum and library, I want you to know that I am always open to your ideas and comments. I want to be accessible to all members and to be responsive to your thoughts and concerns. We are all in this together to make the NCSML the best it can possibly be. I especially want to thank chair Gene Machacek and all the board members for such a warm welcome. Best wishes for a joyful holiday season.

Gail Naughton, *President/CEO*  
[gnaughton@ncsml.org](mailto:gnaughton@ncsml.org)

## Museum Friends and Neighbors Enjoy Colorful Events, Distinguished Guests

The museum has kept up a brisk schedule of activities throughout the year. This summer, NCSML was thrilled to hold the 1st National Bohemian, Moravian, and Slovak Folk Dance Festival. The Lipa Slovak Folk Dancers from St. Paul, MN and the Dmoaci Czech Folk Dancers from Webster, MN entertained a crowd of over



Slovak mezzo-soprano opera legend Eva Blahova and her accompanist Timothy Cheek performed at the museum in October.

200 on one of the hottest days of the summer. *Most*, a Chicago band specializing in eastern European ethnic music, provided music between sets and during large group dances.

In September, the museum welcomed speakers and attendees from around the world to *Kroje: Preserving and Uniting Cultures Through Textiles*. The two-day symposium educated and entertained nearly 100 people about the folk costumes of the Czech and Slovak Republics.

This October, we were delighted when Eva Blahová, an extraordinary mezzo-soprano Slovak opera singer, took center stage in the Grand Hall. Accompanied by the wonderful Timothy Cheek, Eva performed an impressive repertoire of Czech and Slovak folk tunes.

We also welcomed the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International's National Conference. NCSML staff members David Muhlena, Carmen Langel, and Jan Stoffer Tursi contributed to this wonderful conference.



## Glass Behind the Iron Curtain: Czech Design 1948-1978

Organized by the Corning Museum of Glass

February 23 – September 28, 2003

Members opening reception  
Saturday, February 22, 2003

## The 20th Century in Retrospect: The Decade of Turmoil 1938-1948

March 7-8, 2003

The Third Biennial Conference at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

Under Nazi dictatorship in 1938, Czechoslovakia was divided into two entities: The Bohemian & Moravian Protectorate and Slovakia. For both regions, this was a time of political and economic turmoil, as well as extreme hardship.

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library has invited scholars, historians, and authors to address topics related to Czechoslovakia's experiences preceding, during and following World War II, and events leading to the Communist takeover in 1948.

Watch your mail for registration materials. Register before February 14, 2003, for a member discount.

**The conference will include more than 15 sessions on topics including:**

- *Life under the Swastika*
- *Transition to Communism*
- *Crimes against Humanity*
- *The Freedom Fighters*
- *OSS in Slovakia*
- *World War II in Art and Film*
- *Liberation of Pilsen*
- *Dr. Edvard Benes*

**Presenters will include:**

- Dr. Pavel Cernoch
- James Downs
- Dr. James R. Felak
- Dr. Milan Hauner
- Juraj Slávik
- and many first-person accounts.

**For more information,**

go to our Web site at [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org) or contact Museum Educator Jan Stoffer Tursi at [Jan@NCSML.org](mailto:Jan@NCSML.org) or (319)362.8500.

## *Kroje* – Dress for the Dance of Life! Extended

The NCSML is pleased to announce the extension of *Kroje!* through January 19, 2003. Originally scheduled to close in October, the exhibition has received an overwhelming response from the public, warranting its extension through the holiday season.

(right) Study for *Veselanka*, painted by Joza Uprka circa 1916, is currently on loan to the NCSML from George and Beth Drost. It can be seen in *Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!* through January 19, 2003.

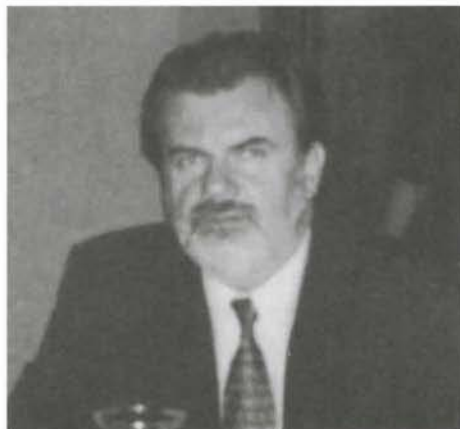


## NCSML Opens Two Exhibitions

*Bohemian Women from West River: Mel Spinar's Paintings of Their Myths and Legends* opened September 20, 2002 in the NCSML's south hall gallery. Inspired by oral history that was passed on to him from conversations with his parents and several other women, Spinar's paintings depict Bohemian holidays, religion, landscape, and everyday life as they were remembered in West River, South Dakota. *Bohemian Women from West River* can be viewed at the NCSML through January 5, 2003. A catalog for this exhibition is also available in the museum store.



*Architects: Urban Lizon Králik Fischer Bogár* opened at the NCSML on October 10, 2002. This team of five Slovak architects was formed in 1995 with the aim of creating the design for the Embassy of the Slovak Republic's new chancery in Washington, D.C. The exhibition includes images from the completed chancery, as well as examples of other Slovak architecture representing work by each of the team members. *Architects* can be viewed at the NCSML through March 16, 2003.



(above) Bohemian women and their environment are on display in the museum's south hall through the paintings of Mel Spinar.

(left) Igor Otčenáš, First Secretary at the Embassy of the Slovak Republic, attended the October 10th opening reception for *Architects: Urban Lizon Králik Fischer Bogár*.

## NCSML Acquires Important Archival Collection

In September 2002 the NCSML acquired the institutional archives, books and artifacts of the Czechoslovak National Council of America (CNCA). Headquartered in Chicago, the CNCA has had a long history of supporting the freedom of Czechs and Slovaks from the Austro-Hungarian, Nazi, and Communist regimes.

During the First World War, two Czech-American groups and one Slovak-American group had similar goals: a nation of Czechs and Slovaks independent of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The CNCA was established in 1918 to coordinate the fundraising efforts and political advocacy of these groups. After the war, the CNCA focused more on cultural activities but was reconstituted upon the Nazi dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

During the Second World War, the CNCA established a press bureau and published a weekly bulletin, *News Flashes from Czechoslovakia Under Nazi Domination*, as well as a number of books about the Nazi occupation. The CNCA also worked closely with the exiled Czechoslovak government in London. The CNCA raised nearly \$2.3 million and donated three million pounds of clothing for war relief.

The CNCA took a strong anti-Communist stance throughout the existence of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Through its Czech- and English-language publications, political lobbying, and public protests, the CNCA informed Americans about the political, social, and economic realities in Communist Czechoslovakia. The CNCA also provided aid to Czechoslovak

political refugees, especially after the Communist coup in 1948 and the Soviet invasion in 1968.

With the fall of the Communist regime in 1989, the CNCA shifted its focus from an anti-Communist stance to one in support of a free and democratic Czechoslovakia and its successor states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The CNCA also gave a total of \$25,000 in support of the NCSML's capital campaign.

Today, the CNCA is on the verge of dissolution. The current leadership of the CNCA voted this summer to give its institutional records to the NCSML in order to preserve and make them accessible for scholarly research. The NCSML is committed to maintaining these archives and has already sorted and arranged them into archival files and boxes. An index of the contents of the archives is in process and will be posted to the NCSML's Web site when completed.

## NCSML Acquisitions Reunite the Bureš Family

One rewarding aspect of working at the NCSML is the opportunity to meet people from around the country and examine their family heirlooms. Occasionally, the stories surrounding these pieces sound familiar, warranting a second look at the history of other possibly related donations.

That was the case this fall when a donation by John and Georgiana Knurr of Maryville, Tennessee arrived. The siblings donated a wooden doll cradle given to their mother Helen in 1883. John also donated a child's miniature wheelbarrow made for him by his grandfather, John Bureš, in 1916. The donation included a photograph of their great uncle, Josef Bureš, and three handmade wooden spoons.

The photograph and spoons looked familiar. A search of the museum's data-

base revealed that Mr. and Mrs. George Swab had recently donated several hand-crafted spoons and a photograph of Josef Bureš, Mr. Swab's grandfather. Librarian Dave Muhlena recalled that yet another family member,

Mrs. Marjorie Stone, had recently donated a 1561 hymnal to the museum. The hymnal was handed down in her family from immigrant George (Jiří) Bureš II.

A book on the Bureš family genealogy in the NCSML library revealed that all three donations are from descendants of George Bureš II, who immigrated to the United States in 1861. John, Josef, and George III were his sons.

It is fitting that the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library not only preserves the tangible aspects of Czech and Slovak culture, but also connects extended families by reuniting their stories and heirlooms.

This photo of Josef Bureš, donated to the museum by his descendants, helped unite his extended immigrant family.



## Brighten Your Home – or Your Friend’s Home – with Ornaments and Other Treasures from the Czech Republic and Slovakia



These charmingly detailed characters by Pipka Collectibles are among the new items on sale in the Museum Store.

Each year the museum store receives a new shipment of hand-blown glass Christmas tree ornaments from the Czech Republic. Each year the ornaments get more beautiful and this year is no exception. The bright reds of Santa Claus, the shiny white snowmen, the red and white candy canes, the frosted windows of the church, teddy bears, clowns, stars, balls of all sizes and colors and more: All are available to decorate your Christmas tree. Do you need a new hand-blown glass tree topper? Many sizes and colors are available.

Ornaments also make wonderful gifts that are treasured each year by friends or family members who hang them on their own tree. If you would like to get your ornaments personalized, Marj Nejd, a local Czech folk artist, will put the name of the person and the year on the ornament for \$1.00. Marj will be at the museum November 29 and 30 and December 7 and 14 personalizing ornaments. If you are unable to come to the museum, we will gladly ship them to you.

### Gifts for Children

The Museum Store has a very nice selection of children’s wooden toys, books, spinning tops, marionettes, push-up cone puppets, puppet theatre and more. Do you remember the small wooden press-up toys such as the clown? You could make him dance and bend in all kinds of directions with just a push on the bottom of the toy. The clown and many other animals are available for \$9.50.

### More gift ideas

Other great Christmas gift ideas are cornhusk dolls and bookmarks; Czech, Slovak, and USA flags in all sizes; Czech glass-bead rosaries; wooden jewelry from Slovakia and garnet and Czech glass-bead jewelry; hand-decorated eggs and egg stands; MODRA ceramic ware from Slovakia and Western Bohemia ceramic ware from the Czech Republic; classical and Christmas music; glassware and more.

A new item in the Museum Store is the hand-blown glass animals, clowns and paper weights. These charming little characters are sure to please someone on Christmas morning. The selection includes a bear, turtle, fish, bull, pig, cow, frog, rooster, penguin, mole, swan, owl, elephant, bird, clown, and paperweights. They range in price from \$20.00 to \$30.00.

### New Books

- *Czeching My Roots*, by Leona Sprinclova Choy \$19.95  
The story of a Czech girl, born during the Depression in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, who didn’t want to be Czech.
- *This is Your Life - Write It!*, by Leona Sprinclova Choy \$9.95  
A how-to-do-it book for writing memoirs.

- *Slovak Tales For Young and Old*, by Pavol Dobsinsky in English and Slovak \$30.00  
The 15 Slovak folk fairy tales contained in this collection are a genuine treasure for anyone interested in the documentation of culture, or simply in the pure pleasure of reading a good story.
- *Slovak Biographical Dictionary*, by Augustin Matovcik et al. \$35.00  
Contains short biographical sketches with illustrations of approximately 1,000 prominent Slovaks.
- *In Search of Homo Sapiens*, by Pavol Hudik \$30.00  
Twenty-five contemporary Slovak short stories. A welcome contribution to current literature and social commentary.
- *Rebirth of Freedom*, by Michael Sumichrast \$16.95  
Escaping by boat in the middle of the night across the Danube from Communist-held Czechoslovakia, Michael Sumichrast had become a refugee. This is a story about fighting the Nazis, fleeing the communists and enduring a seven-year wait to emigrate to the United States.
- *The Czechoslovak Cookbook*, by Joza Brizova \$15.00  
Czechoslovakia’s best-selling cookbook adapted for American kitchens. Includes recipes for authentic dishes like Goulash, Apple Strudel, and Pischinger Torte.

For more information on the store merchandise and shipping costs, please call Shirley Rosencrans or Pat Kent at (319)362-8500. We accept checks or money orders in USD, Visa, MasterCard and Discover card.

Happy Holidays!

## Top 10 Reasons for you to support The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library with your membership, no matter where you live

1. You'll continue to receive *Slovo*, our award-winning twice-yearly journal. The upcoming issue examines the tumultuous years 1938-1948. In it, you'll find a son's memories of a distinguished Slovak statesman who was twice exiled, an interview with an American liberator of Pilsen, and an emotional letter from a young Czech woman to an American GI.

2. You'll keep receiving the newsletter, *MOST*, with updates on the ways your membership investment supports preservation of museum collections, installation of educational exhibits, and creation of new programs.

3. You'll continue to enjoy a 10-15 percent discount on fantastic Czech and Slovak imports, whether you complete your museum store purchases in person, by telephone, by mail, or via e-mail to [GiftStore@NCSML.org](mailto:GiftStore@NCSML.org).

4. You'll enjoy free enrollment in the national Time Travelers program, with visitor benefits at more than 100 museums in 42 states. Don't forget your NCSML card wherever you travel in the U.S.! [For a complete list of participating museums, see our Web site at [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org).]

5. You'll continue to be invited to museum events, conferences, lectures and exhibits. Increasingly, NCSML members from all over the U.S. come to Cedar Rapids to explore their interest in Czech & Slovak heritage. The September Kroje Symposium welcomed attendees from 19 states!

6. If you are able to visit us in centrally located Iowa, you'll receive free admission to all exhibits, including our permanent exhibits, *Homelands: The Story of the Czech & Slovak People*, and the 19th Century Immigrant Home; and, through January 19, 2003, *Kroje—Dress for the Dance of Life!* Coming soon: *Glass Behind the Iron Curtain: Czech Design 1948-1978*, in 2003; *Liberation! World War I and the Formation of Czechoslovakia*, in 2003-04, and *The Music Makers*, in 2004.

Direct benefits aside, there are four more reasons to maintain your membership in the NCSML.

7. You know the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is the largest, most professional U.S. institution working today to preserve and teach about your precious Czech and Slovak heritage.

8. You are convinced that this work is more important than ever in our modern world.

9. You believe that the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library must continue to exist.

10. You understand that the NCSML is empowered only through your support and that of almost 2000 other members like you. *Your membership dollars are your 'vote' for the NCSML's continued work for the preservation of our past and the enlightenment of our future. Please vote 'yes!' again this year.*

### Visit the NCSML Web site

Did you know that you can visit the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Web site to:

- preview the newest exhibit?
- read the latest press release?
- renew your membership?
- check the program schedule?

Visit NCSML online at  
[www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Permanent exhibit: *Homelands: The Story of the Czech & Slovak People.*** This exhibit tells the story of the Czech and Slovak people from the days of Slavic tribes wandering into Central Europe through the Velvet Divorce in 1993.

*Homelands* features art, a 1935 Czech-made motorcycle, folk costumes, military artifacts, and much more.

**Temporary exhibit: *Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!*** For centuries, Czech and Slovak folk costumes have enchanted the world with their colorful designs and intricate motifs. Explore their beauty as well as their significance to politics, geography, and nationalism in this smashing exhibit, the first in the U.S. to address the role of kroje in the lives of Americans of Czech and Slovak descent. Open now to January 19, 2003.

**Temporary exhibit: *Bohemian Women from West River: Mel Spinar's Paintings of Their Myths and Legends*** explores the folklore of the former Czechoslovakia. Open through January 5, 2003.

**Temporary exhibit: *Architects: Urban Lizon Králik Fischer Bogár.*** These five architects designed the Slovak chancellery, the building housing the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Washington, D.C. This photographic exhibition is on loan from the Embassy of the Slovak Republic. Open through March 16, 2003.

**December 7, 2002: Svatý Mikuláš (St. Nicholas Day).** This annual event features an afternoon puppet show performed by the Eulenspiegel Puppet Theatre Company. Meet Sv. Mikuláš, the angel, and the devil as they wend their way up and down Czech Village to the NCSML. Xavier

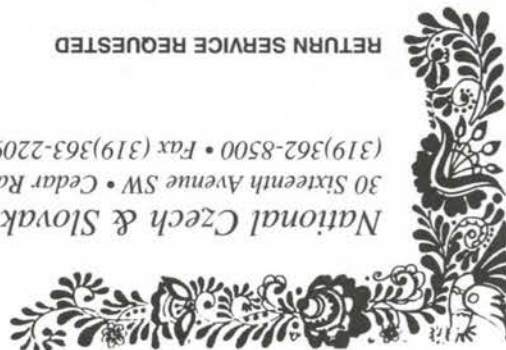
High School Voice Choir will perform Czech Christmas Carols from 12:15 – 12:45. This entertaining event will really get you into the holiday spirit. Call Jan at (319) 362-8500 or consult the web site at [www.NCSML.org](http://www.NCSML.org) to confirm the schedule and times.

**December 14, 2002: Museum Guild 4th Annual Cookie Walk.** This popular holiday event allows visitors the opportunity to stock up on yummy Christmas goodies. Opens at 10:00 a.m. Grand Hall. The event is organized and sponsored by the Museum Guild of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

**March 7 – 8, 2003: Czech and Slovak History and Culture Conference: "20th Century in Retrospect: The Decade of Turmoil, 1938 – 1948."**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library  
30 Sixteenth Avenue SW • Cedar Rapids, Iowa USA 52404-5904  
(319)362-8500 • Fax (319)363-2209



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