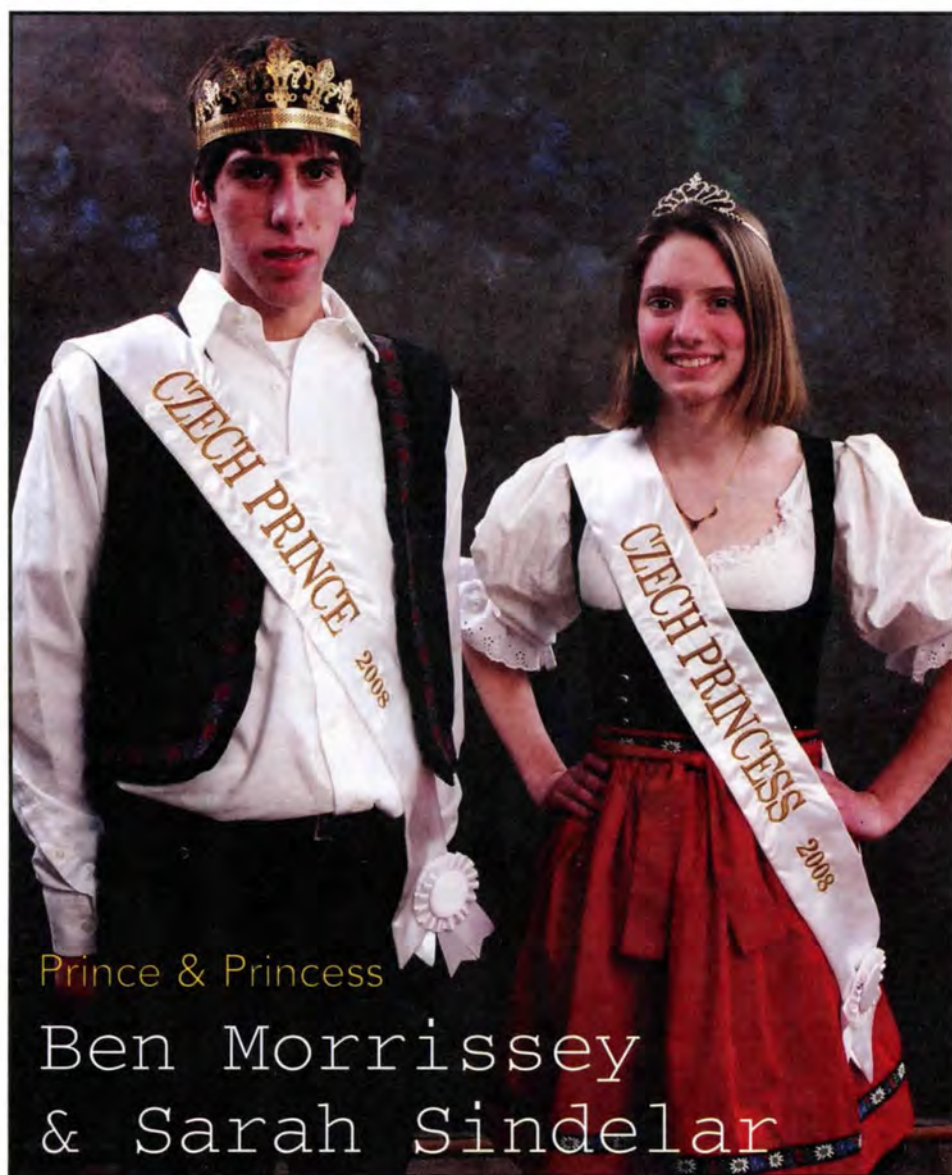


OUR CZECH HERITAGE
Náše České Dědictví



M.K. Nežil



Prince & Princess

Ben Morrissey
& Sarah Sindelar

CZECH HERITAGE FOUNDATION, INC.
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Nase Ceske Deditvni

Subscriptions for Our Czech Heritage are not sold. Members of Czech Heritage Foundation receive the newsletter free of charge. Contributions may be sent anytime. Dues, ranging from \$5 to \$1,000 annually, are renewable on January 1st of each year and expire on December 31. Dues received in September apply to the following year for new members.

Send Us Your Stories

We hope you like our new look! Our local "National Treasure" Marj Nejd captures the true meaning of Czech Heritage with each brush stroke. For our new cover and back page, to Marj we are forever grateful. Please share your copy with a friend or relative, or better yet send in a gift membership in their name. How important is your heritage to you?

President's Message

Czech people, Czech prestige, and the Czech "Pride" that transforms your appreciation of Czech Heritage are growing. At the close of 2007, our "Two Tailed Lions 'Pride'" membership stood at nearly 500. Within less than 47 days, 50 new



members enrolled. Let's keep plugging along as we re-establish the membership level of 1200 that Czech Heritage Foundation experienced in the late 80s. If each one of us enrolled only one new member, we would be back at that level in no time.

Our brother organization, the Czech Village Association, has asked Czech Heritage Fdn. and St. Wenceslaus Church to combine efforts to present a new and expanded offering for Houby Days to be held May 16, 17 and 18. St. Wenceslaus Church will be the site for the Egg and Houby Breakfast, complete with kolac, and for those longing for a traditional pork supper with saurkraut and dumplings, join us in the evening. With the larger venue, it's expected to be even greater than before. Look for the article titled Breakfast With The Saints, giving details later in the newsletter.

And remember, to keep in touch log on to www.czechheritagefoundation.org

Thank you for your continued support.

Leonard Pfeifer

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Czech Youth Ensemble "Svetlusky"

Svetlusky is a youth ensemble that was formed very recently in Cedar Rapids to perform Czech, Moravian, and Slovak instrumental folk music, folk songs, and folk dances. Their focus is on the older folk culture before the advent of modern brass bands. Svetlusky, which translates as 'fireflies', was organized by me in the Fall of 2007. The ensemble is independent of any local Czech organization, and practices in my private dance studio. But credit must be given to Sokol Cedar Rapids for conducting dance classes where the participants enjoyed dancing together and learned that they had the musical skills for such an ensemble.

The ensemble currently consists of four girls and four boys, ages 9 to 17. Their debut performance was on December 1, 2007, at the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library.



They performed using only live music, no recorded music, just like the groups that currently perform similar material in the old country. The young musicians started the program by playing four Czech Christmas tunes. I joined them on the accordion as one young couple danced a *cardá*. Then the young musicians put away their instru-

ments so they could dance and sing accompanied by accordion music. As the group expands, the goal is for youth dancers and singers to be accompanied exclusively by youth musicians.

Some of you remember the day of the ensemble's debut as the day of the ice storm. At the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library it was the celebration of *Den Svatého Mikuláše* (St. Nicholas Day). Some groups cancelled, so Svetlusky and *Svaty Mikuláš* accompanied by an angel and the devil were the only entertainment for the day, and all were dressed in their colorful costumes.

Typical instrumentation for the older music is violins, clarinets, viola, and bass. Miraculously these are the instruments played by six of the participating youth, so the ensemble is about two or three years ahead of what I had planned. Some individuals have played these instruments less than a year, but they are really working hard to develop their skills. Other instruments frequently included in ensembles in the old country are flutes, whistles (penny whistle or recorder), bagpipes, or a *cimbál* (hammered dulcimer).

The next performance for Svetlusky is being planned for *Houby Days*.

Membership in the ensemble is by invitation only, ages 9 through high school, and requires at least two of the following talents: sing, dance, or ability to play an instrument, preferably one of those mentioned above. Anyone interested in being considered for acceptance into the ensemble may request an audition by contacting me at

I am willing to help young musicians develop their skills if they are not yet quite ready.

Donna Merkle

Pork Supper Returns To Celebrate Houby Days!

The Pork and Dumpling Supper at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church returns after rave reviews. Enjoy traditional Czech-style pork loin, dumplings, sauerkraut, fruit, vegetable, kolache, rye bread, and a beverage. 5 - 7 p.m. Saturday, May 18th, St. Wenceslaus School Gym. Tickets are \$10 at the door; \$9 in advance; 12 and under \$4.50. Tickets are available in Czech Village. See your favorite merchant today or call 319-247-6300!

What's New on the Avenue? Maria's Tea Room



Kuncl Mall in Czech Village, 59 - 16th Avenue SW, is best known as the home of Joens Brothers Interiors (residential and commercial flooring experts). In January, George Joens with the help of his able assistant Nancy Schmuecker, opened Maria's Tea Room in the mall in Suite 2, named after his babi, Marie Kuncl.

Marie, her husband Vaclav, and four children arrived in the United States from the "old country" in 1905. Three more children were born here. Because of her large family, Marie's cooking skills were legendary. Her recipes are still being used, passed down onto fourth, fifth and sixth generations.

With a simple, yet elegant menu, Maria's offers a great new alternative for lunch, and can accommodate single parties or groups of 25 or more (larger groups should call ahead and reserve space). At Maria's you'll enjoy home-made soup, sandwiches, salad and desserts that can't be equaled. Stop in for lunch or a quick cup of coffee. Hours

currently are Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., but look for them to expand their hours and their menu as warmer weather comes around.



Pictured is Nancy and George displaying Maria's famous dessert tray. The sign overhead says "Wine, women and song will remove all anger"

Looking for a great Mothers or Fathers Day gift? After lunch, have your waitress show you the wide selection of imported Moravian wines you may purchase buy the bottle to go.

There is a renaissance going on in Czech Village. New merchants have come on the scene and there is a resurgence of growth on the Avenue that hasn't been seen for a while.

Watch for additional stories in future issues of Nase Ceske Dedictvi, and watch for their new website in a few short weeks - CzechVillageCedarRapids.com

Breakfast With The Saints



Join Czech Heritage Foundation, St. Wenceslaus Church and Czech Village Assoc. in celebrating our old world heritage by enjoying Breakfast With The Saints under the watchful eye of the gargoyle. Did you know this Czech parish established in 1874, had four steeple gargoyles embellish the church built in 1904?

The excitement of this new location is an opportunity to showcase the legacy left by the first generation of Czech immigrants to Iowa. Tours will be offered throughout Houby Days (see schedule on enclosed poster) of this magnificent church and grounds. You will be amazed at the newly dedicated statue of St. Ludmila teaching her six year old grandson, the future King Wenceslaus of Bohemia to read and write, which adorns the church park (see depiction on this issue's back cover). The new location makes this year's Houby Days breakfast a real experience for embracing our old world Czech heritage. So mark your calendar for a Breakfast With The Saints under the watchful eye of the gargoyle.

Leonard Pfeifer

Volunteer Extraordinaire

Congratulations to Czech Heritage Fdn. Secretary, Joyce Netolicky who was named National Fraternal Congress of America (NFCA) Fraternalist of the Week for December 10, 2007. Last summer, Joyce received the CSA Fraternalist of the Year Award at their 71st Annual Congress held in Cedar Rapids. Joyce works hard for this organization and many others and is truly deserving of the accolades. Congratulations Joyce! – Marj Nejd

Reprinted from CSA Fraternal Life - Prokop Velky #137, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Joyce Netolicky, a 46-year member of CSA Fraternal Life, joined at the time she married her husband, Arlo. She is an active member of Lodge #137 and as a delegate, was involved in scheduling the 2007 CSA Get-Together in Cedar Rapids. She served as the meeting's secretary, and was involved in the accommodations, menu, activities, registration and hospitality-room planning.

Joyce is an active member of her church, working in the church nursery, the senior luncheons, coffee hours and funeral luncheons.

Her other community activities are centered on her Czech background. She is a member of the Czech Heritage Foundation of Cedar Rapids, volunteering as its secretary, the Prince and Princess Contest, the newsletter creation and distribution, the St. Joseph's Day Dance and parade participation. She was involved in the Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa session, gift bags for participants and other program, which raises funds to send student ambassadors to the Czech Republic. She also is a member of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and volunteers many hours for the museum store, information, kiosk, exhibit guide services and cooking demonstrations.

This year, Joyce was quite involved in organizing the Czech booth at the Ethnic Festival in Green Square Park, coordinating the participation of several Czech congregations in the displays and sales booth.

Her fellow lodge members say that Joyce is a friendly, hard worker, who goes out of her way to make sure things are done and to also make it fun for everyone. She does not think of herself, but is always thinking of others.

Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Pageant

The Czech Heritage Foundation in Cedar Rapids, Iowa will again sponsor the seventh annual Miss Czech Slovak Iowa pageant. It will be held in conjunction with the Houby Days celebration in Czech Village on May 16, 17, & 18. The contest will take place on Saturday May 17, 2008.

We are looking for young women ages 18 to 26, single and attending a high school, college, university, trade or business school, be partial Czech, Slovak, Moravian or Silesian and appear in an authentic or Americanized costume. Contestants participate in interviews, costume modeling, talent contest, luncheon guests, and ride in the parade. She will be accompanied by a Little Sister.

Miss Czech Slovak Iowa winners will receive a crown, \$500 scholarship, flowers, sash, and gifts. Her entry fee will be paid to the national competition in Wilber, Nebraska, the first week end in August. All contestants will receive flowers and gifts.

National winners in the Nebraska pageant win a \$1500, \$2000 toward a trip to the Czech or Slovak Republic, a \$250

cash scholarship, crown, trophy, and flowers.

Girls in the Little Sister program ages 6 to 14 are selected to accompany each contestant for the days activities. They receive flowers and gifts.

Iowa has many Czech communities and girls are encouraged to enter. Winners will represent Iowa by attending various activities during the years official representative of her Czech and Slovak heritage and culture. Iowa girls who have won in the past are Katie Ziskovsky, Amanda DeHoedt, Beth Struzynski, Rachel Lehmann, and Casey Dvorak. Lisa Volesky and Stasia Krievanek both went on to become national winners in Nebraska

Potential candidates and Little Sisters wanting more info or entry forms may contact Adeline Volesky, or the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids.

More at www.czechheritagefoundation.org

Adeline Volesky

Homestay Ambassadors Selected

Three exceptional students were selected as Ambassadors for this summer's Czech Heritage Homestay Program. Each will spend a month with a host family in or near Prague, immersed in the culture and lifestyle of their family's ancestral homeland.



Hello, my name is **Libby Fuller** and I am a senior at West Branch High School.

For the past four years I have been very active, both in my school and in my community. It seems as though each season of the year, I focus on one main aspect of my life. This past summer, it was volunteering. Miracles in Motion, an organization that helps the physically challenged through the use of horses, was the main group I participated with. This was especially significant to me because of the interest I have had in horses for the past nine years. I have taken riding lessons from a friend who owns a horse, and attend monthly horse shows in Cedar Rapids. A mission trip to New Orleans with members of my church, was my other important summer project.

Before summer was truly over, I switched to Cross Country. My school is too small to have their own team, so we participate in a sharing-agreement with City High School. I have been running for all four years, so it was really sad to know I won't ever be spending another afternoon all sweaty with the friends I have made. Oh wait...

Cross Country continued into the school year where I started as the Editor-in-Chief of our high school's newspaper. This has been both extremely enjoyable and very fulfilling every time I see a giant pile of our freshly-printed issues. Sometimes during the school year, usually after Cross Country is over, I have time to also help with our Drama Club's productions. Right now, we are auditioning for our spring musical. I'm trying out for a smaller role, and then I'll also help the director (most likely with costumes, makeup, backstage work, or all three).

Along with general homework and the musical, I have also recently added another way to keep myself busy. At the very beginning of the year, I began working at a local restaurant as a waitress. The owners of the restaurant are extremely friendly and I am learning valuable skills while earning money. Thanks Czech Heritage for a great learning experience. – Libby Fuller



Hi! My name is **Amy Wanek** and I am a senior at North Cedar Community High School in Stanwood. I have been on the honor roll all four years of high school, and am very involved with my academics. I have been co-editor-in-chief

of my school's newspaper for two years now, and was a writer for a year before that. I also love participating in North Cedar's drama department and have been a sound technician for the past four years, and this year I was the Sound Crew Head and an actor with a solo too! I have been very involved in choir and band, participating in several honor choirs, marching band and pep band. I have also attended the annual Xavier Round-Table Debates twice, a gathering of students from around the world to discuss current events and our different cultures.

In my spare time I enjoy reading up on current events, especially politics, and working with animals.

I am very thankful for the opportunity that you have presented to me in the Czech Homestay Program. I look forward to being an Ambassador, and will try my best to represent you well. – Amy Wanek



Hello. My name is **Alyssa Quinn** and I am currently a junior at Prairie High School. Being involved in my community, and with my peers is very important to me. I believe it's crucial to explore your surroundings and to learn more about unfamiliar areas. The activities that I am involved in, inside and outside of school, reflect this idea.

As a student, I am strongly involved in the student council as the class president. I am also on the student/advisory board, which is a group of students and administrators who discuss issues within our school. I'm involved with the freshmen mentor program, a member of the speech team, and cross country team. Most of my time is dedicated to the creation of a new organization I am establishing at school, called Project Be. The idea is to "be the change you wish to see in the world" by volunteering in your community and by creating a "safe place" for all students to feel welcome. In addition to all of my activities, I enjoy attending as many school events as possible, supporting my peers and all of their talents.

(continued on page 6)

Keeping Old World Traditions Alive

For generations, Czech women would congregate around a kitchen table for "feather stripping parties" to gather mounds of feathers pulled from the quills. The down that wasn't used immediately was kept and passed down through the years as a cherished commodity. The fewer the quills, the more precious the down.



In February, 1957, Czech women gather in Pauline Horacek's kitchen for a feather stripping party. From left to right: Anna Tichy and her daughter - Mary, Mrs. Horacek's daughter - Pauline Jasa, Mrs. Horacek and Marie Stejskal

The treasured feather pillows and comforters made from either ducks or geese, are also passed down from generation to generation, keeping this time honored tradition alive. Regardless of where you live, it's a safe bet that Rose Marie "Cookie" Vanous, owner and operator of Czech Feather and Down Company in Czech Village, or one of the previous owners of Griffith Feather & Mattress Company, (fore-runner of the present operation), either made it, or refurbished it.

More than 120 years ago, Susan Griffith started a business along the Cedar River on First Street NW. She left no heirs and the business died out in the 1950s. Vera Vanous and her husband Ed, bought investment property on Ellis Blvd NW in 1958. Equipment for the dormant feather business had been abandoned in one of the buildings on the site. Vera, an accomplished seamstress, seized the opportunity to revitalize the time-honored tradition and ran the company for the next 22 years.

To preserve this nearly lost Czech art, Vera, Cookie's aunt, sold the operation to Cookie and her daughter and son-in-law, Dawn and Rob Schorg, in 1990. They renamed the business, and moved it to its present location in Czech Village. With full time jobs, the young couple couldn't devote the time necessary to maintain the labor intensive craft, so for Cookie, it's become a full time job and then some. Thanks to 100 years of word-of-mouth and lately, the internet, Czech Feather & Down Products are sold worldwide.

Each hand-crafted work of art, made on the Avenue, is special. Cookie takes great pride in the fact that her family is doing their part to honor their Czech heritage by keeping the craft alive. It's evident that this labor of love, also takes skill and patience to clean the feathers, prepare them for stuffing, and then there's the art of sewing the new ticking.

"Even after all these years in the business," Cookie says, "I still get excited when I think how some of the pillows and comforters that cross our threshold have been lovingly cared for by our company for generations of Czechs."

To learn more about Czech Feather & Down Co. go to www.czechfeatherdownco.com or write to Cookie at 72 16th Ave. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404.

Homestay Ambassadors Selected (cont. from page 5)

Outside of school, I have logged in over 125 volunteer hours at Miracles in Motion. Miracles is a place to help mentally and/or physically challenged individuals ride and build a relationship with horses. I am currently working at Harmony Private Care, an assisted living home in Swisher. I have many interests, from spending time outdoors to creating art. I am especially fond of the last week of July, where you can find me at RAGBRAI (Des Moines Registers Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa). This year, will be my fourth year to participate. It gives me a chance to

see what's outside my very own back door, and to meet many wonderful people.

As you've read, it's apparent that I enjoy new people and different surroundings. It is an incredible honor for me to be able to experience the Czech Republic. I am so pleased to have been selected, and I greatly appreciate this opportunity. Thank you to all who are involved, and I will be sure to take many, many pictures and bring back some Czech culture! – Alyssa Quinn

31ST HOUBY DAYS FESTIVAL

IN CEDAR RAPIDS' CZECH VILLAGE

Classy Chassy CRUISERS CAR SHOW

Egg, Houby & Kolach Breakfast with the Saints

- AND -

Czech Pork Supper at St. Wenceslaus Church

GRAND PARADE SATURDAY NOON

Carnival by Superior Shows

Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Pageant

May 16 17 18

SCHEDULED HIGHLIGHTS

Friday, May 16

- 5-7 p.m. Taste of Czech & Slovak
- 6-10 p.m. The T Tops Band
- 6 p.m.-Midnight Carnival by Superior Shows
- 7-9 p.m. Czech Plus Band

Saturday, May 17

- 7-11 a.m. Egg, Houby, Kolach Breakfast St. Wenceslaus Church
- 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Houby Contest Entries available at Information Booth
- 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Classy Chassy Cruisers Car Show
- 8 a.m.-close Arts, Crafts, Flea Market and Great Food Vendors
- 8:30-10:30 a.m. Czech Plus Band & Czech Heritage Singers
- 9 a.m. Flag Raising Ceremony
- 10 a.m. May Pole Dance
- Noon PARADE on the Avenue
- Noon-Midnight Carnival by Superior Shows
- 1-4:30 p.m. Party Time band w/Dave Franklin
- 1:30-2 p.m. Miss Czech-Slovak Pageant Introductions, Parade of Kroje
- 2 p.m. Nat'l Bohemian, Moravian & Slovak Folk Dance Performance
- 2 p.m. Houby Contest Awards
- 2-4 p.m. Rapids Eights Square Dancers
- 3 p.m. Car Show Winners Announced
- 4-4:30 p.m. Miss Czech-Slovak Talent Competition
- 4 p.m. Czech Folk Hymn Mass St. Wenceslaus Church
- 6 p.m. Crowning of Miss Czech Slovak
- 6-9 p.m. Mike Laseck & The Rhythmaires
- 6-10 p.m. 5 of Hearts Band

Sunday, May 18

- 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Egg, Houby, Kolac Breakfast St. Wenceslaus Church
- 10 a.m.-close Arts, Crafts, Flea Market and Great Food Vendors
- Noon Cabbage Roll Race
- Noon-6 p.m. Carnival by Superior Shows
- 1-4 p.m. Leonard Reymann & The All Accordion Band
- 1 p.m. Youth Hawkeye Tractor Pull
- 2 p.m.-4 p.m. H&H Fun Train Ride
- 4 p.m. Children's Parade





Friday, May 16

- 10 9:30 - 4 p.m.** Remember 1968 Twelve Volatile Months That Changed The World, a special exhibition at the Nat'l Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is open to the public. Save \$1 off admission for knowing the Czech word for mushrooms is houby Taste of Czech & Slovak at the Nat'l Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. Enjoy samples of old favorites and new tastes of Czech & Slovak cuisine. Proceeds benefit the Museum Guild of the NCSML.
- 10 5 - 7 p.m.** The T Tops Band - Live on the Avenue!
- 4 6 - 10 p.m.** Carnival by Superior Shows behind Sykora Bakery
- 6 6 p.m. - Midnight** Czech Plus Band at Kosek Bandstand
- 5 7 - 9 p.m.**

Saturday, May 17

- 13 7 - 11 a.m.** Egg, Houby, Kolac Breakfast with the Saints. St. Wenceslaus Church-Chihak Hall - \$7 at the door - \$6 in advance - kids 3 and under Free (1224 5th St. SE)
- 13 8 to 11 a.m.** St. Wenceslaus Church and Park Tours
- 5 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.** Houby Contest Entries available at Information Booth
- 2 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.** Classy Chassy Cruisers Car Show at Sokol Park
- 9 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.** Strolling accordionist Ron Johnson
- 9 8 a.m. - close** Arts, Crafts, Flea Market and Great Food Vendors
- 5 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.** Czech Plus Band & Czech Heritage Singers
- 5 9 a.m.** Flag Raising Ceremony
- 10 9:30 - 4 p.m.** Remember 1968 Twelve Volatile Months That Changed The World, a special exhibition at the Nat'l Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is open to the public. Save \$1 off admission for knowing the Czech word for mushrooms is houby
- 14 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.** Welcome Houby Lovers to the African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa - Free Admission Today for Houby Button wearers in honor of our Czech neighbors (55 12th Ave. SE)
- 11 10 a.m.** May Pole Dance
- 9 Noon** PARADE on the Avenue
- 6 Noon - Midnight** Carnival by Superior Shows behind Sykora bakery
- 4 1 - 4:30 p.m.** Party Time band with Dave Franklin Live on the Avenue!
- 11 1:30 - 2 p.m.** Miss Czech-Slovak Pageant Introductions, Parade of Kroje
- 11 2 p.m.** Nat'l Bohemian, Moravian & Slovak Folk Dance Performance in the garden
- 5 2 p.m.** Houby Contest Awards
- 5 2 - 4 p.m.** Rapids Eights Square Dancers
- 2 3 p.m.** Car Show Winners Announced

- 13 4 p.m.**
- 10 4 - 4:30 p.m.**
- 13 5 - 7 p.m.**
- 11 6 p.m.**
- 4 6 - 9 p.m.**
- 5 6 - 10 p.m.**

- Czech Folk Hymn/Polka Mass, St. Wenceslaus Church (1224 5th St. SE)
- Miss Czech-Slovak Talent Competition
- Park & Dumpling Dinner - St. Wenceslaus Church Gymnasium, \$9 advance, \$10 at door - 12 and under \$4.50
- St. Wenceslaus Church and Park Tours
- Crowning of Miss Czech Slovak
- Mike Laseck & The Rhythmaires - Live on the Avenue!
- 5 of Hearts Band at Kosek Bandstand

Sunday, May 18

- 9 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**
- 13 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**
- 9 10 a.m. - close**
- 13 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**
- 13 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**
- 10 Noon - 4 p.m.**
- 6 Noon - 6 p.m.**
- 3 Noon**
- 5 1 - 4 p.m.**
- 1 1 p.m.**
- 9 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.**
- 1 4 p.m.**

- Strolling accordionist Ron Johnson
- Egg, Houby, Kolac Breakfast with the Saints. St. Wenceslaus Church Gymnasium - \$7 at the door, kids 3 and under free, - \$6 in advance (1230 5th St. SE)
- Arts, Crafts, Flea Market and Great Food Vendors
- History Display of St. Wenceslaus Church Chihak Hall
- St. Wenceslaus Church and Park Tours
- Remember 1968 Twelve Volatile Months That Changed The World, a special exhibition at the Nat'l Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is open to the public. Save \$1 off admission for knowing the Czech word for mushrooms is houby
- Carnival by Superior Shows behind Sykora bakery
- Cabbage Roll Relay Race on the Avenue - Sykora Bakery
- Leonard Reyman & The All Accordion Band
- Youth Hawkeye Tractor Pull
- H&H Fun Train Ride
- Children's Parade with drawings for bicycles and other wonderful items immediately following

For more information about Houby Days, call (319) 247-6300.

To learn more about the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, call (319) 362-8500 or visit our web site, www.ncsml.org.

Wilber, Nebraska's Incredible Event

The month: August. The place: Wilber, Nebraska. The temperature: 98 degrees, apparently normal for a Nebraska summer. I arrive at Hotel Wilber, the very same inn where my grandparents honeymooned. My roommate, Miss South Dakota, waits for me on the porch. She gives me the queen-sized bed, the first of many acts of kindness to come. I haul my box of mason jars filled with Pride of Iowa cookie mix up the stairs. As I set each of the ten jars on their respective queen's bed, I discover that the chocolate chips have melted into the flour, the brown sugar into the coconut. It's cookie chaos, resulting from a seven hour ride in the back window of our family car. Thankfully, the other queens don't mind the deformed layers. They are all older than me, and most have participated in the national pageant more than once.

The first morning of the National Miss Czech-Slovak Pageant, I awake around six and my fellow queens and I rush to get ready for the morning introduction and parade. Hair-spray fumes and the smell of baking kolaches saturate the hotel; girls run around wearing red tights and multiple layers of undershirts. Once dressed and primped, we leave to meet our assigned Little Sisters. Mine, coincidentally, is actually related to me! My great-grandpa and hers were brothers, but my line of ancestors moved to Iowa, while hers

stayed in Nebraska. We discover our family connections while touring the Czech Library, which is on the site of my great-grandpa's childhood home.

Lunchtime arrives and we sit down to a traditional Czech meal: sausage, dumplings, rye bread - dokanally lahody (quite delicious!). I very much enjoy being in the company of girls who also love sauerkraut and mustard.

After the first round of the pageant is over for the night, we relax in our rooms. Miss South Dakota and I have become closer than sisters and the rest of the girls casually congregate in our room to chat. I learn so much about the other girls' lifestyles, Miss Florida's in particular. She lives in Miami Beach, where I can't imagine a more contradictory upbringing than my experiences in small-town Iowa. She talks about selling an iPhone to Shaquille O'Neil at 3:00 a.m. and gasps at the description of huge deer in Iowa compared to the roe-sized deer in southern Florida. Each of the girls gain my respect and friendship that day, for they are all exceptionally smart, focused women - Miss Oklahoma is studying pre-med at Georgetown; Miss South Dakota will graduate with a degree in chemical engineering.

The last morning of the two-day event, the queens and I visit the Wilber nursing home. In the assisted living complex, I talk with folks about their lives and families in the old country. The women love my kroj (costume) and I am honored to have their approval of my historical research into the customs of my family's region near Pilsen. Their lunch meals come just as the last of the queens walk out the door (it was Czech food, of course!).

Next up is the talent competition. I sing Goin' Home by Antonin Dvorak; Miss Oklahoma recites Czech folktales; Miss South Dakota tells jokes during a chemistry magic show. Afterwards, my brother congratulates me on my performance and nicknames me Droopy Bunny because my bonnet is un-starched and sad-looking.

The girls and I go out dancing that night (to polka music, of course) and savor the last few hours we'll have together. Our hugs, tears, and goodbyes can wait until morning. For now, I'm thankful that our immigrant ancestors chose the challenging lives they did, and that I've been blessed with this opportunity to get more acquainted with my extended family, honor my close relatives and traditions, and meet some incredible young women.

Casey Dvorak



Karel Hynek Mácha

Macha was born on November 16, 1810 in an old part of Prague where his father was the foreman at one of the city's mills. At school he learned Latin and German, the two languages approved by the Hapsburg authorities, and later studied law at Prague University. His great model was Byron, with whom he shared a romantic idealism, wandering the Bohemian countryside to visit castle ruins, always making sketches and notes describing the natural beauty surrounding him. He also walked the length of Moravia and Slovakia and made a journey to Venice on foot.

While studying law at university; he also became involved in theatre, where he met Eleonora Somkova, with whom he had a son out of wedlock. Fond of travel, Macha enjoyed trips into the mountains, and eventually moved into Litomerice in order to have a relaxing atmosphere to prepare for law school exams and to write poetry.

His lyrical epic poem *Máj* (May), published in 1836 shortly before his death, was judged by his contemporaries as immoral and as a threat to society. The work was rejected by publishers, and was published by a vanity press at Mácha's own expense, not long before his early death. Mácha's reputation improved after his death and *Máj* is now regarded as the classic work of Czech Romanticism.

He also authored a collection of autobiographical sketches titled *Pictures From My Life*, the 1835-36 novel *Gypsies*, as well as several individual poems.

Mácha became suddenly ill and died on November 5, 1836 just shy of his 26th birthday, on the day he was to wed Somkova. The exact cause of his death is unknown, but both cholera and appendicitis had been suspected, as well as possible bacterial poisoning.

Radio Praha shares this report of Macha's final days – "His very sudden and untimely death was connected to a fire in Litomerice, during the extinguishing of which he caught a chill and died as a result of it. In a letter from October 21, to his parents and fiancée Lora in Prague, Macha wrote:

"In the evening, I was lying on Radobyl, one of the high peaks behind Litomerice, it was already dark, and flames appeared in Litomerice. I saw it from that peak. So I ran quickly down to Litomerice, I had to run about three-quarters of an hour to get there, and I was still one of the first ones to the fire. Eleven barns, full of grain, burst into flame, and the wind was blowing into them terribly. Such

clarity and heat I've never seen in my life. The wind was driving the flames across the road, such that no one wanted to run through it. So four of us ventured into it. I removed my hat and coat, someone wet my hair so it wouldn't catch, and I ran around the burning barns and behind me the other three. We were right on time. I climbed up on the crest of the roof of a barn like a horse, and my companions were passing me water to pour all over the roof so it wouldn't catch fire, though I was barely able to stay there with the heat and wind. Always before I had poured out the water, I had to wet my face and drink some of it. So we saved the barn and the whole line of homes behind it. Only then did the horses with the fire engines come."

That night, Macha went to sleep in his room all wet without any ill effects, which testifies to his strong health.

In spite of this, however, Macha wrote his last letters on November 2, one to his parents and brother and the second again to Lora. None of them even suspected that the end of the poet's life was approaching. Two days later, he was struck ill with diarrhea, but he didn't see a doctor and continued going to the office. But his condition quickly worsened, he began vomiting and, despite medical treatment, died."

Buried in a pauper's grave in Litomerice, his remains were exhumed in March 1939, as Nazi German was occupying the country, and given a formal state burial at Prague's Slavin Cemetery on Vysehrad. A statue was erected in his honor in Petrín Park, Prague.



No portraits are known to have been found of Macha, He was described as being dark, tall and thin, with a full beard and dark bewitching eyes, exotically dressed in a dark cloak and hat.

Few details of his life are known. What is known is that his life was far too short.

Our thanks to Radio Praha, Twisted Spoon Press and myczechrepublic.com

May

Karel Hynek Macha

Late evening, on the first of May—
The twilit May—the time of love.
Meltingly called the turtle-dove,
Where rich and sweet pinewoods lay,
Whispered of love the mosses frail,
The flowering tree as sweetly lied,
The rose's fragrant sigh replied
To love-songs of the nightingale.
In shadowy woods the burnished lake
Darkly complained a secret pain,
By circling shores embraced again;
And heaven's clear sun leaned down to take
A road astray in azure deeps,
Like burning tears the lover weeps.

A haze of stars in heaven hovers—
That church of endless love's communion—
Each jewel blanches and recovers
As blanch and burn long-parted lovers
In the high rapture of reunion.
How clear, to her full beauty grown,
How pale, how clear, the moon above,
Like maiden seeking for her love,
A rosy halo round her thrown!
Her mirrored image she espied,
And of self-love, beholding, died.
Forth from the farms pale shadows strayed,
Lengthening longing to their kind,
Till they embraced, and close entwined,
Coiled low into the lap of shade,
Grown all one twilight unity.
Tree in the shadows writhes to tree.
In the far mountains' dark confine
Pine leans to birch and birch to pine.
Wave baunting wave the streamlets move.
For love's sake—in the time of love—
Anguished goes every living thing.

Above are the first lines as translated by Edith Pargeter.
For the complete poem go to www.lupomesky.cz

In Memorium

We receive memorial contributions often, and every once in a while we receive one that is accompanied with heartwarming correspondence -

Donald E. Horak



Date: December 4, 2007

To: Czech Heritage Foundation
P. O. Box 761
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Re: Memorial donation from Lillian (Pelisek) Horak

Please accept the enclosed memorial to the Czech Heritage Foundation in honor of Lillian (Pelisek) Horak who passed away October 28, 2007.

Lillian's grandson, James Horak, participated in your organization's Home Stay Program. James was Czech Prince during the opening ceremonies of the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in October, 1995 when the three presidents were there. I enclose a photo of Lillian and James taken on that day.

Please use this money as you see fit to continue your wonderful programs for the youth.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Horak

If you would like to make a contribution in memory of a loved one, or honor a living relative, friend or neighbor, send your contribution to Czech Heritage Foundation, P.O. Box 761, Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

Great Tastes on Bohemian Wall Street

Cicero, Illinois was home to many Czechs, Moravians and Slovaks who moved to the area from inner city Chicago in the 1920s because of the abundance of jobs at the Western Electric Plant. Cermak Road, named after the Chicago's only Czech mayor, Anton Cermak, at one time held so many Czech businesses that the locals called it Bohemian Wall Street.

Most of the Czech businesses are now gone, replaced by predominantly Hispanic stores. There are, however, still a few Czechs in the area, and pride of heritage runs deep in the Saballus family. In 2003, Frank Saballus and his sister Elizabeth Keeley Biddle bought Klas Restuarant on Cermak, and take care to preserve the multi-leveled 13,000 sq. ft. building in its historic splendor.

Saballus likes to refer to himself as a curator, and while he still serves up pickled beef, goulash, and potato dumplings, he sees himself more as a caretaker of Czech-American history. The restaurant opened in 1922 and is filled with antiques and momentos from the "old country."

It is believed that the original owner, Adolph Klas, hired local artists in the 1930s to paint and carve designs in the solid wood walls. Klas died in 1962 and the restaurant has had several different owners. Owner Saballus sums it up this way, "For me, this building defines Czech culture in Cicero and the United States. It's important to keep it around so we can remember our roots."

The restaurant is a favored stop by bus tour companies wishing to provide their clients the best food with the finest atmosphere. If you haven't dined at Klas Restuarant you are missing out. If you go to Chicago, you must go to Klas'. On second thought, it's only a four hour drive from Cedar Rapids. What are you waiting for. You don't really need any other reason to go to Chicago.

Excerpted from a recent Chicago Tribune story submitted to us by A. Smulski



Your Donations Make It Happen

What value do you place on your Czech heritage?

When you write your check each year, we ask you to consider more than the Basic Membership Level of \$ 5. We encourage our members to increase their giving so that we may continue honoring our Czech heritage by supporting the many projects we undertake.

Each issue of *Nase Ceske Dedictvi* carries a Membership (Renewal)/Gift Membership Form in the back. Besides the Basic Membership Level, there are eight levels of participation offered for you, from which to choose. Each increasing level, from \$10 on up to \$1,000 is named for a notable Czech, Moravian or Slovak.

In the Fall, 2007 issue of *Nase Ceske Dedictvi* we paid tribute to Bozena Nemcova, and in this issue we honor Karel Hynek Macha.

All donations are valued, whether you contribute the minimum each year of \$5 (which just about covers the cost of the newsletter) or \$1,000, or anywhere in between. We appreciate your support. The reality is, however, that costs for everything in recent years has skyrocketed. In an effort to hold our expenses down, contributions of less than \$10 will not be sent a membership card and acknowledgement.

Czech Heritage Foundation Membership

If you haven't renewed your membership, you're late! Memberships expire December 31 and are renewable January 1. Use this handy Membership Renewal Application form. Don't forget. Renew now so you won't miss a single information packed issue of Nase Ceske Deditvi.

I want to honor my Czech Heritage and pay tribute to the following outstanding writer of the past.

Please check the author you wish to honor with your tax deductible contribution.

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- including the foundation in my/our will.
- the tax advantages of donating stock.
- major project gifts to honor or in memory of friends and family members.

Mail form and check to: **Czech Heritage Foundation, Inc.**, P.O. Box ~~1161~~ ⁸⁴⁷⁶, Cedar Rapids, IA ~~52406~~ ⁵²⁴⁰⁸

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Why not consider a gift membership for someone special? Your generous donation helps to fund several worthwhile endeavors such as Czech Prince and Princess, Miss Czech Slovak Iowa, Scholarship Program, Homestay Program, along with publishing the quarterly Nase Ceske Deditvi, and other numerous publications. The list of Czech Heritage projects goes on and on.

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