



Fall 2013



Delynn Pokorny, Kelsey Pokorny, Victoria Knight, Holly Stepanek, and Brennan Bell represented the Czech Heritage Foundation at the Freedom Festival Parade in Cedar Rapids this summer. Photo by Cindy Hadish.

From the Editor

Editor

Sara Jacobmeyer

Memberships

Subscriptions to *Naše České Dědictví* (*Our Czech Heritage*) are not sold. Members of the Czech Heritage Foundation receive the newsletter free of charge. Annual dues are \$10.00 per person and are renewable on January 1 of each year and expire on December 31. Contributions go toward preserving our cherished Czech heritage.

Website

CzechHeritageFoundation.com

Got News?

Contact Sara Jacobmeyer at or . Your ideas, photos, and stories are always welcome.

CHF 2013 Officers

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Autumn is here, which means there is a lot to look forward to in the coming months. The Czech Heritage Foundation will be busy planning for 2014 and sharing in annual holiday traditions, and I'm very pleased to be taking part. As this is my first appearance as editor of *Naše České Dědictví*, I would like to thank the board of the Czech Heritage Foundation for giving me the opportunity to record these stories for you to enjoy.



Because I have not had the pleasure of meeting many of our members, I will take a moment to introduce myself. I am a native of Cedar Rapids, though I spent several years in Cherokee, Iowa while growing up. I ventured to Nevada, Missouri to attend Cottey College for a time, and afterward moved back to Cedar Rapids. I eventually graduated from Mount Mercy University with a Bachelor's degree in history. I have studied a variety of disciplines, including criminal justice and respiratory therapy, but my true passion has always been for the past. European history is my special area of interest. Currently, I live in Coralville.

I have worked for the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library since 2012, and take pride each day in sharing Czech and Slovak history and culture with visitors from the world over. There is always something new to be learned. Czech Heritage Foundation has a lot to be proud of. If there is something you would like to see in this newsletter, please feel free to contact me. I'm also happy to take articles and hear comments from any of our members.

Přeji vám vše nejlepší (all the best)!

Sincerely,
Sara Jacobmeyer

2013 Miss Czech-Slovak U.S. Pageant



Left to right: Brittany Smisek of Minnesota, Anna Hand of Kansas, and Danielle Patzel of Nebraska. Photo courtesy of MissCzechSlovakUS.com.

A new Miss Czech-Slovak U.S. was crowned on August 4th in Wilber, Nebraska. Anna Hand of Kansas, daughter of David and Peggy Hand, was awarded the title during the well-loved National Wilber Czech Festival. "I couldn't believe they actually announced my name," said Hand, a student at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. "I am so proud to be part of such an amazing and colorful history." Anna was accompanied by Little Sister Alyssa Hooper, daughter of Justin and Melanie Hooper.

The Miss Czech-Slovak U.S. First Runner-Up for 2013-2014 is Danielle Patzel of Nebraska. Danielle is the daughter of Steven and Theresa Patzel, and was a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University in 2012. "I am passionate about my Czech heritage and want to do everything I can to share it with others," she said. Danielle's Little Sister is Katelyn Schroder, daughter of Dee Schroder.

Brittany Smisek, the daughter of Jeffrey and Michelle Smisek, is the Minnesota Czech-Slovak Queen. She was awarded Second Runner-Up and Miss Congeniality in this national pageant. She feels "blessed to be part of such a beautiful and interesting heritage." Brittany attends Minnesota State University, Mankato. Her Little Sister this year is Bree

Hormandl, daughter of Allen and Brooke Hormandl.

Holly Stepanek, our Iowa Czech-Slovak Queen, also competed in the pageant at Wilber. Holly, the daughter of Tom and Sheila Stepanek, performed an accordion solo and modeled her Americanized kroj. She was accompanied by Little Sister Olivia Pomajzl, daughter of Brad and Nicole Pomajzl. Holly is a student at the University of Iowa. The Czech Heritage Foundation is proud to have sponsored this talented contestant, and continues to take pride in her community ambassadorship.

This was the 27th annual Miss Czech-Slovak U.S. pageant. The Czech Heritage Foundation of Cedar Rapids again sponsored a room at the Historic Wilber Hotel, and was a Friend of the Pageant Level Sponsor. WFLA of Cedar Rapids was a Queen Level Sponsor. The first pageant was held in 1986 in Wilber, the "Czech Capital of the U.S.A." Over 300 contestants have competed for the title since then. At this time, nine states send their Czech-Slovak Queens to this national level: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin. The 2014-2015 pageant will take place in Wilber on August 2nd and 3rd, 2014.

Czech Heritage Foundation Royalty



During the Czech Heritage Foundation's annual picnic on August 13, the 2013-2014 royalty were announced. Holly Stepanek will continue her reign as Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa. Victoria Knight and Delynn Pokorny are this year's Little Sisters.

Brennan Bell and Kelsey Pokorny continue to represent the Czech Heritage Foundation as 2013's Czech Prince and Princess.

Congratulations to each of them for a job well done!

Left to right: Holly Stepanek, Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Queen; Delynn Pokorny, Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Little Sister; Victoria Knight, Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Little Sister; Kelsey Pokorny, Czech Heritage Foundation Czech Princess.



Left to right: Czech Prince Brennan Bell, Little Sisters Delynn Pokorny and Victoria Knight, and Czech Princess Kelsey Pokorny (back) visit the Czech House at Ushers Ferry Historic Village this summer. Photo by Cindy Hadish.

Fall Festival Brings Crowds to Czech Village



Silbortaler Musikanten plays traditional Austrian music, but is known to play folk songs from many cultures. Left to right: Dr. Fred Isaak, Roland Peterman, Cheryl Kissling, and Tim Fees. All are from Eastern Iowa. Photo courtesy of Silbortaler Musikanten.

The annual Czech Village Fall Festival was enjoyed by all on Sunday, October 13. With a variety of family-friendly activities, performances, and contests, there was something for everyone. The Czech Village Association works hard to plan and promote this event each year, bringing hundreds of visitors to the Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street District.

Vendors lined 16th Avenue SW and sold seasonal goods. Contestants entered to win the top prize for best goulash. Prizes were also given for the best decorated pumpkins at the festival. A display of antique tractors was available to admire for the day at Sokol Park. Families could enjoy a hay rack ride through the Village, try the gourd toss, hear live music, and much more. The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library had free children's crafts. As a result, there were many

in the Village wearing self-designed pins and crowns (adults included).

Musicians included Silbortaler Musikanten, Waubeek Trackers, Muddy Ruts, the University of Iowa Steel Drum Band, and Acoustic Jack.



Photos by Deb Christensen



Above: Families took hay rack rides through Czech Village during the Fall Festival. Right: A table full of colorful pumpkins sits outside Sykora Bakery. The trophy-winning pumpkin at the front sports curly hair and a dashing moustache.

CR2CR – Cedar Rapids to Czech Republic; Friends Through Adversity

By Jason Wright

When eastern Iowa was devastated by flood damage in 2008, the people of the Czech Republic donated more than \$500,000 to local Cedar Rapids organizations in support.

Five years later, Cedar Rapids is looking to return the favor after the Czech Republic was hit with flood damage of its own.

The organizations that benefitted from the Czech Republic gift in 2008, the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation, Sokol Cedar Rapids, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and St. Wenceslaus Church joined forces for CR2CR, a flood-relief effort that has successfully raised \$50,000 for Děčín's flood-ravaged library in the Czech Republic. The Czech Heritage Foundation was one of these donors.

"All of the citizens of Cedar Rapids have benefited from the Czech Republic's generous gift five years ago," says Tom Hansen of Cedar Rapids, one of the organizers of the project. "This is a great opportunity for our city to show its appreciation and friendship to the Czech people."

In June 2013, the Czech Republic suffered catastrophic flooding, with the cost of the damage estimated at more than a billion Czech crowns. Děčín, a town in northwest Czech Republic, was one of the hardest-hit communities; more than 1,600 of its 50,000 residents were evacuated, and many lower-lying buildings were ruined when water levels went up by 10 meters. Images of Děčín's waterlogged library painted a dramatic portrait of the devastation— one that was eerily similar to Iowa's own flood damage in 2008.



CR2CR originated early this summer during a friendly golf game between Hansen and Steve Groner of Cedar Rapids. The pair struck up a conversation about the news from the Czech Republic. Both recalled how, in 2008, the Ambassador of the Czech Republic delivered a flood-relief donation to Cedar Rapids of more than \$500,000. It was among the first major contributions to the city, said Hansen, who had been serving as President of the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation at the time. Groner agreed that Cedar Rapids needed to repay that kindness.

"We find that the people of Cedar Rapids are very grateful and have a very generous heart," says Groner. "We want to tell the people of Děčín, 'We know what you're going through. And we want to help.'"

A delegation representing the CR2CR initiative will travel to the Czech Republic in December to personally deliver the money and a certificate listing all the donors to the Děčín Library.

Diversity Celebrated at University of Iowa Festival



Members of the Czech Heritage Foundation proudly took part in the University of Iowa's 23rd annual Celebrating Cultural Diversity Festival in Iowa City, Iowa on September 29. The event was held outdoors at Hubbard Park near the Iowa Memorial Union. The Czech Heritage Foundation booth was managed by Kitty Chadima, Marj Nejd, Bonnie and Marv Rohlena, Holly Stepanek, and Brennan Bell. University of Iowa students and visitors from around Eastern Iowa stopped at the CHF booth to sample Czech treats, have eggs personalized by Marj Nejd, and purchase books published by the Foundation.

The array of baked goods included assorted koláče, potica, poppy seed and lemon bread, cherry squares, and lemon coconut cake. Iced tea and lemonade were popular with those stopping at the booth due to the warm day. Joyce Netolicky, Zelda De Hoedt, Bonnie Rohlena, and Kitty Chadima provided these delicious offerings.

According to the University of Iowa, this festival brings up to 5,000 people annually to its campus. The aim of this event is to bring knowledge of other cultures to the community and celebrate human diversity. The festival offers music and dance performances, craft demonstrations, interactive programs, and ethnic food.



Top: Holly Stepanek and Brennan Bell taking charge of the booth. Middle: Brennan Bell and Holly Stepanek meet new friends at the festival. Bottom: Marj Nejd, Kitty Chadima, and Holly Stepanek.

Photos by Bonnie Rohlena

Holiday Cheer in the District

Savor the scents and sounds of Christmas at the 4th annual Old World Christmas Market. The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library will present this family-friendly event on December 7 and 8.

Shopping, children's activities, folk art workshops, and more await visitors to the Market. For the first three years, the event was called "Old Prague Christmas Market." This year, the NCSML has refreshed the name in order to include and celebrate more cultures.

Artisan vendors will have unique Christmas gift ideas for sale in a large, heated outdoor tent. Visitors will find things such as Russian nesting dolls, ornaments, European chocolate, folk arts, ethnic baked goods, soaps, one-of-a-kind jewelry, elaborately decorated Czech gingerbread cookies, alpaca knits, jams and jellies, and so much more. All vendors have been hand-picked by the event coordinator based on the high quality of their products. The Czech Heritage Foundation will bring back the popular wreath raffle.

All ages will delight in taking a free horse-drawn wagon ride through Czech Village to view the "Window Wonderland," an initiative taken by the Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street District to brighten 16th Avenue and 3rd Street over the holiday season. Graduate art students from the University of Iowa will decorate many windows in the District, adding to the festive atmosphere.

The NCSML has again partnered with the Cherry Building and NewBo City Market to bring a trolley to the District. This will be a convenient way for shoppers to move from one venue to the next and experience three Christmas celebrations in one weekend.

Inside the museum, the NCSML's Museum Guild will hold their annual Cookie Walk in Mitvalsky Hall. This will take place on Saturday, December 7, and doors open at 9:30 a.m.



Saturday, December 7 from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 8 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Treats can be paid for by the pound. The Cookie Walk will end at 12:30 p.m., or when all the cookies are gone. The Museum Guild will also have a café in Grand Hall with hot apple cider, coffee, and hot chocolate that day. Children's crafts will be available in Grand Hall and the Jiruska Gallery through the weekend, and Hruska Hall will have a stage with live musicians and demonstrations. The Světlušky youth ensemble will introduce Svatý Mikuláš at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday with a dance performance.

Brunch with Svatý Mikuláš will return on Sunday, December 8 at 10:00 a.m. Folk artists Daniela Sipkova Mahony and Marta Hasnik will conduct workshops throughout the Old World Christmas Market. Reservations for both the brunch and the workshops are required, and can be made by calling the museum at 319-362-8500. There is limited seating, so calling early is encouraged.

Visit www.NCSML.org for a complete schedule and more details.

Christmas Wreath Raffle: Calling All Crafters!

The Czech Heritage Foundation needs your help! We are looking for individuals or organizations that would like to spread Christmas cheer by donating a decorated wreath to be displayed and raffled off at the Old World Christmas Market on December 7 and 8. Last year we had 32 beautiful wreaths donated. This year we hope to have even more! How can you help?



- 1. Make a wreath (or two, or three)! Any kind, any size.
Deadline: Saturday, November 30. Wreaths may be delivered to the NCSML at 1400 Inspiration Place SW in Cedar Rapids.**
- 2. Buy a raffle ticket to win a wreath! Drawings for winners will be on Sunday, December 8 at 2:00 p.m.**
- 3. Do both! All donations and raffle ticket sales benefit the Czech Heritage Foundation.**



Top: Emma Lehmann helped with the CHF wreath raffle in 2012. Left: A young girl excitedly enters the raffle for her favorite wreath!

Photos from Barb Edmunds

Contact Barb Edmunds at

or

to ask questions or make a donation.

Fact Czech

Amadeus Mozart said of Prague: "Meine Prager verstehen mich." He believed the people of Prague



understood him. Prague was a city that brought him luck and support, while Vienna was not. Mozart's had a deep love of the Golden City, and he was quite popular there. His operatic masterpiece *Don Giovanni* premiered at the Prague Italian

Opera in 1787.

Jakub Kryštof Rad was the owner of a sugar factory whose wife was injured while trying to cut sugar loaves into smaller pieces. She then suggested he do something about it, and thus the sugar cube was born in the mid-19th century.

Vánočka Recipe

Czech Christmas Bread

This bread is similar to other Eastern European twist breads such as challah or houska. Tradition calls for the loaf to be made of three braids, with the largest braid on the bottom and the smallest resting on top. The following recipe will make one large loaf of Christmas bread.

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cook Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 2 hours

Ingredients:

1 cup scalded milk

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter

1 cup sugar (or less, to taste)

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 packages active dry yeast

1/4 cup warm water

2 large room-temperature eggs, beaten

5 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 cup golden or dark raisins

1/2 cup blanched sliced almonds

1/3 cup chopped citron

Topping:

1 large room-temperature egg, beaten

2 tablespoons blanched sliced almonds

Confectioners' sugar (optional)

Preparation:

Add butter, sugar and salt to scalded milk. Stir to combine and let cool to lukewarm.

Place yeast and warm water in the bowl of a stand mixer and, with the paddle attachment, stir until dissolved. Add lukewarm milk mixture and 2 eggs and combine.

Add 3 cups flour and beat with the paddle until smooth. Add the raisins, almonds, citron, and remaining flour and mix, 3 to 5 minutes until smooth. Dough will be sticky.

Place dough in greased bowl. Turn over and cover with plastic wrap and let rise until double, about 1 hour.

Punch down dough and turn out onto lightly floured board. Divide dough into 3 large pieces and 5 smaller ones. Roll each piece into a rope, about 14 inches long. On a parchment-lined baking sheet, braid the 3 larger pieces loosely and pinch ends together.

Braid 3 of the smaller rolls, pinch ends together, and place on top of large braid. Twist the last 2 rolls together and place on top of second braid, tucking ends under large braid. Cover with a cloth or greased plastic wrap and let rise 1 to 1 1/2 hours in a warm place.

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Brush vánočka with 1 beaten egg and sprinkle with 2 tablespoons almonds. Bake 15 minutes, reduce heat to 375 degrees and bake 30-45 minutes or until instant-read temperature registers 190 degrees. Let cool completely before slicing. Dust with confectioners' sugar before cutting, if desired.

From EasternEuropeanFood.about.com

Membership for the New Year

Have you paid your dues for 2014?

By Donna Merkle

Starting in 2014 with the winter issue of the newsletter, we will list the names of members who have paid their dues for the year. We will also list the names of anyone who has given an additional donation, but we will keep the amount of the donation confidential. We will include your city and state, but not your street address, along with your name. We want to do this so we can share with you just how widespread our membership is. You would be amazed!

This new feature gives us a way to say thank you for your support while also helping you keep track of your payments. If you forget and submit your dues a second time, we will contact you to ask what you would like to do: apply the duplicate payment to dues for the following year, offer it as a donation for the current year, or have your check returned to you.

Please remember that your membership in the Czech Heritage Foundation runs from January 1 to



December 31. Dues are \$10.00 per person, not per household. Your membership entitles you to receive the newsletter *Naše České Dědictví*, generally four issues per year. Your membership also entitles you to vote at the annual meeting in Cedar Rapids each January. Money from your dues and donations helps cover the general operating expenses of the organization, including costs associated with printing and mailing the newsletters.

If you don't see your name in the winter issue and you think you already paid your dues, please contact Donna Merkle, the Financial Secretary. If you would prefer to remain anonymous, please let Donna know. She can be reached by phone at _____, by e-mail at _____, or by mail c/o Czech Heritage Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 8476, Cedar Rapids, IA 52408.

Thank you for your membership and support!

Subscribe, renew, or donate today!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

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New Member: \$10 (per person, Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2014)

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Donation

Mail form and check to: Czech Heritage Foundation, Inc.

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Merry Christmas

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“Without dreaming of a better Europe we shall never build a better Europe.” –Havel, 1990

Havel Continues to Inspire

The Václav Havel Award for Human Rights is an international award established in 2013 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Václav Havel Library and Charta 77 Foundation, and will annually honor outstanding human rights activity. The first recipient is Ales Bialiatski from Belarus, who has been working to improve human rights in his country.

Václav Havel was also honored by the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, D.C. this year. Havel was the focus of the Embassy’s annual Mutual Inspirations Festival, which features extraordinary Czechs who have inspired and influenced others through their work.