



OST

The Bridge

News of the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library



Fall 1996

Astronaut Eugene Cernan to Help Honor Senator Hruska

Keynote Speaker for Dinner October 26; Grand Hall Dedication set for 10 am

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is pleased to announce the festivities surrounding the dedication of the Roman L. Hruska Grand Hall. The dedication of the Grand Hall will take place, Saturday, October 26, at 10 am. It is free and open to the public. Congressman Jim Leach and Senator Charles Grassley plan to be in attendance. Roman L. Hruska is a former United States Senator from Omaha, Nebraska, and was a major contributor to the new building capital campaign.

The weekend will begin with a luncheon Friday, October 25, in the museum's WFLA Heritage Hall. Along with the presence of Senator Hruska, the luncheon will feature the Czech Heritage Singers and the crowning of the Czech prince and princess. Tickets for the luncheon are \$15 and can be purchased through the museum office.

The weekend will be capped off Saturday evening at a dinner in Heritage Hall. Gemini and Apollo Astronaut Captain Eugene Cernan will be the keynote speaker. Captain Cernan was the second man to walk in space and the last man to walk on the moon. He is of both Czech and Slovak descent. The dinner also commemorates the one-year anniversary of the historic building dedication which brought Presidents Clinton, Havel and Kovac to Cedar Rapids, and *Dozinky* the traditional Czech Fall harvest festival. Tickets are \$25. Call 362-8500 for more details.

Popular Folk Artist Returning to Museum

Daniela Sipkova-Mahoney to offer holiday workshops

Learn to make your own holiday ornaments from dough, straw, and eggs in a series of workshops being offered by the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and taught by Daniela Sipkova-Mahoney. In March of this year Daniela, a folk artist who was born in Prague and now lives in Portland, Oregon, taught a popular series of workshops at the Museum on Batik Egg Decorating.

The holiday workshops will be held November 18 - 22, in the Museum's WFLA Heritage Hall. Cost per three-hour session is \$25. Daniela will also personalize ornaments in the museum gift store. Call the museum at 362-8500 to learn more about times and classes.



Guild Report

The Guild of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library has added an exciting dimension to its meetings. Each month a portion of the program will be used for a staff presentation of a Museum artifact.

At the September meeting, Patti Hikiji showed the group a framed photo of the Infant of Prague, a recent acquisition. The picture had been sent many years ago to the United States as a welcome gift to a new baby. Writing on the back indicated that the picture had been blessed at Our Lady of Victorious Church where the Infant is displayed.

Guild President Sylvia Rohlena planned and hosted a day of activities for five scholars from the Czech Republic. The group is at the University of Iowa for three months to develop a civics education course for 12th graders.

The visitors were taken to the Museum, St. Wenceslaus Church, the computer lab at Wilson Middle School and shops in the Czech Village. The day ended with a dinner and social time at Zindrick's, where other Guild members joined the group.

Twenty-eight Guild members and friends traveled by motor coach to DeWitt for the August meeting. Joanna Lund hosted the group at her Healthy Exchanges complex. The day included a program, a luncheon with Czech dishes, and a building tour.

The Guild continues to seek new members. As a support group for the Museum, all members, volunteers, and friends are welcome. Contact the Museum office for dates and times of meetings.

Museum Shop Filled With Holiday Ornaments

Don't forget the National Czech & Slovak Museum Gift Store while you do your holiday shopping. The shop is filled with colorful glassware, traditional ornaments, and much more which make the perfect gift for *you* or family and friends.

Director's Report

Recently I had the pleasure of traveling to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and attending the opening of an exciting new exhibit, "A Thousand Years of Czech Culture: Riches from the National Museum in Prague." The exhibition was the result of cooperative efforts between Old Salem, Inc., one of this country's best-known village museums, and the National Museum of Prague. The presentation consists of 207 artifacts whose stories provide an overview of Czech history from the 11th century forward. The exhibit's design and interpretation work in consort with the artifacts to create a remarkable impact on the museum visitor.

There are reasons for discussing this exhibit in Cedar Rapids. First, it represents the quality of exhibition which the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is now working toward installing. For some time we have been in a design process with Robert Bodnar and Associates of Omaha as we strive to present our outstanding collection in an historical and cultural context which will engage the visitor's interest and imagination.

Secondly, my trip to Old Salem allowed me to make the acquaintance of Milan Stloukol, Director General of the National Museum in Prague, and four of his curators. It has long been our desire to develop an ongoing relationship with the National Museum in order to facilitate curatorial exchanges, loans of artifacts, and professional enhancement for our museum. The National Museum has a surprisingly high awareness of Cedar Rapids and our museum, an awareness that only served to hasten my ability to engage in substantive talks on how our institutions can work together.

Thirdly, we have begun preliminary discussions concerning the prospect of "A Thousand Years of Czech Culture" traveling to Cedar Rapids. At this point there is no way to know what chance there is of this happening (as one might imagine, financial questions rule the day), but it is important for our members to know that we are seeking every opportunity to bring the highest quality programming to the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

Museum Fills Two Professional Positions

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is pleased to announce the addition of two important staff members: Carmen Langel as Curator of Collections and Judy Ostrander as Director of Development.

Carmen is originally from Iowa City. She has a B.S. and M.S. from the University of Iowa, where she studied geology, anthropology, and museum studies. She has worked at several museums in Eastern Iowa, including the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics Medical Museum, where she worked in collections and exhibits, and at the History Center in Cedar Rapids, where she was Curator of Education. Most recently, she worked in collections at the Putnam Museum of History and Natural Science in Davenport, Iowa."

"It is a wonderful opportunity for me to join the staff of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library," Carmen explains. "This is an organization with a nationally recognized collection and a new facility. We all feel that we can build on the years of hard work and expand the collection and develop exhibits which will bring great pride to the community."

In their spare time, Carmen and her husband Rick enjoy fishing, hiking, and caving.

Judy Ostrander, also, brings considerable experience and expertise to her new position. Her background in nonprofit fundraising includes over 17 years of development work at Coe College where she earned her B.A. Degree.

Even though the foundation of her development experience was obtained from Coe, her more recent work with a social service agency helped provide a new perspective on nonprofit fundraising.

"I am extremely happy to have the opportunity now to represent a valuable community resource like the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library," Judy says. "This position was especially intriguing because of my genuine interest in people and community involvement."

Judy's initial priorities will center around a year-end corporate/business membership drive, assessing the museum's current individual membership program, and developing a strategic plan for the 1997 fundraising initiatives, including the raising of funds for the installation of a new exhibit.

When not at work you may find Judy bicycling, playing racquetball, running, reading, sewing or doing some traveling with her husband, David.

Supreme Court Justice Visits Museum & Library

The Museum was honored this summer by a visit from United States Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. Justice Thomas was in Cedar Rapids as the guest of the Linn County Bar Association. Executive Director Dan Baldwin and Programs Coordinator Patti Hikiji found a very interested "tourist," who asked many questions about Czech culture and marveled at the collection. He was especially taken by the immigrant home as it reminded him of his boyhood in Missouri.



NCSML Director Dan Baldwin, left, with Justice Clarence Thomas and Judge David R. Hansen, right, in the Museum's Grand Hall.

**HAVE YOU CONSIDERED
GIVING A NCSML MEMBERSHIP
FOR CHRISTMAS?**

Collections Update

After a few short weeks at the Museum, I am starting to become familiar with the collections.

I am very impressed with the scope of the collections and the generosity of our donors. Word of the Museum & Library is definitely out because we receive weekly, if not daily, inquiries and donation offers from around the country and abroad.

One of my top priorities is preparation of permanent storage space. Unfortunately, our grand new building doesn't have enough space for storage of all our collections. Thus, it has been decided that the 'old' museum building will be retained for this purpose. The structure is in an ideal location, it's secure, and it should be large enough for our current needs. However, it needs a little TLC (remember, staff moved out of the building over 1-1/2 years ago, then it was slated for demolition). On the list of things to accomplish in the structure is a thorough cleaning, painting of the interior, and better climate control.

As we get the building prepared for storage, I will be spending more time working directly with the collections. The Museum has gone a long while without a curator, so I have a lot of processing to catch up on. This will involve establishing the order in which donations were received so each object can be assigned an accession number and a unique catalog number. Complete descriptions and information about each object needs to be entered on catalog sheets. We must also prepare an updated inventory of the entire collection as our most recent inventory is several years old.

As you can imagine, these projects are more than enough to keep me busy! However, there are several other collections-related activities coming up. You can look forward to more details on these projects and an update on our progress in future newsletters.

-Carmen Langel, Curator

Museum & Library Receives Generous Donation

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is proud to announce the receipt of a \$51,000 gift to its operations. The gift comes in equal parts from brothers Victor Naxera and George "Max" Naxera, long time museum contributors. As an unrestricted gift, the funds may be used at the museum's discretion.

"We had some good fortune in the increase on a stock transaction," Vic explains, "and felt we could share that with the museum. It is a lot easier to make a contribution in this way, without having to dig into cash reserves. I hope others follow our example."

"Many donors forget the need for operational support," Max says, "which is why we made the gift unrestricted. Without support for salaries, utilities, and other items, the museum cannot present its programs or responsibly take care of the collection. We feel very good about how the funds will be used."

The Museum & Library offers its deepest gratitude for this generous contribution.



CONCERT of CZECH MUSIC

Sunday November 3rd 4:30pm

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library
16th Ave SW, Cedar Rapids IA

Tickets \$5 (call the museum at 362-8500)

Sponsored by: CRST, Iowa Arts Council, McGrath Automotive, Bill Shuttleworth, Czech Cottage, Czech Heritage Foundation

Illustration & Design by Peter Wells/Hellman Associates, Waterloo, IA

"Haj Husicky"

November 30 & December 1

Not sure yet what to do with your out-of-town guests on Thanksgiving weekend? Not sure what to do with yourself while you eat leftover turkey? The solution is to come to "Haj Husicky," the First Annual Holiday Sale & Gathering of Artisans at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

Saturday, November 30 (8:30 am to 8 pm), and Sunday, December 1 (9 am to 4 pm), the Museum's WFLA Heritage Hall will be filled with ethnic arts and crafts and their artists.

Haj Husicky will provide an excellent opportunity for unique holiday shopping.

(As "Most" goes to press, booth spaces are still available. For more information call, 362-8500.)

Garden Nears Completion

Cranes, trucks, bobcats, and back hoes have been familiar sights at the Museum & Library the past two months as work has progressed on the new garden and stage located at the building's South side. The garden's design includes a central green space, which will seat 250 - 300 people, rimmed by a band of traditional Czech perennials. Within this band are several stone benches placed on brick pads. Sixteen decorative pear trees will be planted along the garden's perimeter. The garden is designed to compliment the clock tower and immigrant home.



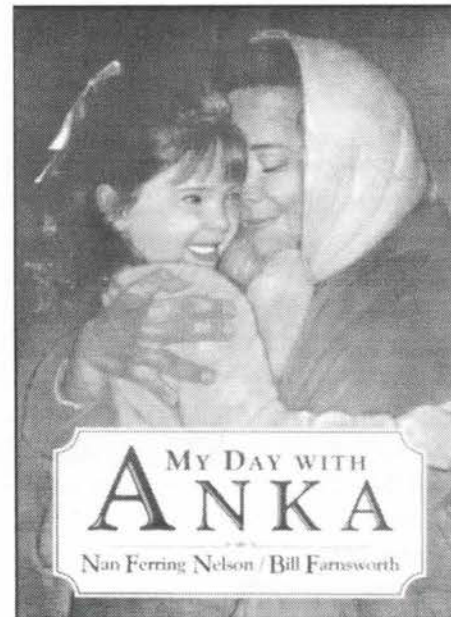
The stage, which incorporates two railings from the former 16th Avenue bridge, will provide an outdoor space for programs and rentals. The stage will see its first use Saturday afternoon, October 26, with a performance by the Czech Plus Band.

Completion of the garden would not be possible without the remarkable volunteer effort of Jerry Haight, who acted as project manager. Jerry worked tirelessly with the staff, building committee, and contractors. Board member Jim Novak and Arnie Kluber of the City of Cedar Rapids, provided many hours of design work.

Author to Present Artwork, Sign Books

Former Cedar Rapids resident and author, Nan Ferring Nelson, will be present at the Museum & Library November 21 for a signing of her new book *My Day With Anka*, the story of a young girl's relationship with an older woman who emigrated from Czechoslovakia. Ms. Nelson will also be presenting the museum with a piece of original artwork by the book's illustrator, Bill Farnsworth.

Ms. Nelson is a graduate of the University of Iowa who currently lives in Edina, Minnesota.



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Mrs. Frances Kralick
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Anne Hospodarsky
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Jerome & Marilyn Jandik
June Kysilko Kraeft
LaVonne I. Noska
Paul M. & Nancy Jerabek
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Delores Hubert

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through September 30, 1996**

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For: LEONA PODUSKA

Katie Poduska

**HRUSKA GRAND HALL DEDICATION
OCTOBER 25-26**

Friday, October 25

**Luncheon in the Heritage Hall
Noon, \$15 per person
Czech Heritage Singers
Crowning of the Prince and Princess**

Saturday, October 26

**Dedication of Hruska Grand Hall
10 am, Grand Hall; Brief reception to follow**

**Dinner in the WFLA Heritage Hall
6 pm Social Hour; 7 pm dinner; \$25
Keynote Address: Captain Eugene Cernan**

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HONORING

SENATOR ROMAN L. HRUSKA

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25th 1996



12:00 NOON - \$15⁰⁰

- Crowning of Czech Prince and Princess
- Czech Heritage Singers

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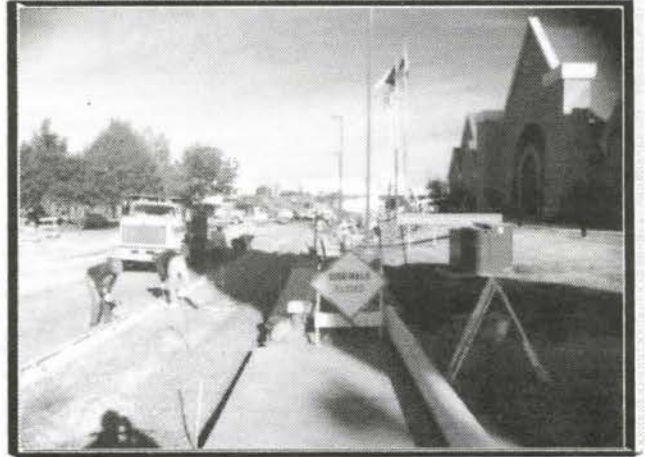
File Cabinet (four or five drawer)

Bubble Jet or Laser Computer Printers

Point and shoot 35 mm camera (we gratefully accepted a fine 35 mm for collections photography; we are now looking for something appropriate for special event use).

Touring Docents

Library volunteers, especially ones who read Czech



Museum staff, volunteers, and visitors were put to the test during September as the city-wide sewer project found its way to the front of the Museum & Library. We never knew how much we loved our parking lot!



National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

30 Sixteenth Avenue S.W. - Cedar Rapids, Iowa USA 52404-5904

319 362-8500 - Fax 319 363-2209

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