

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

NAŠE ČESKÉ DĚDICTVÍ

OUR

CZECH

HERITAGE



Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!

**Special Exhibit Opens at
National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library**

(Story on page 4)

Volume 27 – Number 1 - 2002



NAŠE ČESKÉ DĚDICTVÍ

OUR CZECH HERITAGE

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- | | |
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Nase Ceske Deditivi

Subscriptions for the newsletter are not sold. Members of the Czech Heritage Foundation who pay their annual dues of \$3.00 per person receive *Nase Ceske Deditivi* free. Dues are renewable on January 1st of each year and expire December 31st. The newsletter, which is mailed quarterly, serves to inform its members of its activities, people, and places. Dues received in September apply to the following year for new members.

January Newsletter Volunteers

By Frank Novotny

It is always enjoyable to get together and prepare the *Nase Ceske Deditivi* for mailing. The past issue volunteers were:

Emma Davidson, Lenora Jiroutek, Peg Merta, Arlo & Joyce Netolicky, Frank Novotny, John & Adeline Volesky, and Mana Zlatohlavek.

We do want to express a sincere thank you to all the above and anybody else who helped getting the activity organized. We'll be calling for help for future editions.

President's Message

By Sylvia Rohlena

Spring no doubt is a wonderful time of the year, new beginnings, not only in the beautiful blooming flowers and shrubs but also for organizations like Czech Heritage who have set new goals for the year. Now many volunteers are busy giving their service and using their talents to complete our goals. We appreciate and thank all members involved, for it is through their commitment that projects are completed.

Two projects of the many come to mind. The St. Joseph Day Dance in March was a huge success because Frank and Barb Edmunds along with their committee did an excellent job of organization. The many tickets sold by Evelyn Stejskal and the generous gifts for door prizes were greatly appreciated. Now we are preparing to celebrate the first annual Iowa Czech, Slovak Princess contest. Thanks to Adeline Volesky and grand daughter Lisa, for taking the initiative to make this happen.

The many events in our area have never been more diverse for our members. A visit to the NCSML by Pavel Dostal, Secretary of Culture of the Czech Republic was of great significance for both parties involved. The Museums colorful display of Kroje, and the many events planned during Houby Days makes it fun to be a part of our Czech Heritage.

One of the main reasons our success continues is the support our members give to Czech Heritage through annual gifts and donations. This strong support benefits

many youth and programs and continues to create a richer more meaningful Czech Heritage in us all. I am pleased to report our great progress and grateful to all our members. Thank you so very much.

Sylvia Blaha Rohlena

Editor's Message - by Russ Novotny

This issue has an interesting twist in that we are finishing up our reports from last year's Homestay students as we introduce the students who will participate in the program this year. We also have located an article on a little-known early Czech-American who made a significant impact on commerce between the contiguous states and Alaska.

Look for details of these stories in our next Newsletters

- ❖ **Special Reports:**
 - 2002 Homestay Ambassador Reports
- ❖ **Historic Perspective:**
 - Marak's Store - Swisher, IA
 - Joe & Cliff's Restaurant - Cedar Rapids, IA
- ❖ **Feature Article:**
 - Melvina Svec, 100 Years (Transcript from Tribute Program 9/16/01)

Please contact us with your ideas for articles at:

Newsletter Materials
Czech Heritage Foundation
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I. Special Notices:

Houby Days May 17th - 19th



Come on down for the Czech Village Association's **25th Annual Houby Days Festival** May 17, 18, and 19, 2002. Attendees to this popular ethnic festival can participate in the 2nd Annual Taste of Czech & Slovak, the Egg and Houby Breakfast, May pole dancing, Parade of Kroje (Czech and Slovak folk costumes), koláč eating contest, and the houby

contest. Also, there will be various craft and food vendors, a car show, two parades, pony rides, carnival, and the **first ever Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa pageant**.

Bands from all around the Midwest will play ethnic music, but, you won't want to miss the popular Button Accordion Jamboree. Enter your team in the 1st ever

Cabbage Roll Relay Race and the Carp Toss Competition. Buy a Houby Days button for a chance to win one of 100 prizes or a raffle ticket for a chance at a hand-pieced and sewn quilt. Activities for children will be all weekend and climax with a kiddie parade at 4:00 p.m. Sunday. Receive \$1 off admission to the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and see **Kroje - Dress for the Dance of Life!** a special exhibition about the folk dress of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia.

For more information about Houby Days activities, call The Wooden Spool at (319) 286-8773 or the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library at (319) 362-8500. Houby Days will take place along 16th Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids. Please refer to the schedule below (information in this schedule is believed accurate at the time of printing, but times and locations are subject to change):

Friday, May 17th, 2002

9:30 - 4:00 - \$1 off admission - NCSML
4 - midnight - Carnival - 17th Ave. Parking Lot
5 - 7:00 - Taste of Czech & Slovak - NCSML
5 - 10:00 - Pony Rides - Avenue
7 - 9:00 - Czech Plus Band - Kosek Bandstand

Saturday, May 18th, 2002

7 - 11:00 - Egg & Houby Breakfast - 2 Star Detective
8:30 - Flag Raising Ceremony - Avenue
9 - 5:00 - Craft Show - Avenue
9 - 5:00 - Pony Rides - Avenue
9 - 7:00 - Food Vendors - Avenue
9:30 - 4:00 - \$1 off admission - NCSML
10:00 - Parade - Avenue
11:00 - Meet the Queen Candidates - Bandstand
11 - 7:00 - Dunk Tank - Avenue
Noon - 2:00 - Czech Artist - Music Loft Stage
Noon - 2:00 - Czech Plus Band - Kosek Bandstand
Noon - Cabbage Roll Relay Competition - Avenue
Noon - Midnight - Carnival - 17th Ave. Parking Lot
1:00 - Folk Dancing - NCSML
1 - 2:30 - Queen Interviews - NCSML
2 - 2:30 - Czech Heritage Singers - Kosek Bandstand
2:00 - May Pole Dance - NCSML
2 - 5:00 - Allen Simanek, Accordionist - Strolling Ave.
2 - 5:00 - Dave Franklin's Party Time Band - Music Loft
2:30 - Houby Winners Announced - Kosek Bandstand
2:30 - 5:00 - Mike Lasack & Rhythm-Aires - Bandstand
3:00 - Queen Talent Show - NCSML
4:00 - Car Show Trophies Awarded - Sokol Park
5 - 9:00 - Atahualpa - Music Loft Stage
5 - 9:00 - Rose B. - Kosek Bandstand
6-9:00 - Crowning Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa - NCSML

Sunday, May 19, 2002

7 - 11:00 - Egg & Houby Breakfast - 2 Star Detective
9 - 5:00 - Craft Show - Avenue
9 - 5:00 - Food Vendors - Avenue
9 - 5:00 - Pony Rides - Avenue
10 - 9:00 - Dunk tank - Avenue
10:30 - Folk Hymn Mass - St. Wenceslaus

Noon – 4:00 - \$1 off admission - NCSML
 Noon – 9:00 - Carnival - 17th Ave. Parking Lot
 Noon – 2:00 - Button Accordion Jamboree - Bandstand
 Noon – 4:00 - Craig Erickson Band - Music Loft
 1 – 4:00 - Kiddie Games - Sokol Park
 1:00 - Parade of Kroje - NCSML
 1:45 - Sokol Tumbling Demonstration - Avenue
 2:00 - Carp Toss Competition - Avenue
 2 – 4:00 - Czech Heritage Band - Kosek Bandstand
 2:00 - May Pole Dance - NCSML
 3:00 - Kolác Eating Contest - Sykora's Bakery
 3:00 - Lecture - NCSML
 4:00 - Kiddie Parade - Avenue

Czech Heritage Picnic Date Changed to Sept. 10, 2002

The Annual Picnic for the Czech Heritage Foundation has been changed. It will be a month later than usual, scheduled for the regular meeting night in



September. The picnic will begin at 6:30 PM, September 10, 2002 at the ZCJB Park near Cedar Rapids. The picnic will be a potluck with drinks and meat furnished. All members and friends are encouraged to attend. Mark your calendar now.

II. Cover Story:

Kroje Exhibit Opens at NCSML

By Jan Stoffer Tursi



Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!



The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is proud to announce its special exhibition, *Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!* The exhibition features kroje (pronounced kroy-eh), folk costumes from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. These costumes blend bold colors, fine fabrics, and detailed designs into works of wearable art. The exhibition opened to the public April 12, 2002 and runs through October 13, 2002.



Several Guests Attended the Exhibit Opening
 Dressed in Their Own Kroje

"*Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!* is probably the most anticipated exhibition we have put together since *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture in 1997*," commented Carmen Langel, NCSML curator. "People from all over the country are planning to visit the museum just to see this show."



Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life! is an original exhibition prepared by the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. *Kroje* highlights the NCSML's tremendous textile collection and will only be exhibited at the National Czech & Slovak

Museum & Library. Colorful heirloom textiles, including many never-before-seen items and complete kroje, elaborate embroidery, laces, and fine beaded textiles from the Baine/Cincebeaux Collection tell the enchanting tale of national and local pride in ethnic heritage. Also included are several kroje that were

previously on display; but, have been 'resting' for several years. One such kroje is the "Fish Scale Kroje." (See Accompanying Story on Page 6).

Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life! also includes a series of original oil paintings by Joza Uprka, one of Moravia's most recognized artists of the early 20th century. His post-impressionist style uses bright color and texture to create remarkable imagery of village life. These paintings are on loan from George Drost, Chicago's Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic, and, *Kroje!* features images adapted from a newly acquired set of World War I-era lantern slides, including hand-colored photos of men and women wearing their kroje.

The NCSML will also be featuring a series of fun programs to compliment *Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!* including: lectures, needlework classes, porcelain painting classes, workshops, and a variety of other events. The Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre is presenting "The Bartered Bride (Prodaná Nevesta)" by Czech composer Bedrich Smetana, June 7 and 9, 2002. The NCSML is hosting a Smetana Forum on June 2, 2002. Dokolacka, dokola: The 1st National Bohemian, Moravian, and Slovak Dance Festival will be July 27, 2002 and a Kroje Symposium will be held September 6 and 7, 2002. Leading folk costume and kroje experts from the Czech Republic and the United States will discuss the trends and history of these unique and beautiful fashions.

Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life! will be on exhibition for a very short time. Don't miss your opportunity to experience the most colorful exhibition in town! During this special exhibition, the NCSML will be open Monday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



and Sundays noon to 4:00 p.m. The exhibition will close October 13, 2002. "Normally, we are only open Tuesdays through Sunday; however, with the immense interest in this exhibition, we felt it necessary to accommodate visitors who will only be in the area on Mondays," explains President/CEO Dan Baldwin.

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is located at 30 16th Ave. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA. For more information about *Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!* or upcoming events, please call 319.362.8500 or consult the web site at WWW.NCSML.ORG.

III. Olga's Czech Language Corner:

Lesson 8

By Olga Drahozal



Answers to your translation exercise from the last lesson:

From ENGLISH	To CZECH
I have a red coat	(Ja) nám červený kabát.
You have a new auto?	Ty máš (or Vy máte) nové auto?
We have a small white ticket.	My máme malý bílý lístek.
The old lady is here	Stará pani je tady.
The yellow lamp is small.	Žlutá lampa je malá.

From CZECH	To ENGLISH
(My) máme ten velký domov.	We have that large home.
Máte modré auto?	You have a blue car?
Ta velká zahrádka je hezká.	That garden is pretty.
Ten park je veliký. (velký & veliky are interchangeable)	That park is large.
Ten autobus je žlutý.	That bus is yellow.

This lesson – Adjectives with plural nouns.

Lesson 6 taught us something about plurals. Let's add what we learned about adjectives to plural nouns.

An adjective, which describes a plural *masculine* noun, ends in "e".

	ENGLISH	CZECH
Singular Noun	White ticket	Bílý lístek
Plural Noun	White tickets	Bílé lístky

An adjective, which describes a plural *feminine* noun, ends in "a".

	ENGLISH	CZECH
Singular Noun	White pencil	Bílá tužka
Plural Noun	White pencils	Bílé tužky

An adjective, which describes a plural *neuter* noun, ends in "e".

	ENGLISH	CZECH
Singular Noun	White pen	Bílé péro
Plural Noun	White pens	Bílé pera

In conversation, you sometimes hear a "y" ending on masculine and neuter plural nouns. This may be

acceptable in conversation but never correct in written form.

Exercise for next time –

Practice the following:

- Černý vlak (vlahk) a black train
- Černé blaky (vlah-kee) black trains
- Zelená louka (low-kah) a green meadow
- Zelené louky (low-kee) green meadows
- Modré jezero (yeh-zeh-raw) a blue lake
- Modrá jezera (yeh-zeh-rah) blue lakes

Exercise for next time –

Translate the following sentences:

- My máme nové mapy.
- Oni vidi (vy-dyee) [see] staré mosty (stah-reh maw-sty) [bridges].
- Vy mate modre auta.
- Your new books are here.
- I see the big airplanes.
- She has large black dogs.

IV. National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library



Fish Scale Kroje

By Jan Stoffer Tursi

The Fish Scale Kroje is a complete kroje from near Trebon, Czech Republic. According to the donor, during World War II, the donor's husband, John Vittengle, was a member of the Occupational Forces in Czechoslovakia after the war. He served as a member of the Secret Service investigating Russian activity in the country. Because he was fluent in Czech, Vittengle befriended many Czech people and let them know he was from the United States.

Russian officials confiscated valuable items from the

Czech people. In order to protect some of their belongings, several such items were passed along to Vittengle with the understanding they would be sent to a Czech community in the United States. Vittengle, in return, sent them to his wife in their home city, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



The Fish Scale Kroje is said to have been made in 1813 and belonged to the wife of a head fishmaster and supervisor of a large lake near Trebon, Bohemia (now Czech Republic). It is adorned with glass beads, silver sequins, semi-precious stones, lace, and carp scales. The carp scales were cut into various designs before being sewn, with beads, into flower patterns on the blue velvet vest and brown velvet apron. The scales represent the fish and their role in the livelihood of the fishmaster's wife, while the glass beads represent the fish eggs.

This wonderful complete kroje (consisting of a cap, tie, beaded headband, bodice, beaded blouse, skirt, two aprons, underslip chemise, stockings, handkerchief, scarf, and sandals) was donated to the Czech Museum in 1981. It remained on exhibition for several years before it was temporarily taken off display. The NCSML is proud to once again display this unique and beautiful kroje.

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is located at 30 16th Ave. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA. For more information about this exhibit or programs, call (319) 362-8500.

V. Special Reports:

2001 HOMESTAY REPORTS -

EDITOR'S NOTE: Here are the final two reports from our Homestay student who visited the Czech Republic last year. We split these reports across multiple issues for space considerations, and to let you enjoy their stories over more time.

Kit's Observations

By Kit Wobeter

What a great trip! My trip to the Czech Republic this summer was the best trip I have ever had in my life. I got to see a new country, live in a great city, meet and stay with friendly people, and see many interesting places.



My trip started with a week at a sports camp that everyone from my host mother's work attended. I had a good time meeting kids my age and interacting with everyone because we were playing sports and speaking was not a necessity. At the camp I got to see a castle in a nearby town, and I got to see rural Czech Republic during biking and canoeing trips.

The next week was spent at a cottage near Germany. One of my host brother's friends had a cottage in a village 100km north of Prague. We went swimming in a lake, grilled food outside, and went on bike rides during the week. I enjoyed meeting Tomas' (my host brother) friends and learning what school was like compared to school in the United States.



This is the cottage I stayed at for a week. It is about 150 years old.

The next two weeks were spent in the city of Prague. During these two weeks, I got to see many famous landmarks, visit my relatives, and just experience normal things in a city of 1.1 million people. I got to see the National Museum, Wenceslas Square, Charles Bridge, Prague Castle, and other popular places. My favorite was Wenceslas Square because of all the people, stores, and things going on.



This is some of my favorite pictures from my trip. I took these from the top of a bell tower of the church that is inside Prague Castle. From this tower, I could see almost everything in the city.



These are my relatives that live in Hanusovice, CZ. It is about a 2.5 hour drive from Prague. The parents are Frantisek and Mariana Felner. Their children are Matous-5, Terezie-3, and Frantisek-1.

I also enjoyed visiting my relatives. My host family was nice enough to drive a total of eight hours on two separate trips so I could visit them. My relatives told me stories of the ancestors to my family and about my grandparents when they visited Europe 15 years ago.

This has been a wonderful experience for me. I learned a lot about the Czech Republic and had fun at the same time. Also, I would like to thank the Czech Heritage Foundation for allowing me to go on this trip.

Regina's Observations

By Regina Hogan



Before leaving for the Czech Republic, everyone that had previously been there told me that it was going to be the experience of my life, and that I would never forget it, and yet I didn't know quite what to expect. I soon discovered the

warm hospitality that I had been told so much about, as we were all greeted with numerous hugs (and maybe even kisses) just minutes after retrieving our luggage.

I was quickly shipped off to Tereza's (my host sister's) flat (or apartment as we would call it) where I would be living for the next 4 weeks. It was a small, cozy 2-bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and living room flat.

The first couple weeks I spent in awe. Everything from the countryside that we saw while flying in, to Prague itself was so beautiful. Coming from a small town, things like the metro (Czech equivalent of a subway) and millions of people walking around were all very new to me. A good portion of my time was spent in Internet cafes, trying to keep everyone at home informed, and sitting in just regular cafes having a cup of coffee with Tereza's friends. During the day Tereza and I were on our own, as her mother worked from 4am to 3pm Monday through Friday.

The third week I spent in Slovakia at the cottage of one of Tereza's friends. Here we did everything from chopping down a no-longer-in-use electrical pole to swimming and relaxing for about 4 days. It was really a nice change from busy Prague.



**Chopping Down No Longer Used
Electrical Pole at the Cottage**

My last few weeks and days in the Czech Republic were spent doing sightseeing, attending birthday parties, dancing the nights away at the dance clubs, going to Czech movies with English titles and vice versa.



**Tereza and her Relatives at
Tereza's Cousin's Birthday Party**

I really enjoyed my time in the Czech Republic, and am so thankful for being sent, as I would return in a heartbeat. There is really nothing like going to Europe, and it's even better when you get the entire experience of staying with a family. I would recommend it to anyone.

2002 HOMESTAY AMBASSADORS NAMED -



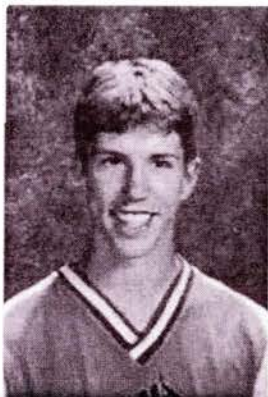
Jon Trpkosh, Nathan Votroubek, and Anthony Ziskovsky will represent the Czech Heritage Foundation this summer as they travel the Czech Republic to spend a month living with and becoming part of a Czech family. The Foundation has already sent over 50 students on this great adventure. This program continues to be one of our

most successful activities for helping our youth become involved with and appreciative of their culture.

Following are notes from each of these students, commenting on their excitement at being chosen for this adventure. We also are including comments from their applications where they explained why they wanted to go on this trip and what they hoped to gain.

When these students return from their trip later this summer, we'll ask them to report on their experiences. Then they can tell us if they really did get what they hoped to gain.

Jon Trpkosh



Hello, my name is Jon Trpkosh. I am one of the three student ambassadors traveling to the Czech Republic this summer. My Czech heritage comes from my Grandfather, who was born on the boat while coming to America. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about myself.

I spend much of my time at Cedar Rapids Prairie, where I am completing my junior year of High School. I am taking a variety of classes, including AP US History, Pre-Calculus, and two foreign languages. I am currently at the top of my class with a 4.00 GPA.

Academics are not my entire life at Prairie. I play Alto-Contralto Clarinet in the school's top band and have been on the soccer team for three years. I am a member of Amnesty International and am Vice President of SAVE, the schools conservation club. I also serve as Vice President of the Junior class. My favorite school activity, however, is Quizbowl, Prairie's Academic Team.

When I am not at school, I do the typical teenager thing. I hang out with friends, play videogames, and listen to music. I spend a lot of my down time reading. I also enjoy getting outside and experiencing nature.

I am very excited about this trip. I look forward to immersing myself in the culture and learning about my heritage. I also look forward to sharing my experiences with anyone who will listen. I'd like to extend my gratitude towards everyone who made this trip possible. Thank you.

Why do you want to spend a month in the Czech Republic?

I have always wanted to travel abroad and learn about my heritage. This trip provides me with an opportunity to do both. I've also heard wonderful things about the country. My cousin studied in Prague for a year and

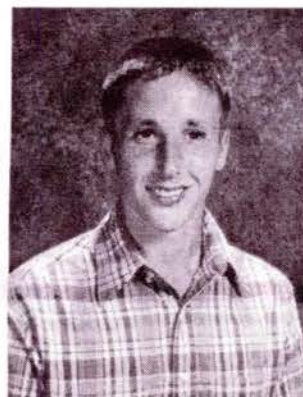
loved it. I believe I would give my host family a favorable impression of what a typical American is like. I'd also be able to teach them what America is really like. I would also like to set up a future contact with a family so that either they or I could visit each other in the future.

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

I hope to gain a better understanding of the people I share part of my cultural identity with and the country they are from. I also want to learn what it will be like far from my home in an unfamiliar environment (almost like a testing ground for college). Unfortunately, my family doesn't engage in any ethnic traditions, Czech or otherwise. I hope this experience will remedy this shortcoming.

Nathan Votroubek

Hello, my name is Nathan Votroubek, and I am excited to be one of the Home-stay program scholarship winners. I am very optimistic about this opportunity, and I'd like to thank everyone for your support of the trip, it will be a once in a lifetime experience that I'll never forget.



I was born and raised just South of Cedar Rapids, and I attend Prairie High School, where I am a junior. I attend church at St. Ludimila's in Cedar Rapids, and I work at St. Luke's Hospital in dining services.

At school I am involved with the show choir, concert choral, football, soccer, and the weight lifting program. My favorite class is probably either history or show choir. I love to learn interesting facts about the past in history, and show choir is just a blast to be a part of. As far as my future education goals are concerned, I am still undecided. I've always been a Hawkeye fan (some years are easier than other to support the team, but I always do), but right now I'm looking at some colleges like ISU for their engineering department.

I am thrilled to be part of this trip. My Czech heritage is evident in my grandparents and certainly my dad. My grandfather speaks Czech very well and is 100% Czech. I am eager to learn about the culture my ancestors enjoyed, and the current life in the Czech Republic. I hope to participate in every opportunity to meet new people, study the life, and most importantly live the life and have fun. I really feel that to get the full meaning of this trip I have to let go of my culture for a month, to really learn what it's like in a new environment, and make friends.

I'd just like to thank everyone once again for this opportunity. I hope that I can share my memories with all my friends, and pass around some really interesting information about where our traditions come from. I hope to have a lot of fun, this is a rare opportunity, and I will make the most of it. Thank you for taking the time to read this article, hopefully it gives you a better idea about who I am, and who the Czech Heritage Foundation is sending as representatives of our country on this trip.

Why do you want to spend a month in the Czech Republic?

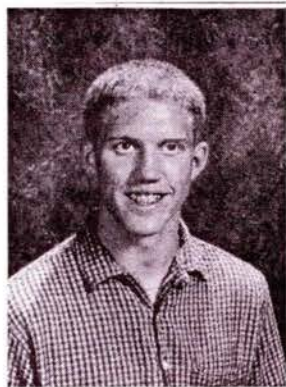
I want to learn more about my heritage and experience a new culture in the Czech Republic. My grandpa is still very much Czech; he learned to speak Czech before he learned English. I want to keep any family heritage that I can by learning more about our Czech ancestry. The other large reason I want to stay in the Czech Republic is for the fun and experience of jumping into a new and unique culture. I want to meet new people and to really experience what life is like in other parts of the world. People say that the US cuts itself off from other countries and their cultures, so I would like to get outside of that stereotype and learn as much as I can.

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

I hope to gain whatever I possibly can from this experience. I want to be able to find out historical facts, traditions and customs. I want to gain the experience of living and working peacefully with people in a totally new environment. This could help me deal with many living and working arrangements in my future. I want to gain the friendship and memories of people that I meet over there. I believe the best way to experience a culture is to meet people and truly find out what they are like. I hope to have a memorable experience that I can tell my friends and family about. Furthermore, I hope to learn about my ancestry, where they were from, and what life was like for them. My family at home will be very curious.

Anthony Ziskovsky

Hi, my name is Anthony Lee Ziskovsky and I have received the privilege of being chosen to attend the Czech Republic this summer. Ever since I hosted a Czech Student last year, I have wanted to go and experience the country, and thanks to the Czech Heritage Foundation Scholarship this summer I will be able to accomplish that.



I am a 17-year-old Junior, who attends Prairie High School, and am involved in many organizations there.

The main activities that I am in are Soccer, Football, Electric Car, Show Choir, Concert Choir, and Student Council. I enjoy all of these activities, however, they do tend to keep me fairly busy.

As for my Czech Heritage, my dad's side of the family is completely Czech, and my mom's side has none so I am considered 50% Czech. My family consists of five members. My dad's name is Dwane, and he works part time in town and is also a farmer. My mother's name is Ann, and she is a Chemical Technician at the Duane Arnold Energy Center (Nuclear Power Plant in Palo). My Sister, Katie, is 19, and is now attending her Sophomore year at Simpson College, in Indianola. Last is my brother, Darren, he just turned 14 and is an Eighth Grader at Prairie.

I am very excited to go on this trip, and am very thankful that the Czech Heritage Foundation has given me this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Why do you want to spend a month in the Czech Republic?

I would have to say the biggest reason for wanting to go to the Czech Republic is a chance to see Tomas Hereog again. Tomas is from Prague and he stayed with me for a month last year. We had a lot of fun together and it would be awesome if I could see him again and visit some of the people and places we talked about. Another reason is that the pictures I have seen of Prague and other cities in the Czech Republic are absolutely gorgeous, and it would be a dream come true to be able to see these places in real life. The third reason I would love to go is that the only other country I have been to is Peru, for a Work trip through church. Although Peru has absolutely beautiful scenery, we were only in poor villages and were not able to see any of the culture of the country. It would be thrilling to be able to see a developed foreign country to see how different it really is from the United States.

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

I hope to gain an enormous amount from this experience. First off, I know very little Czech, so being immersed in the language will be a great way to start learning and hopefully spark my interest enough to continue learning once I get back. Secondly, although I personally do not know where my ancestors were from in Moravia, it would be great to talk to my grandparents and great grandma about where our roots are at, and maybe do a little bit of genealogy while I am there. Thirdly, I hope to be around kids my own age so that I can see things that are different and hopefully find things that are universal.



St. Joseph's Dance Report

By Frank and Barbara Edmunds

Sunday, March 24th was a wonderful day, nice weather, good old fashion Czech fellowship, and a variety of music for all to enjoy. Over 400 people, including children and youth, were at the ELKS LODGE in Cedar Rapids to participate.



This location was a change from the past St. Joseph's Day Dances and proved to be a good move. Guests enjoyed having more room to dance, and just enjoy the great music provided by the Jim Busta Band from Spring Grove, MN. This dance is to benefit two of the Czech Heritage programs; the Homestay, and the Scholarship program. Through the admissions, successful bake sale, door prizes and raffle items, we were able to turn over \$1,263.77 to each of these two programs.



We have so many people to thank, and we don't want to miss any of you. The tickets were printed courtesy of STEJSKAL'S FLORIST. Our Board members, Ambassadors and former Princess and Prince helped us out in many ways. We had over 46 businesses contribute to this fund raiser, either with donations of money, items and certificates to raffle or bought tickets. We are thankful for the help from Evelyn Stejskal, who again this year spent MANY hours contacting businesses and individuals to help us with this fund raiser. Much of our success is because of Evelyn. (See Page 14 for a list of

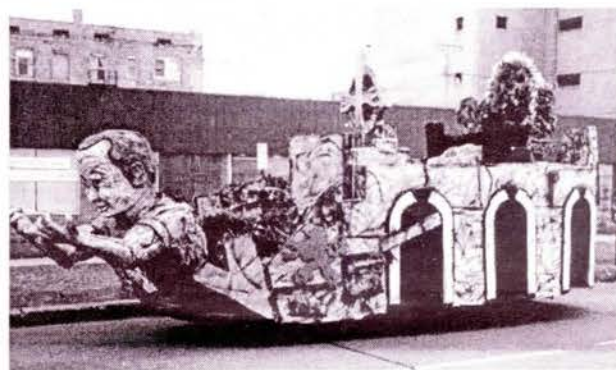
those businesses who graciously donated to our cause when Evelyn came to call.)

The arrangements have been made for 2003. The Elks Lodge will be the place to be on Sunday, March 23, and the Jim Busta Band will be there to entertain you.

Again, thanks to all who helped and came to our 2002 dance. We will see you next year!

Czech Heritage Float Wins Again, & Again

The Czech Heritage float took top honors this AGAIN year in both the St. Joseph's and the St. Patrick's Day parades in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



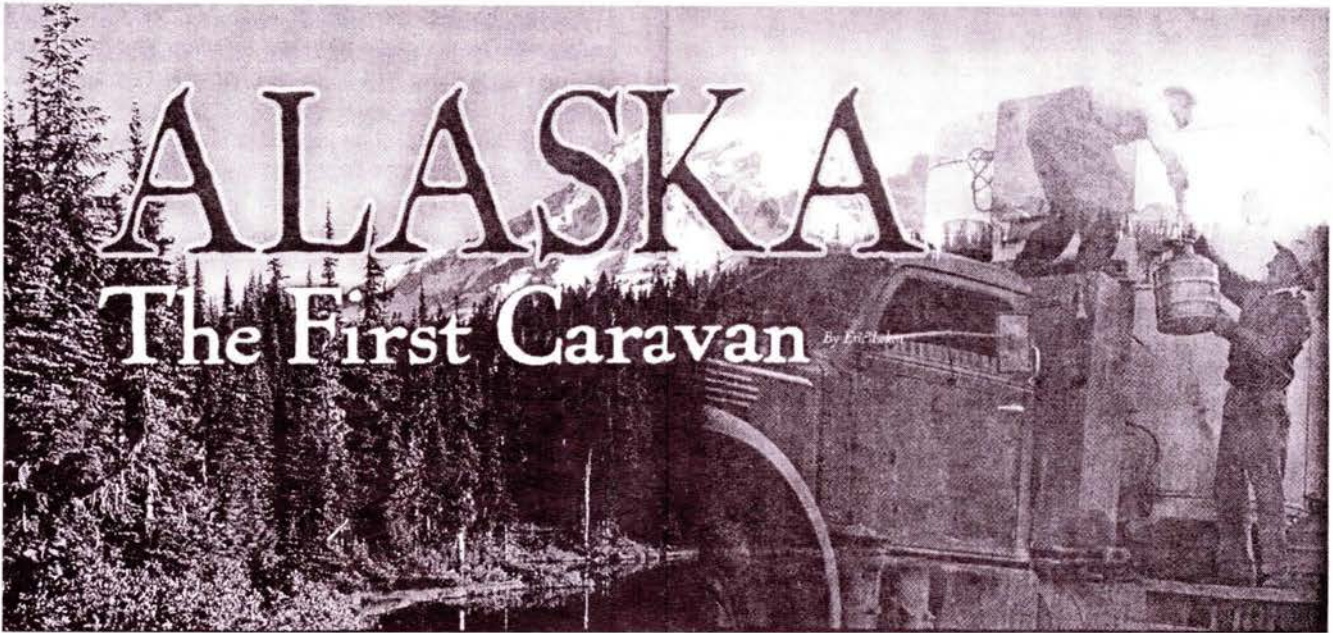
The float's theme was the connection between present day Czechs and the Boii Tribe of Celtic origin, who were the forerunners of the Bohemians. It featured Chieftain Czech, who named the Bohemians.



Czech Prince & Princess (Eric Gervais & Rachel Wobeter) Bundle Up to Stay Warm as they Ride the Czech Heritage Float

Thanks again to Leonard Pfeifer for his creative visions and his tenacity to turn those visions into rolling displays. The Czech Heritage Foundation gains significant visibility from this exposure.

VII. Feature Story:



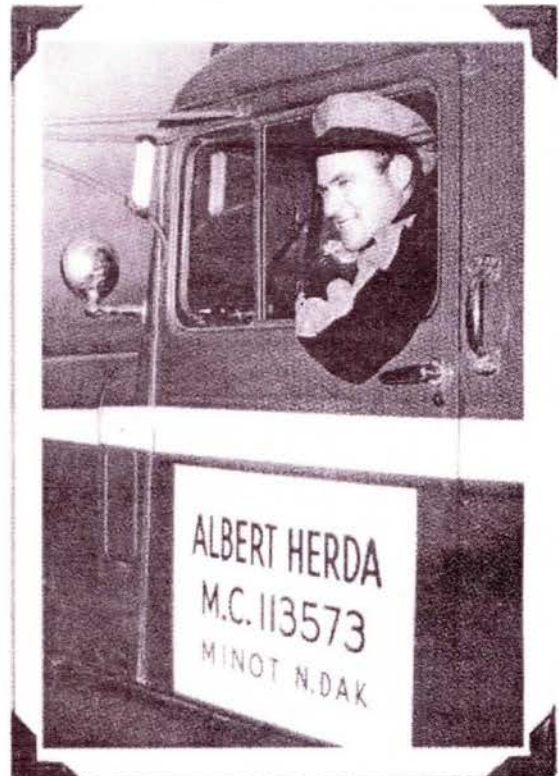
EDITOR'S NOTE: Recently, Czech Heritage President, Sylvia Rohlena, noticed this article about an adventurous Czech who opened up the Alcan Highway to commercial trucking. The article was in Western Horizon Resorts' magazine, Spirit of the Road/Winter 2002. We thought this was a great opportunity to highlight the determination of an early Czech-American. Thank you to Western Horizon Resorts for permission to reprint this article.

A Czech Leads the Way: Alaska, The First Caravan by Eric Loken

The year was 1946. A shipping strike on the West Coast had cut off supplies to Alaska by sea. To make matters worse, there was only one ill-kept military road leading to the state, and it was considered too difficult for commercial trucking. The lack of access by land, compounded by the shipping strike, had left the residents of Fairbanks, Alaska sorely in need of fresh produce. Prices were soaring.

Meanwhile, further south in Minot, North Dakota, a trucker's gaze turned north and saw an opportunity too attractive to ignore. Twenty-five year old Albert Herda was born of Czech parents but infused with the indomitable American spirit for pioneering. He was not about to let the prospect of one 3,000 mile long, poorly maintained road built through mountainous country in some of the most frigid temperatures on the continent intimidate him. Just a few weeks earlier, the Canadian government had granted permission for American commercial trucks to pass through its borders along this Alaskan highway, known as the "Alcan." Herda flew to

Fairbanks where he was assured of a strong market, then returned home to begin his plans for the first commercial trucking expedition to Alaska in history. After securing four trucks with experienced drivers and over \$100,000 worth of produce, along with extra winter clothing, heating and sleeping equipment, replacement parts for the trucks, emergency supplies, and 1,600 gallons of gasoline, Herda was ready to begin the 3-week haul to Fairbanks. On November 26th, Albert hugged his wife, Ida, and four children goodbye. The last in line to see him off was his youngest at the time, Cleo Herda, a girl



of one that would later marry Jim Loken and with him become the cofounder of Western Horizon Resorts.

Along the route, Albert and his team would enter a land untamed. Many miles would pass where there would be no trace of human intrusion, only great bulwarks of jack pine and spruce or mountains of snow. The dark winter months would receive little sun as the northern lights flew over the Yukon sky. Below, the twilight gaze of headlights would stay lit 24 hours a day. And of course, uncountable mountain passes stood in mute deterrence. Caribou, elk, wolves, and all manner of hard-eyed winter wildlife would be their only company.

At first, the expedition went as planned. Then an ominous two-week period passed in which Ida Herda heard no word from her husband. Newspapers in Minot ran with the headlines "No Word from Herda Caravan Due in Alaska" and "Still No Word from Alaska Bound Caravan." Ida was worried, and with good reason. Further north, her husband had decided to take his caravan on a shortcut over the ice of the Smoky River in northern Alberta (cutting off nearly 200 miles). Albert was the first to cross the river with his truck. He then walked back to guide the other trucks over the ice. The first two rumbled over successfully. When the third truck attempted the cross, however, disaster struck with the sickening baritone rumble of cracking ice. Albert yelled for the driver to swing the truck over, but the driver was too intent on reaching the far shore to comprehend. Then the ice shattered and the back of the truck began to sink. Herda ran forward and the ice gave way beneath him as well. Rescuers surged forward to help: another man fell through. The driver of the sinking truck leapt clear, not even getting wet. Meanwhile, Herda and his would-be rescuer were helped out of the water. The 28 below temperature quickly froze the outer layers of clothes on the wet men. Luckily, the water had not seeped through the many thick layers to their skin, and they were not in serious danger of freezing.

With the help of sixteen natives and a pair of horses, along with over thirty hours of grueling work in temperatures that fell to 60 below during the night, Herda was able to free the trailer from 11 feet of water. Enough of the load was salvaged to make it worthwhile to get the truck rolling again, and for the next eleven days men worked with blowtorches to thaw the ice on the truck. Only 1,600 miles to go. The next problem arose near Muncho Lake, 1,000 miles from Fairbanks. A broken gear in the differential meant that one of the trucks, along with 18 tons of meat and flour, had to be left behind.

Leonard Stevens, a reporter from Collier's Magazine, rode with Herda on a later expedition to Alaska and described the conditions. "For more than eight days, Albert Herda had barely moved from behind the wheel of the big truck. In that time, he had grabbed his rest when he could, sleeping beside me in the cab, his engine running constantly to keep it from freezing solid in the

bitter cold. It had been the hardest kind of driving imaginable. More than once, my heart had been in my throat as we swept around a slick, steep curve; and, even riding as a passenger, I felt stiff and sore – and, of course, cold. Men have frozen to death driving these roads (when it gets really cold, say 60 below, Herda turns on a blowtorch and sets it on the cab floor)."

It was New Year's Eve when Albert's historical expedition reached its destination and the three remaining trucks rumbled into Fairbanks. Despite the fact that Albert ended up losing quite a bit of money on this trip, he regarded his first haul as a learning experience; he would come back to Fairbanks again. For many more years, Herda's trucks would supply the city, earning him the title of "Dean of the Alcan Highway." He was granted interstate commerce commission approval to operate his trucks regularly along the Alaskan highway as his trucking outfit prospered. Albert died in 1970 of a heart attack, leaving behind a family that still misses him and is still immensely proud of their father.



Now, of course, better road maintenance has made the trip to Alaska far less treacherous than it was for Albert. Caravans of RVers with the same pioneering spirit follow the route he took, though with the comforts of a modern RV travelers can enjoy the rugged, untamed lands of Alaska without needing a blowtorch to keep warm. And, of course, they have the luxury of waiting until summer to make the trip. Travelers can now enjoy all of the wonders Alaska has to offer, from visiting Glacier Bay National Park, to snowmobiling in pristine wilderness surroundings, to catching trophy-sized fish in the Yukon River.

Biography:

Eric Loken, youngest son of Jim and Cleo Loken, graduated from the University of Colorado in 2000 with majors in English Literature and Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology. At age 23, he works in the publishing department of Western Horizon Resorts.

Contributor Acknowledgement

DONATIONS WITH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS - The following have graciously included donations beyond the basic membership fee with their membership applications.

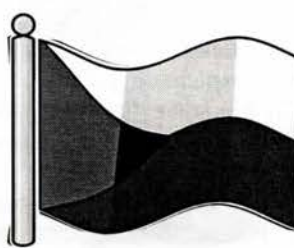
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It is time to renew your membership, unless you are a new member. Memberships expire December 31 and are renewable January 1. Use this handy Membership Renewal Application form. Don't forget. Renew now so you won't miss a single information packed issue of Naše České Dědictví.

Please renew today! A Bargain at \$3.00 per year

Calendar of Events

-
- May 14 **Czech Heritage Foundation Meeting** - Museum, 7:30 PM
16 **Learn at Lunch.** "Making Old Dolls New", JoAnne Neff - Museum, Noon.
17-19 **Houby Days Celebration** - Czech Village, Cedar Rapids, IA
18 **Crowning of Miss Iowa Czech Slovak**, Czech Village, Cedar Rapids, IA
19 **Life Long Learning:** "Czech Voices & Nebraska & Kansas", Dr. Mila Saskova-Pierce - Museum, 3:00 PM
-

- June 2 **Life Long Learning:** Smetana Forum - Museum, 2:00 PM
7 & 9 **The Bartered Bride**, by the Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre - Theatre Cedar Rapids, 2:00 PM & 8:00 PM
11 **Czech Heritage Foundation Meeting** - Museum, 7:30 PM
17 **Life Long Learning:** Immigrant Home History - Museum, 7:00 PM
20 **Learn at Lunch:** "Writing Your Family History" by Charlene Hansen - Museum, noon.
23 **Life Long Learning.** "Work and Life in Slovakia - from an American Perspective." - Museum, 2:00 PM
-

- July 9 **Czech Heritage Foundation Meeting** - Museum, 7:30 PM
18 **Learn at Lunch.** "Polka on the Radio" by Dave Franklin Kralik - Museum, Noon
27 **1st National Bohemian, Moravian, & Slovak Dance Festival** - Museum Garden, Time to be announced.
-

- Aug. 13 **Czech Heritage Foundation Meeting** - Museum, 7:30 PM
15 **Learn at Lunch:** "St. Ludmila Church - From the Old to the New" by Nancy Colbert - Museum, Noon
-

- Sept. 6-7 **Kroje Symposium** - Museum, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
10 **Czech Heritage Foundation Annual Picnic (everyone welcome)** - ZCJB Park, 6:30 PM
-

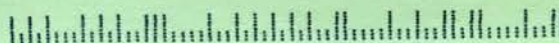
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Czech Out These Web Sites

Travel to the Czech and Slovak Republics from the comfort of your own home. Read a Czech newspaper (in Czech if you want). Research your Czech/Slovak roots. The web contains more sites and information related to our heritage than any of us will ever have time to fully explore. Try some of these sites out.

Lists of Links to Other Czech & Slovak related Web Sites

<http://www.ncsml.org/links.htm> - Provided by the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library)

<http://www.slavophilia.net/czecho.htm> - Czech Republic Links

<http://www.slavophilia.net/slovakia.htm> - Slovak Republic Links

<http://www.slavophilia.net/> - Slavic and Eastern European Links

National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library.

<http://www.ncsml.org/>

Cedar Rapids Gazette Features

<http://www.gazetteonline.com/special/village/index.htm> - Czech Village (Gazette articles, clickable map, village-related web sites, recipes, photo tour)

<http://www.gazetteonline.com/special/czech/index.htm> - Dedication of the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library - Special reports and related articles (1995)

Official Governmental Sites

<http://www.czech.cz/> - Czech Republic

<http://www.slovakembassy-us.org/> - Slovak Embassy in USA