

Continuing the art, page 8



2008/2009

Editor

Emma Lehmann

Contributors

Leonard Pfeiffer, Barb Edmunds, Zelda De Hoedt, Holly Steponek, Allie Wieneke and Russ De Hoedt.

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Check out our web site

The Czech Heritage Foundation's newly updated web site is something you have to see. So please visit www.czechheritagefoundation.org anytime for all things Czech.

Send us your stories

I hope you like the newly reformatted newsletter! If there is anything you would like to see included in the next issue, please let me know! Write to me anytime at or send articles to

. And always remember to share your copy with a friend or relative, or better yet send in a gift membership in their name!

In this issue

Sv. Mikolas Day in pictures	4
The trip of a lifetime	
Continuing the art	8
'Old World' Easter traditions	

President's message

As efforts continue to rebuild the Czech heritage image, certain clarifications of our community role have becomes more defined. The Czech Heritage Foundations mission is to promote our image as Czech's who honor and celebrate Old World Heritage. So we begin to reshape our image, it will require renewed efforts to carry on with projects to help to achieve or primary mission.

Our recent appearance in the 25th annual Holiday Parade, Svaty Mikolas appearances in Czech Village, Lindale Mall, and the Fire and Ice Festival in Cedar Rapids was the kicked off our renewed image rebuilding efforts. The year started off with the crowning of our new Prince and Princess at our annual January meeting. Our most recent expo was our participation in the 20th annual Cultural Diversity Celebration in Iowa City where the attendance participation to this event was in the thousands.

With our up coming Cultural educational expo on March 12 at General Mill Cedar Rapids plant, plus an entry in the SAPADASO (Irish) Parade March 17th, the St. Joseph Day (Czech) Parade March 19th, and the St. Joseph Dance March 22nd you see our efforts to rebuild our image has a busy schedule. Top this off with plans to participate in the 32nd annual Houby days Festival May 15th, 16th, 17th, efforts of these projects will show case the Czech Heritage with the flag raising ceremony, Houby breakfast, a mushroom identification booth, the Houby Fest Parade where the Czech Heritage Foundations will show off many of the students that participate in our programs, a kroje show, plus the Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant where one contestant will represent lowa at the Nationals level that will be held in Wilber Nebraska in August.

Make plans to attend one of the many up coming events. I would like thank another Czech organization in Cedar Rapids in their recovery efforts. As it is the Czech Heritage Foundations role to promote our heritage, it is the role of the NCSML to preserve our artifacts. They too are very busy and we thank them for their efforts.

by Leonard Pfeiffer

St. Joseph Dance to be held March 22, 2009

The Czech Heritage Foundation in Cedar Rapids will be the proud host for the annual St. Joseph Day Dance on Sunday, March 22, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

This will be held at the Cedar Rapids Elks Lodge, 801 - 33rd Avenue SW. The admission price is only \$7.00 and tickets are available from any Czech Heritage Board member or at the door.

Barefoot Becky and the Ivanhoe Dutchmen from Cedar Rapids will entertain us again this year. Everyone enjoyed the band the past two years. We are fortunate that they are returning. Food will be for sale by the Elks Lodge and a large bake sale is always a part of the fundraising by the Czech Heritage Foundation.

There will be door prizes given out during the afternoon and nice raffle items are all part of the fundraising. This is the primary financer for the Czech Heritage's Homestay and Scholarship Programs. Three students were chosen this year to go to the Czech Republic.

We invite all to come and enjoy the fun and fellowship during this St. Joseph holiday.

with any

Contact committee chairs Barb and Frank Edmunds at questions.

by Barb Edmunds

Czech Singers hit high note with CHF board member

During the December 2008 Czech Heritage Meeting we had some wonderful entertainment. The Czech Heritage Singers performed for us at our Christmas meeting. It was a very enjoyable presentation. Donna Merkle played the piano and Bessie Drahazol, Bernie Drahazol, Marj Nejdl, John Kostal and more sang several holiday songs for us in Czech and English languages. They also had a few songs which we all joined in. It was very enjoyable and we thank them for attending and providing excellent entertainment!

by Zelda De Hoedt

Svaty Mikolas Day festivities down the avenue in pictures





(top) The angel, devil and Saint Nicholas (Svaty Mikolas) walk down the avenue during the winter holiday celebration. (right) Czech royalty celebrate the holidays. (left) Children enjoy Czech traditions.





CHF seeks queen contestants

We are getting ready for another wonderful year full of new adventures with the Miss Czech Slovak lowa pageant. Since last year there has been a major flood throughout Cedar Rapids , lowa . This means that the entire Czech Village was destroyed and is currently in the process of being re-constructed. However... Houby days in the Village will still go on and is currently being scheduled with lots of entertainment throughout the weekend. The Miss Czech Slovak lowa pageant will take place on Saturday, May 16, 2009 during the Houby Days Celebration. A few events that you can see the past and current participants in will include the morning breakfast, floats at the parade, kroje competition, talent competition and the crowning ceremony for the new Miss Czech Slovak lowa 2009-2010. She will continue to represent lowa throughout the year and represent lowa in Nationals at Wilber , Nebraska in August.

Zelda De Hoedt is the new pageant committee chair. Adeline Volesky, past pageant committee chair, 'pictured left', Joyce Netolicky 'pictured right' and Debbie Volesky not pictured are active pageant committee members.

by Zelda De Hoedt

The trip of a lifetime

three homestay participants to travel to Czech Republic in mid June reveal themselves



My name is Holly Stepanek, and I am from Cedar Rapids. I am a junior at Prairie High School. I am in a lot of activities such as band, National Honor Society, Student Council, Tennis, Business Professionals of America and I take piano lessons. I was also on the Czech Royal Court for two years previous to being selected to go on the trip.

It has been my dream to go to Czech Republic ever since I learned about my heritage in Czech School when I was seven years old. We had been able to talk to other people who did the same program that I have the opportunity to do, and I remember dreaming about the day I would be able to ago myself. I was fortunate enough to have the Czech School experience, so I know some of the language and of the cultural things to expect.

I have actually been to Germany and Czech Republic before...if only for

12 hours! I can't believe that now I have the opportunity to stay there for a whole month now, and really see what it is all about, and soak up the differences in culture.

I want to say thank you to all of those who have made this trip possible, especially Pam Kostle, who has lined everything up and is working with the travel agent, and Judy Serbousek, who saw me

at school and gave me important information to get me started on applying for this wonderful experience. I am so excited, and feel so fortunate that I have the chance for a once in a lifetime opportunity such as this one.





My name is Allie Wieneke. I am 16 and am currently a junior at Solon High School. My Czech heritage stems from my mother's side. The Modraceks are a large closely-knit family of which my great-grandparents, Leo and Irma Modracek, are the center. They have always taken great pride in their heritage and have passed that on to me. I am excited to learn more about this culture because it has been such a big part of my life. I am very close with my family and I hope to become close with my host family as well.

My interests include singing in the school choir, church and preparing for college. I plan on getting a degree in Elementary Education because I enjoy working with children. I had the opportunity to be a teacher's assistant at the elementary school in Solon which affirmed my career choice.

I want to thank the Czech Heritage Foundation for allowing me this opportunity. I know this is going to be

an incredible, once-in-a-lifetime experience and I will make the most of my time in the Czech Republic.

When I first heard that I would be spending a month in the Czech Republic, I screamed. It wasn't an oh-no scream and it wasn't a bloody-murder scream, but more it was a squeal of delight, because that's what I do.

My name is Emma Lehmann. I am currently 17 and am a junior at Kennedy High School in Cedar Rapids. I have been involved in the Czech Heritage Foundation for many years and attended Czech School when I was younger. I was the 2007 Czech Heritage Princess and I am the editor-in-chief of Naše České Dědictv.

I am so proud to be a Czech; in fact I often shriek with glee in realization of my ancestry. I would like to enthusiastically thank every one of the board members responsible for allowing me to spend my summer abroad, it is truly the chance of a lifetime.

I intend to zealously embrace the language and the culture and to make the most of this experience. I know that a good time will be had by all and we will be screeching with enthusiasm the whole way!



the art

Photo by Russ De Hoedt

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arj Nejdl is our local folk artist. She is very active in our local Czech community in Cedar Rapids, lowa. Marj's family is husband Edward (now deceased), two sons, Charles and wife DeeAnn and Phillip and wife Michelle and three grandchildren, Her first grandchild is Scott and wife Kasey with great grandchildren Wyatt and Emma. Her other two grandchildren are Emily and Tommy.

Marj is listed with the lowa Arts Council as Master Czech Folk Artist and has painted an egg for First Lady Mrs. Bush and Astronaut Eugene Cernin. She created a Rhea egg for Rita Klimova (Czech Ambassador) and lowa Governor Branstad. She was chosen to represent the Czech Folk Art of lowa for lowa's Sesquicentennial celebration at Smithsonian Institution's Festival on the Mall in Washington DC. These are only a few of her accomplishments. She is known far beyond the lowa borders. Her talents are amazing and once you notice her artwork you will start realizing it is all around the Czech communities. She creates Czech designs for recipe (continued on page 10)

(continued from page 9)

books, baker's aprons, tee-shirts – one which is sold at our local "Houby Days", ceramics, reversed drawings on glass, wood, stationery and cards. She designed the logo for the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, lowa.

One of her favorite art activities is to decorate eggs, especially for Easter and Christmas decorations. As a child she learned the art of "kraclice" (Old World egg decorating) from an uncle who lived next door when she was a young girl. Every Easter their family would prepare the dyes and decorate eggs. She thought everyone spent hours and hours decorating eggs. She and her uncle created their own ideas and designs while enjoying one another's company. Her favorite egg art is (using the Batik method). "Although it is more time consuming, she relates, "it is the most interesting and you never know how the egg will turn out until the final stage of removing the wax." She has workshops demonstrating and teaching the "Batik Method" to decorate eggs.

Marj is not only truly amazing in her art work; she is amazing in all aspects of her life.

She is very interested in her heritage and is involved in many organizations. She helps teach polkas and dances to youngsters at the summer Czech School, and demonstrates how to cook Czech dishes at the museum. She

is a member Hus Memorial Presbyterian Church and teaches weekly Sokol exercise classes. She also is a member of the Czech Heritage Chorus, Czech Museum Guild, Czecholosivka Society of America, and the Czech Heritage Foundation.

My two daughters and I attended one of her egg decorating workshops. What a success - okay not the eggs (they turned out as a first attempt success), what I'm talking about are all the years after the workshop. My sister and her daughters went to following workshop and now every Easter our entire family including my nephews can't wait to pull out the beeswax, dyes, candles, eggs, to create decorated eggs using the Batik method. My daughters love this and I know that they will continue to decorate and teach their children this tradition - All Thanks Goes to Mari! It's wonderful and so much fun! I also now watch Emily (Marj's granddaughter) and am very curious, "Will Emily be our next Master Folk Artist?"

by Zelda De Hoedt



Baltic egg decorating

Batik method uses a simple wax-resist process. You start with the lightest color - this will be white, if you use a white egg. Everything that you want to remain white, you cover with wax, using the stůžka. Then, you dye the egg - the next color is generally yellow. Wherever there is wax, the yellow dye will not be able to penetrate. Now that the egg is yellow, you mark with wax all the parts of the design that you want to remain yellow. The eggs are generally dyed successively in colors from lightest to darkest. In the end, you will have an egg with a great deal of wax on it - if black is your finishing color, you will end up with a virtually black egg. Then, using the side of a candle flame, you melt away all the layers of wax, revealing the colors that were protected underneath.

You will need:

- Beeswax
- Candle
- Stůžka
- Dyes
- Pencil
- Paper towels
- Shellac (clear/ glossy)

Step 1: Set-up a flat surface covered to protect the table. Step 2: Lay out dyes in order of lightest to darkest and mix acstep 3: Mix water with baking soda, wash egg thoroughly and dry it. You Step 4: Have your stůžka, candle lit and beeswax in cont of you- Have a paper towel under your working surface to catch the broken wax. Heat the metal tip of stůžka in the candle, the scoop into beeswax. Quickly draw "pattern" onto white egg. Wherever the wax goes- your egg will be white. Repeat as needed. Step 5: Put egg in dye- let sit in dye (probably yellow) for about 2-3 minutes. Dry off with paper towel or something similar. Now go back to your station and use stužka. Wherever this wax goes will be yellow in color. Keep going in this manner until you get to the last color which is usually dark purple or black. The egg will probably be covered in wax. Note: if you make a mistake don't remove the wax, just continue

Step 6: Use your candle and slightly heat the egg shell. This is de-waxing the coating from the egg enough so that you can wipe off with paper towel- this takes a while and requires patience! If your candle flame isn't hot enough and sometimes candle flame leaves a black residue on the egg. If this is the case flame form an-

Step 7: Some people will use a small drill in each end of egg and blow out yolk. You can also buy special blowers. A traditional method is just to other heat source should be used. let the egg dry out naturally. This works with no problem- the inside

Step 8: Spray the egg with glossy shellac

'Old World' Easter traditions

Everyone is familiarly with the celebration one day before Ash Wednesday (referred to as Fat Tuesday). In the Czech and Slovak Republic it is referred to as Shrove Tide. It is a three day celebration, which with a sumptuous Sunday lunch, followed by dancing late into the night. It has also been called a "Husbands Ball" and it is believed that the height a farmer's wife jumps while dancing would be the height the grain would grow that yea.

Monday is the slaughtering and preparation of a pig, as continued celebration and dancing pre-set the big celebration of Fat Tuesday. On Shrove Tuesday, the feast culminates. Masked processions and theater performances are held, roast pork and cabbage served, and traditionally celebrants are suppose to eat and drink as much as possible in order to have ones full strength through-

the year.

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The Shrove Tide back as the thirteenth century, yet historical anthropologists have linked this observance similar to the pre-Christian pagan ceremonies of the Druids.

This pre-Christian celebration does not end beginning with Ash Wednesday. Through-out the Holy Observance, the last week of the 40 days of lent, several other traditional Czech events occur to ensure a healthy and wealthy year.

This seven day celebration begins Spy Wednesday also referred to as ugly, black, or sooty Wednesday. The soot and build up from winter's fire is cleaned from chimneys and be certain you do not frown or scowl this day or you will scowl every Wednesday the rest of the year.

On Green Thursday, you get up very early before sunrise and after morning prayers, wash

your hands and face outside with the pre dawn dew. This will prevent ailments of the neck and other sickness. You must sweep the

carry the dirt to the curb so that no fleas remain in the house. Your presunrise breakfast consists of

floors and

12

bread smeared with honey to ensure protection from snake bites and wasp stings. Also one is supposed to jingle money so as to have enough money to last throughout the year. The remainder of Green Thursday is observed by eating green foods (spinach, cabbage, etc.) and eating "Judas" pastries daubed in honey. ("Judas" pastries are special shaped ceremonial bread from leavened dough.) This is done to ensure a healthy year. Also do not lend money or have a fight with anyone on Green Thursday, to ensure that no quarrels or controversy arise from the money that comes your way.

Good Friday is linked to a belief in the magical power of the Earth. The miracle of a risen Christ, led to a belief that the ground opens up to reveal hidden treasures on the night of Good Friday. Treasure hunters believe this day will reveal in abandoned places and old ruins the wealth a hunter may gather. You are not allowed to turn the Earth to seek out treasures. The Earth will open up what treasures are to be yours.

White Saturday is devoted to the newly baptized of the Church. The evening vigil begins with the symbolic burning of "Judas" and the cinder from this fire are placed in jugs of water for those who grow crops or raise livestock. Farmers then sprinkle the water on fields, gardens and property to ensure safety from fire and natural disaster. Livestock are sprinkled with this symbolic ash water of "Judas" to prevent sickness and disease.

Easter Sunday is devoted to the eating of blessed foods such as Bread, Wine, Lamb, Eggs, and Easter Cake. It is believed that by eating consecrated food

will return home those lost and were unable to join the Easter feast. Also a portion of the blessed food is cast upon the fields and gardens to ensure a bountiful harvest and adequate supplies of water will be provided throughout the growing season.

Easter Monday or Whipping Monday is a non-Christian traditional day of Czech observance to the day after the Easter celebration. It is of ancient origin and a ritual that began as an adult only event. Spouses and lovers whip each other with rods. This pleasurable ritual in later years manifested to young boys who would go from house to house looking for girls to frolic flog. (Easter Whips were made of wicker adorned with ribbons.) In some villages, when young lads didn't participate in Easter stick festivals, girls would pour cold water on boys to invigorate them. This age-old custom ensured that one would be healthy for the entire year, cheerful, and above all hardworking.

The traditional customs of Easter such as Passion Plays (the suffering and resurrection of Christ) and egg decorating have not been omitted from this recollection of Easter celebration because they aren't part of a Czech Easter celebration but rather they're the most popular and recognized reasons for the observance of Easter.

To enrich our knowledge of Old World Heritage of Easter "Czech style" is why these not-so-popular customs were shared in this article. It is a part of the fabric of our alluring Czech Heritage that you can be proud of. Enjoy your "Vesele Velikonoce" (Happy Easter) Celebration.

by Leonard Pfeiffer

The Cedar Rapids Czech Heritage Foundation

announces its search for Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa 2009-2010



Could you be her?

- · Candidates must be 18 to 26 years of age with a Czech, Slovak, Moravian, or Silesian heritage.
- Candidates must be a resident of Iowa.
- · Contestants will compete at the annual Houby Days Czech Festival in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in four categories: private interview, talent, costume modeling, and public interview.

Winner will receive: jeweled crown, sash, flowers, scholarship, gifts, and sponsorship to the Miss Czech-Slovak US pageant in Wilber, Nebraska.

National winners can receive trophies, scholarships, savings bonds, flowers, gifts, a trip to the Czech Republic, and paid tuition to Florida Gulf Coast University.

For more information and to apply visit: www.czechheritagefoundation.org

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Why not consider a gift membership for someone special? Your generous donation helps to fund several worthwhile endeavors such as the Czech Prince and Princess, Miss Czech-Slovak lowa, the Scholarship and Homestay Programs, along with publishing the quarterly *Naše České Dědictví* and other numerous publications. The list of Czech Heritage projects goes on and on!

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