



Casey Dvorak
of West Liberty, Iowa

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Nase Ceske Dedictvi

Subscriptions for *Our Czech Heritage* are not sold. Members of Czech Heritage Foundation receive the newsletter free of charge. Contributions may be sent anytime. Dues are renewable on January 1st of each year and expire on December 31, with dues received in September applying to the following year for new members.

Send Us Your Stories

We hope you like our new look! Our local "National Treasure" Marj NejdI captures the true meaning of Czech Heritage with each brush stroke. For our new cover and back page, to Marj we are forever grateful. Please share your copy with a friend or relative, or better yet, turn to page 14 and send in a gift membership in their name. How important is our heritage?

President's Message

As the fires of our cultural past burn and create the flickering flame of our future, I'm pleased to announce the latest torches of our focus on the future for Czech Heritage Foundation. The final touches are being completed to make available a web site that will allow our current members (web savvy) to view and stay in touch with Czech Heritage Foundation activities. It also opens the door to seek out new members.



Additionally, our foundation has linked with Boy Scouts of America as sponsors of a Venture Group with a specific area of interest in Czech identity. The Scouts' focus is to achieve a greater insight into Czech history, music, culture and traditions. Combine this with our other youth programs — Scholarship, Homestay, Czech Prince and Princess and Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant, it is clear the flickering flames of our future burn brightly.

Another successful season of Summer Czech School, plus the Sokol's new Czech Youth Folk Dancing Program is proof positive that contributions to the preservation of Czech identity grows.

I wish to express a heart felt thank you to all those who volunteer to keep the flames of our cultural past glowing.

Leonard Pfeifer

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St. Joseph's Day Dance

The Czech Heritage Foundation again sponsored its annual St. Joseph's Day Dance on Sunday, March 18th at the Cedar Rapids Elks Lodge. Dave Salmons and his Polka and Variety Band from Omaha, NE played for our enjoyment.

We had a wonderful assortment of items for the bake sale. A large number of items were donated for the raffle and door prize tables much more than we expected. We had many happy winners. The Czech Heritage Fdn. thanks everyone that donated these items to help make this annual fund-raiser a success.

This is the main means to raise money for the Czech Heritage's Scholarship Program and Homestay Program. For the Homestay program, students are selected each year to spend one month in the Czech Republic.

The Czech Heritage Foundation would like to send a BIG thank you to all that helped in any way and to those that sold and bought tickets. A special thank you to Evelyn Stejskal for all of the tickets and donations she was able to obtain for this dance.



Stasia Krivanek and Frank Edmunds

We received two nice donations from former Ambassadors, Lynette Stejskal and Kit J. Wobeter. Each had stated in the correspondence how the Homestay Program had helped them in their lives.

The 2008 St. Joseph Dance will be held Sunday, March 30th, 2008 at the Elks Lodge with Barefoot Becky and the Ivanhoe Dutchmen playing for us. Mark your calendars!

ST. JOSEPH'S DAY DANCE THANKS

The Czech Heritage Foundation would like to send a special THANK YOU to the following people and companies that contributed to help make the dance a success:

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Swisher Trust & Savings Bank | Jiruska Enterprises | Vic Pilsner - D&V Industrial Supplies | Merle Norman Cosmetics |
| Red Frog | Stalker Electric | Polehna's Meat Market | Czech Shirt Shop |
| Roland Wilbert Vault | Papich Kuba | Tic Toc Restaurant | Dairy Queen - Johnson Avenue |
| Cedar Memorial Funeral Home | Funeral Homes | Zindrick's Czech Restaurant | Cottage Kitsch |
| Hy Vee Drug Store | Bartunek Appliance | Czech Cottage | Larry & Arlene Spina |
| Cedar Memorial Park Cemetery | Teahen Funeral Homes | Saddle & Leather Shop Inc. | St. Wenceslaus Monica Circle |
| Murdock Funeral Homes | Leo & Elaine Shima | Joen's Brothers Interiors | The Ambassadors for their great raffle items |
| Brosh Funeral Homes | Fleck Sales - Scott Frerick | Nat'l Czech & Slovak Museum & Library | |
| Iowa Valley Monument | National Flag & Flagpole | | |
| | Pierson's Florist | | |

And many others not mentioned who donated baked items, donations and gifts for the door prizes and raffle items. We thank all of you!

The Dance Committee,
Frank & Barbara Edmunds

Library Updates - NCSML

Library Announces its 10,000th Cataloged Item

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) is pleased to announce an important milestone. In July 2007, the 10,000th item was entered into the library's online catalog Komensky, (<http://www.ncsml.org/komensky.htm>). These 10,000 items include books, CDs, DVDs and VHS tapes. The 10,000th item cataloged is the recent Vaclav Havel autobiography *To The Castle and Back* (New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 2007). Havel, along with Bill Clinton and Michal Kovac dedicated the new NCSML in October 1995.

Funded in part with a grant from the Czech Heritage Foundation, the NCSML cataloging project began in the summer of 2003, and the online catalog Komensky was launched the same year. Rebecca Bartlett began working as the part-time cataloger in December 2004, and has been working full-time since February 2006. The cataloger enters all new items received into Komensky as well as the international library database, WorldCat. Our library actively collects materials focusing on Czech and Slovak arts, culture and history. We receive the majority



Library Director David Muhlena and Rebecca Bartlett

of our books as donations from individuals, while the remainder, as with Havel's *To the Castle and Back*, are purchased. By making these catalog records available in Komensky as well as WorldCat, the national library database, these books are now accessible to both walk-in visitors at the NCSML and researchers around the world.

Gail Naughton, NCSML

A Sign of the Times

In January of 1950, the City of Cedar Rapids installed the first electric push button pedestrian cross walk. In its first year, news articles were printed in the Gazette explaining in detail what it was and how pedestrians could make use of it. Each location also had a sign posted explaining how to use the new device.

The continued growth and popularity of electric push button pedestrian cross walks at last found its way to Czech Village.

In May of 1955, the city passed a resolution to establish a cross walk to be located at the intersection of 16th and B Avenues S.W. Concerns were raised that the predominantly Czech speaking population in this section of the city would be unable to understand a sign explaining how to use the push button cross walk if it was written in English. Therefore, in order to be certain that every pedestrian could understand what the mechanism was for and how to use it, the sign was printed in English and Czech.

By 1980, the City of Cedar Rapids passed yet another resolution, allowing the removal of the one and only electric push button cross walk in Czech Village. Today, the original "Walk" and "Don't Walk" signs are still around and safely guarded by two village merchants who had the foresight to retain a unique part of our Czech past. The City's Traffic Engineering Department also has a cardboard replica of the sign in their possession.

Leonard Pfeifer



Puppetry! Suspended Animation

This summer, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) featured "Puppetry! Suspended Animation," an original exhibit created by the NCSML curatorial team of Edith Blanchard and Stefanie Kohn. In researching for this exhibition, Edith learned that Czech immigrants to the United States brought their puppetry traditions with them. In fact, Sokol Minnesota has continued this tradition and created two 15 foot puppets in the summer of 2004.

Dubbed Jitka and Jarda, the puppets were part of a Community Gate Project, celebrating the contribution of Czech and Slovak immigrants in building the business and communities of the Bohemian Hill Neighborhood on the West End of Saint Paul, MN since the 1870's. "Heart of the Beast," a puppet theater group in Minneapolis was commissioned by the West End Federation to lead the creation of the puppets. The puppet direction came from Laurie Witzowski and the work of many volunteers and friends of Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota.

Starting with 300 pounds of clay, the molds for two heads and two sets of women's hands were sculpted and, by adding more clay to the women's hands, the man's hands would take shape. Next, ten layers of papier-maché were applied to each of the sculpted pieces, alternating newspaper and paper bags. Each layer needed 24 hours to

dry. After the last layer was dried, the papier-maché was lifted off of the clay forms and painted. Painting the pair gave them life and character, and created the desire to name them.

A frame of wood and plumbers PVC pipe was made to support and manipulate each puppet. The thickness and durability of the papier-maché made it possible to drill through and screw the heads to the frames.

Creating the kroje took several stages, and many machines. Typically, a kroj skirt and apron are embroidered; but, to keep the weight manageable, the skirt and apron designs were hand-painted. These two puppets require six people and one director to operate. After over 400 volunteer hours by a core group of three people and several other willing volunteers, Jitka and Jarda were ready to make their debut.

The public first saw the pair at the High Bridge Gate dedication and the Czech and Slovak Festival at the Historic CSPS Hall in St. Paul in September 2004. Since then, they have appeared and performed in parades in New Prague, Montgomery, and Cedar Rapids (photo featured on back page).

Jan Stoffer, NCSML

Houby Days May Pole



Every year during the Houby Days Festival, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library hosts a May Pole Dance. A very tall pole topped with a wreath of flowers is placed in the middle of the garden and adorned with ribbons 35 feet long. The public is encouraged to pick up a ribbon and help wrap the pole.

The May Pole Dance held at the NCSML is not a Czech dance. Upon their arrival in Cedar Rapids, Czech immigrants adopted some of the traditions the local German immigrants had brought with them. Among these traditions was the May Pole Dance. The NCSML archives include a photograph of Czech immigrant children wrapping ribbons around this type of May Pole.

There is no trick to the dance. Dancers walk in a circle to the beat of the music and are instructed as to how to wrap the pole. Whether it is a barber shop pole pattern, or a basket weave (the latter being a bit more challenging), everyone enjoys participating in this springtime event.

Jan Stoffer, NCSML

REMINISCENCES Of The Cemetery

(First of Three Parts)

The Czech National Cemetery was established in 1896 by a group of C.S.P.S. and Z.C.B.J. lodges along with the Cedar Rapids Sokol organization to serve the growing Czech population of Cedar Rapids. The Czech Catholics already had their own cemetery, Saint John's.

The first sexton of Bohemian National Cemetery was Josef Stetka. From 1920 to 1950, the caretaker was Josef Stejskal Sr. and from 1950 until his retirement March 1, 1985, Joseph Stejskal Jr. was sexton.

Josef Stejskal Sr. furnished his own truck for cemetery work and was paid an hourly wage. Josef Sr. and his wife Agnes owned and operated a green house where they grew all of the geraniums and bedding plants for the cemetery. The bedding plants (kyticky) were called



“Jacob's Coat” and it was planted as a border around each grave. Some families wanted the names Otec (Father), Matka (Mother), Babi (Grandma), or Deda (Grandpa) planted in the center of each grave. These flowers had to be watered and kept trimmed all summer long, and families only paid \$ 5 per grave. During that same period of time, the Bohemian National Cemetery in Chicago charged \$ 15 to \$ 25.

In the early 1940's, young boys approximately 15 years of age did the mowing with push mowers. Louie Stepanek, George Lebeda, Joe Petrzelka and Frank Zobac were some of the young boys who did the mowing, most of the time barefoot. They were paid 60¢ an hour. Three to four women, including Mrs. Katerina Lorenc and Mrs. Kristina Volak trimmed around monuments, markers and graves with sickles from 6:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. It was the women's responsibility to keep the sickle blades as



sharp as razors. For this work, they received 25¢ an hour. It was the responsibility of the cemetery sexton to close the main gate every evening at 9.

Graves were dug by hand by two men and another man would haul the dirt away. The charge for opening and closing a grave was \$6.00 at that time, so each man received \$2.00. In the winter time, the ground would freeze 2 to 3 feet deep and small amounts of blasting powder was used to crack up the ground so it could be dug at with picks and shovels. It was very hard, back-breaking work.

The monument section of the cemetery is the original cemetery. The land that is now the Park Section had been the City Garden prior to being platted into the Cemetery. The entire Park Section was full of “sand babies” or sand burs when it was originally incorporated into the cemetery.

In the southeastern part of the cemetery, there was a large wooden water tank on stilts. It had a small gas engine to pump the water into the tank from the ground. The tank



was near the buckeye tree that is still growing there today.

The Cemetery Board members were very strict about the care and appearance of the Cemetery. Members of the Board were known to come out to the Cemetery over their lunch hours to check on the grounds. At that time there were 25 members of the Board and every Memorial Day 24 chairs had to be set up for them at the ceremonies.

Evelyn Stejskal

Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant

The 6th Annual Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant was held Saturday May 19th in Czech Village in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in conjunction with the Houby Days Festival. Iowa's current Little Sister Megan Lehmann and Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Queen Rachel Lehmann crowned Casey Dvorak on the steps of the newly dedicated and opened Babi's House & Visitors Center.



Outgoing Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Rachel Lehmann crowns Casey Dvorak Iowa's next Miss Czech Slovak.

Casey Dvorak is from West Liberty, Iowa. She is the daughter of David and Jody Dvorak, and a student at West Liberty High School. For the talent competition, Casey featured a Czech vocal song "Going Home," by the Czech composer Antonin Dvorak. Her talent includes five school plays, Community Theatre, ten years of ballet, nine years of tap and jazz, three years in show choir, jazz choir, concert choir, marching band and concert band. She takes private voice lessons and spent two summers taking acting classes in Chicago. In addition to being very active in school, Casey is also a regular participant in community activities including church and 4-H.

The Little Sister this year is Annelyn Broghammer of Solon, Iowa. She is the daughter of Tim and Laurie Broghammer. Annelyn attends Lakeview Elementary School in Solon. She takes tap, ballet and jazz dance lessons as well as piano lessons. Annelyn is also involved in Brownies, dance, swim lessons, soccer, WFLA, and recently made her first communion in church. She enjoys her many friends and pets.

Judges for the pageant were Lorraine David, Irene Hamous and Dr. James Ripley. Lorraine Davie is from Montgomery, Minnesota and is a graduate of Minnesota State University. Lorraine and her family were instrumental in starting the first Miss Czech Slovak Minnesota



Left to right: Stasia Krivanek – Miss Czech Slovak USA 2003-2004, Amanda DeHoedt – Miss Czech Slovak Iowa 2004-2005, Annelyn Broghammer – Little Sister 2007-2008, Casey Dvorak – Miss Czech Slovak Iowa 2007-2008, Megan Lehmann – Little Sister 2006-2007, Rachel Lehmann – Miss Czech Slovak Iowa 2006-2007

Pageant in 1999. She has represented Minnesota on the National Miss Czech Slovak USA Board of Directors for 17 years. Lorraine was chosen to represent Montgomery at the dedication of the Czech Memorial Highway, a state highway linking Montgomery and New Prague, Minnesota. Her daughter, Constance, was crowned the 1989 Miss Czech Slovak USA Queen. Lorraine is especially proud of receiving the Lady of Libuse Award in Wilber, Nebraska and, in 2005, she and her husband Jerry were chosen Grand Marshals of Kolacky Days in Montgomery. She is the proud mother of three daughters and grandmother of four grandchildren.

Irene Hamous is very proud of her Czech heritage. Her parents, George and Alma Naxera, were both Czech and were very involved in many Czech organizations. In 1948, her parents took their family to Czechoslovakia to visit relatives and see the land of their heritage. As a child she attended Czech School and has been a Sokol member for 55 years where she judged many gymnastic competitions (Sokol Slets). She is a lifetime member and supporter of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library as well as being a volunteer at the museum. She also belongs to the WFLA, CSA, and Damska Matice Skolske.

Dr. James Ripley is chair of the music department and director of instrumental music at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He also serves as principal guest

(cont. on next page)

Miss Czech Slovak U.S.A. Pageant

The 46th annual Wilber Festival was held on August 3-5 in Wilber, Nebraska. Wilber is known as the Czech capital of the United States, and is also home of the Miss Czech Slovak U.S.A. Pageant. This year's pageant was the 21st annual event. There were ten contestants vying for the 2007 title from around the nation. Katelyn Adams (18) is from South Dakota. Her talent was a chemistry magic show. Marianne Beran (20) of Texas presented a vocal solo. Casey Dvorak (17), is from Iowa and sang a solo by Antonin Dvorak. Amanda Johaneck (22) is from Wisconsin and her performance was also a vocal solo. Elizabeth Klasek, (23) is from Missouri and shared a narration of Czech fairy tales. Lindsay McKee (18) is from Oklahoma. Her talent was a saxophone solo. Jana Blaha-Rodriguez (19) is from Florida and she played a violin solo. Leah Sticha (23) is from Minnesota and also played a violin solo. Rachel Svaty (19) is from Kansas and did a Czech oration. Michelle Wiedel (20) is from Nebraska and she offered a ballet and tap dance. The candidates are judged on private and personal interviews, poise, and appearance, and their authentic or Americanized kroj (Czech costume). The panel of judges from this year's pageant were Lisa Volesky (Illinois), Mary Grandi (South Dakota), and Bob Petrik (Florida). After the judges score the contestants, auditors tally the scores and the winners are announced. Auditors were Shirley Pecka and Linda Morrissey both from Wilber. After Miss Czech Slovak U.S.A. 2006, Queen Sarah Middlebrook of Texas,



Queen Candidate Group — left to right: Katelyn Adams, Marianne Beran, Jana Blaha-Rodriguez, Casey Dvorak, Elizabeth Klasek, Michelle Wiedel, Lindsay McKee, Leah Sticha, Rachel Svaty, Amanda Johaneck, Sara Middlerook

gave her farewell address, Michelle Wiedel was crowned the new 2007-2008 Miss Czech Slovak U.S.A. Queen. First runner-up was Leah Sticha. Other awards were presented for talent and kroj. Besides the Miss Czech Slovak pageant, the festival is host to a children's parade on Friday, and a full parade on Saturday and Sunday. Other features of this year's festival included Jozef Ivaska—International Folk singer, Ostry family singers, Kramer Sisters, Accordion Jamboree, Wilber Jr. Czech Beseda Dancers, and the 180 piece Wilber-Clatonia Alumni Marching Band along with other bands. Wilber is a town of 1,530 residents and hosts 30,000-40,000 visitors during the Czech festival.

Adeline Volesky

Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant (cont. from page 6)

conductor of the Sukuyo Wind Orchestra at Sukuyo University in Kurashiki, Japan. Prior to his appointment at Carthage, Dr. Ripley served as assistant professor of conducting and ensembles at the Eastman School of Music, where he was the associate conductor of the Eastman Wind Ensemble and Wind Orchestras. He was also the conductor of the Symphonic Wind Ensemble at the River Campus of the University of Rochester. Before teaching at Eastman, Dr. Ripley was associate director of bands at Northern Arizona in Flagstaff and a faculty member at Luther College. He taught in the public schools of Iowa and Minnesota for eleven years.

The new Miss Czech Slovak Minnesota Queen Leah Sticha attended the day's activities as did Iowa's past Queens Stasia Krivanek (Miss Czech Slovak USA),

Amanda DeHoedt, and Beth Struzynski. Past Iowa queens unable to attend were Katie Ziskovsky of Swisher and Lisa Volesky (Miss Czech Slovak USA) from Chicago. Serving on the pageant committee were John & Adeline Volesky, Arlo & Joyce Netolicky, and Dennis & Debbie Volesky. The committee and the Czech Heritage Foundation would like to extend a special "thank you" to all the following for the donations and contributions: the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, Western Fraternal Life Association, Stejskal Florists, Ralston Foods, Corvette Club, Emma Davidson & Quaker Oats, Target Stores, photographer John Kostel, the DeHoedt Family, Lud Svoboda, and Danny Gardenmann's AE Dairy in Palo, Iowa.

Adeline Volesky

Czech School

Summer Ceska Skola was held from June 11th through July 13th at Wilson School with 56 students in attendance. Each day the students attended class from 8:00 to 11:00 AM. While there were many students new to the Czech language in each of the classes, we were happy to see so many return from previous years. Division I (ages 5-7) was taught by Mrs. Bessie Dugena with Fred Anthony assisting. This is Bessie's 23rd year teaching her "little angels." Division II (ages 8-10) was taught by Mira Tvrznik from the Czech Republic. This is his second year teaching this class. This year he had 22 students, some being new to Czech School. The teacher for Division III (ages 11-13) was Radka Horakova, also from the Czech Republic. This is Radka's third year on our staff and we are thankful for her continued support in teaching the valuable fundamentals of the Czech language. All of these classes learned not only the Czech language, but much about the history of the Czech Republic and the Czech Republic of today. We were so pleased to have these two people from the Czech Republic teaching our students this year.

Each day, the three classes individually attended music classes taught by a new member to the Czech School, Donna Merkle. Donna was assisted by her husband, Guenter Merkle. They are formerly from Houston, Texas and moved to Cedar Rapids this spring. We are so happy to have them with us and appreciate all their Czech talents that they bring to Cedar Rapids. The five weeks were very busy with everyday learning plus a few extra interesting topics each week. To celebrate Flag Day on June 14th, The Hanford Post No. 5 had the students be a part of the flag raising at Wilson School. Each student received a small American flag.

On June 25th, Cary J. Hahn, with KGAN TV, filmed The Iowa Traveler program with the classes and had a program on the Channel 2 TV station. Divisions II and III walked to the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library on June 28th and spent the morning learning about the new puppet exhibit and about the Czech history in our Czech Village community. For the Upbeat Concert series at the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library, the students sang in front of a full house on Saturday, June 30th. It was fun to show what they had learned in three weeks of school.

We were honored to have two Czech Republic visitors with us. A representative from the Czech Boy Scouts,

Helena Brotankova spent a morning visiting each class and hearing her language being spoken by the students. She was thrilled to hear what the students had learned in such a short time. Our second visitor visited us on July 6th. Jaroslav Richter is from Prague, working as a Correspondent for the CTK Czech News Agency in Washington DC. He spent most of the morning filming and interviewing teachers and students. This was an exciting thrill for him to see what the Czech School has accomplished in such a short time. He and his family would like to return next year to visit us.



Jaroslav Richter, Correspondent for the CTK Czech News Agency in Washington DC, films Division I students during class.

The Czech School students sang again at the Czech Museum for the Museum Guild meeting. This was on July 9th and was a good practice or the final program on July 13th. Everyone at the Guild meeting enjoyed the music and the students enjoyed entertaining them.

Marj NejdI was a invaluable contributor to the Czech School. She designed our nice new shirts again. This year we have a bookworm added.

On the evening of July 13, we had the final program and ice cream social. Donna Merkle did a wonderful job putting together a nice selection of music. Radka always brings some new Czech songs that her class enjoys singing. Thanks to all who brought cakes and helped set up and serve. The Czech School Board wishes to thank all who helped in any way to make this year such a success, especially the area lodges, Sokol Cedar Rapids, and all who gave monetary donations, supplies and refreshments. And a big thank you to the teacher's aides, Fred Anthony, and junior helpers Cecelia Wolter, Andrea Cada, Samantha Wehr, and Emma Lehmann. I enjoyed being Director this year and am looking forward to another great year in 2008.

Barb Edmunds

Czech Heritage Announces Scholarship Winners

We are pleased to announce that at the July meeting attended by the Scholarship Committee, we selected four students to each receive \$750 scholarships for 2007. – *Lee Thornbloom*

...AND THE WINNERS ARE:

MICHAEL ALLAN BRANNAMAN

(Iowa State University)



Michael sent in an impressive family tree of his ancestry. His mother's side of the family is 100% Czech all the way back to Great Great Great Grandparents and Great Great Grandparents coming from Czechoslovakia. For his whole life, Michael has lived on a farm and always wanted to farm. He thinks of himself as a hard worker and feels no greater joy than spending a long hard day in the field. When he accomplishes something with his own two hands, he feels as if he is really making a difference in the world. It is no wonder that when it was time to go to college, Michael wanted to go into agriculture. Michael chose agriculture business as his future major because he figures he could manage a CO-OP or be a farm manager for awhile and eventually take over his family's farm. One of Michael's teachers describes him as an unbelievably focused and intelligent student. At a time when most students lack the ability to be "self-motivated," Michael needs no encouragement to succeed.

MATTHEW DAVID KOSTLE

(University of Northern Iowa)



Two years ago, Matthew was fortunate enough to be selected as one of the Homestay ambassadors which turned out to be a terrific opportunity for him to explore his Czech heritage. He was able to visit towns where some of his ancestors came from. Matt has written and spoken about his trip several times at Loras College and in Cedar Rapids. At a meeting of Lodge 262 in Cedar Rapids, I had a chance to see Matt talk about his trip and was very impressed with the slides and the excellent presentation that he gave. Matt has started working on a degree in the field of education. He has always enjoyed working with kids and finds it very satisfying. Matt would like to become a high school teacher of either Social Studies or Science. He is exploring both fields to see which he finds suitable. Ultimately he would like to move on and get more education and be able to teach at the college level. Matt would love to teach psychology at the college level as it has always piqued his interest.

ELIZABETH SAMEK

(Mt. Mercy College)



Over the years, Elizabeth has participated in many activities that have supported her Czech heritage. Her family partakes in St. Nicholas Day, Houby Days and St. Joseph Day celebrations year after year. Even meals serving common Czech foods such as pork, dumplings, sauerkraut, kolaches and houskas are not rare for the Samek family. They try to continue Czech culinary traditions. Elizabeth is a graduate of Czech School after attending lessons for eight summers. In more recent years she has been honored to represent the Czech Heritage Foundation as the 2004 Czech Princess and Student Ambassador in the Homestay pPogram. Majoring in Business Management with a finance minor, in the future Elizabeth hopes to use her degree to work at a financial institution. She chose the business field because for many years, she has had an interest in the subject and her parents have had successful business careers.

JESSICA ANNA SAUER

(University of Northern Iowa)



As part of the Czech Heritage Foundation's Homestay Program, Jessica had the opportunity to visit the Czech Republic. While there, she became very close to her host family. This experience has inspired her to continue traveling internationally. Jessica looks forward to returning to the Czech Republic and other parts of Eastern Europe to research her heritage and learn more about the history, culture and lifestyles of the people of the region. Jessica has done a wonderful job tracking her financial needs for college. It is especially important to her that she is able to graduate from college with as few loans as possible as she is hoping to participate in either Master's International or Fellows/USA (programs that combine a graduate school education with service in the Peace Corps). At the University of Northern Iowa, Jessica is studying to receive a major in Spanish and a minor in general communication. Foreign languages which Jessica has studied include Spanish, Czech, Korean, Italian, German, American Sign Language and Russian.

Small Czech Towns Humble But Fun

A strip of honey-colored flypaper spirals down from a thumbtack that anchors its now-empty canister. Speckled with lifeless flies, the canister swings each time the violin bow pokes it.

The band plays on in a small-town Czech bar few tourists would think to frequent.

It's very tight quarters as the string quartet plays everything from Bach and Smetana to Czech folk favorites and 1930s anti-fascism blues. The string bass player grooves like a white Satchmo — his bow sliding in and out between diners. My sweater is just in the way. I'm eating pork and potatoes in a small-town pub in the Czech Republic — Trebon. It could be just about any small town in Eastern Europe, but definitely not Western Europe. What we think of as Eastern Europe (more correctly Central Europe) comes with old-fashioned flypaper and bandleaders with big moustaches. It's changing fast and catching up to the West. But if you visit quickly, you'll catch a world with an endangered patina. The bandleader plays a 100-year-old black wood flute. During a break, I finger its mouthpiece — worn like an ancient marble relic by countless nights of music making. The flautist sports a big bushy moustache just like the emperor — Franz Josef — who looks down from a yellowed poster above the door to the kitchen.

Above the quartet is a high window. Teenage heads bob into sight — straining and craning on tiptoe to look in. Each time a song ends, golden beers giggle on rough wood tables as the roaring crowd claps and cheers for more. As the night wears on, there are fewer tourists clicking photos and more locals singing along. As the quartet sways together like seaweed in a nostalgic musical tide, it occurs to me that in little towns all over the world, no-name bands are causing strangers to smile — and drink more beer. Crossing the border into the Czech Republic, I stow my desire for good wine and become a beer lover. Here, beer is the default drink. It hits your table like a glass of water does in the States. On my early trips — before I learned that Czech beer is more powerful than other beers — I used to have a big beer at lunch and spend the rest of the day wobbly, sightseeing on what I called “Czech knees.” Now, when in the Czech Republic, I resist a momentum-killing beer at lunch and finish each day with a fresh draft beer (tonight's is still trying to kill my momentum as I type).

The man who bought me my beer noted, “These days, with the European Union opening things up, many Poles and Hungarians are going west to France and Germany to get jobs. But not the Czechs. We can't find good enough beer anywhere but here. Our beer keeps us glued to these bar chairs.” Back in my hotel, I climb to my attic room — careful not to bean myself on a medieval wooden beam. (I feel like I'm sleeping in a playground structure built before the age of steel piping.) I lean out my tiny dormer window, the sound of the boisterous bar small in the distance.

I am so happy for the freedom, peace and prosperity the countries of the former Warsaw Pact are enjoying. The new, sturdy roof tiles around me are slick with a light rain. The street, wet and shiny, is as clean as a model railroad town. Cars, while not expensive, are new and parked tidy as a jukebox. Cheap yellow lampposts light the scene. After 40 bleak years of communism, the lampposts seem to be intentionally cheery, like a fashion accent decorating the line of pastel facades that arcs out of sight.

In small Czech towns, the facades are humble but fun. Three centuries ago, each was given an individual personality — with more variety designed into them than even the famous gables of Amsterdam. And today — after a grime-filled 20th century — they sport new paint jobs: A mellow rainbow of simple solid pastels, with lines that accent their individuality. And behind each facade is a family or a shop or a bar like the one I visited tonight.

I could have gone to an American-style hotel bar and nursed a drink while looking out at the pretty town square. I'd have had crisper service and more choices on the menu. And the chairs would have certainly been more comfortable. But by venturing away from the high-rent zone and the places with English menus and dodging a few vigorous string bass bows and swinging flypaper canisters, I stumbled onto memories that colored my Czech experience vividly.

By Rick Steves, Tribune Media Services

Rick Steves writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio.



Bozena Nemcova

Every Czech is introduced to this famous Bohemian author in 7th grade. Her most popular novel named "Babicka" or Grandmother in Czech, is required reading.

Here is an early passage from the book "Babicka" -

"It was long, long ago when last I gazed on that dear face, kissed those pale wrinkled cheeks, and tried to fathom the depth of those blue eyes, in which were hidden so much goodness and love. Long ago it was when, for the last time, those aged hands blessed me. Our Grandmother is no more: for many a year she has slept beneath the cold sod. But you used to say, "Upon this earthy ball, not a soul that pleases all." If then, a few readers shall find as much pleasure in reading about you as I do in writing, I shall be content."

According to the textbooks, encyclopedias and her tombstone, Nemcova was born illegitimately in 1820. Her mother was a laundry maid and her father a coachman for a prominent Czech Duchess. Her mother was said to be strong, plain in appearance, and by nature the exact opposite of the smiling, outgoing Bozena. Her attitude towards her daughter appeared to those around her more like a step-mother's than a mother's. Her father, was described as good-hearted, hard-working, frugal, and well-liked. Rumors circulated in later years that Bozena may have even been born to the Duchess as she closely resembled the Duchess in appearance and that this secret parentage explained the advantages given to Bozena by the Duchess over the other servant's children. She was allowed to stay at the castle for teaching, and she had a home tutor before she even started school. The Duchess took a personal interest in Bozena and even allowed her to borrow books from the castle library. In 1837, at the age of 17 she married Josef Nemeč, a man 15 years her elder, and entered a marriage that would turn out to be difficult and unhappy. She was delicate, intelligent and polished. Her husband was a rough, brutal man, oftentimes described as primitive. In 1842, he brought her to Prague and introduced her

to the Czech intellectual life of the capital. Nemcova immediately attracted a great deal of attention, as much for her brilliant mind as for her beauty. After 1845, Nemcova and her husband moved frequently, living in small towns around Bohemia. Both she and her husband were active in the Czech National Revival where it became somewhat possible once again to speak and write in Czech after years of German domination. In the early 1850s, she traveled by herself across Bohemia and into Slovakia folklore material along the way. She was considered by most standards, an unconventional and emancipated woman. Her conflict-filled 25 year marriage was stricken by poverty, constant moving, and poor health. It was worsened by the sudden death of her talented oldest son in 1853, who died at fifteen of consumption. Mostly on her own, she raised her other three children with the little money she earned from her writing.

Nemcova herself fell seriously ill. But, it was also at this time that she began to write Babicka. The novel was published in 1855 in serial form in the periodicals of the day, and was immediately hailed as a masterpiece. Six months before her death, she left her husband and moved from Prague to Northern Bohemia. Then after a short reconciliation in Prague of only a few days, she died of cancer.

Here's another passage from "Babicka."

Whenever Grandmother baked bread, the children had a feast. For each one she baked a little loaf filled with plum or apple sauce; this had never been done before. They, however, had to learn to take care of the crumbs. "The crumbs belong to the fire," she used to say as she brushed them up and threw them into the stove. If one of the children dropped a bit of bread, she made him pick it up, saying "Don't you know that if one steps upon a crumb, the souls in purgatory weep?" She did not like to see bread cut uneven, for she used to say: "Whoever does not come out even with his bread will not come out even with people."

Grave of Bozena Nemcova in Vysehrad Cemetery

On January 20, 1862, the day before she died, she received her author's copy of the first completely bound edition of "Babicka". It was said she burst into tears over it, because it was printed with so many mistakes and on the cheapest paper found. In spite of its poorly manufactured first edition, it is the best known and best loved work by a woman author in all of Czech literature. The fictional story is about the author's childhood in north-eastern Bohemia in the 1820s and is centered on the character of Babicka - the simple, almost saintly Grandmother who comes to live with her daughter and grandchildren. Babicka shares her folk wisdom and kindness and accompanies her grandchildren as they grow and learn about the life around them. There are many sad or tragic events in Babicka, the flood that devastates homes in the valley and surrounding area, Grandmother's painful recollections of war, and the loss of her husband.

The importance of Babicka in Czech culture can hardly be exaggerated. The book has appeared in countless editions, there are several Czech film versions. Apart from Babicka and a handful of short stories, unfortunately, very little has been translated into English. She wrote many books and essays, extensive folktale collections and fascinating material from her travels in a factual and down-to-earth style. In the Czech town of Nachod is a national literary and historical monument in her honor.



Grave of Bozena Nemcova in Vysehrad Cemetery

Information for this article came mostly from the Central Europe Review, Radio Prague, and a Canadian bookseller where the most recent English translation of Nemcova's book Babicka can be purchased.

It's Fun To Get Things In The Mail

Remember the Johnson Smith Catalog? Their slogan above said it all. Whatever you needed, or didn't need was available for practically pennies. Well, it's still fun to get things in the mail, e-mail or snail mail (U.S. Postal Service). Here's a great thing to get in the mail: The Czech classic novel Babicka is available by writing - mail@czech-books.com, 1652 Mountbatten Place, Victoria BC, V8S 5J9, Canada or by calling them at 1-877-287-1015. They have a great catalog too!

Americans in Prague

Americans have made remarkable contributions to Prague's post-Communist renaissance. Poland's Warsaw is larger, and Hungary's Budapest is almost as beautiful. But in neither of those capitals have Americans made the same impact as they have in Prague. Lobkowitz (the Boston-born grandson of exiled Czech aristocrats) may be the most visible American here, but other prominent

Yanks include Tonya Graves, an African-American singer linked to Prague's reemergence as a center of popular music; Jack Stack, an Irish-American banker in the vanguard of the city's rebirth as a financial capital; Karen Feldman, a suburban

New Yorker who has almost single-handedly restored the tradition of fine, handmade Czech glassware; and David Minkowski, a former Hollywood producer who has led Prague's revival as a world-class film capital.

Jonathan Kandell, Smithsonian Magazine

Please find the rest of this intriguing account of the impact Americans have had in Prague in the August 2007 issue of the *Smithsonian Magazine*. The article chronicles the efforts of five American individuals to make Prague a dynamic, modern city while also preserving and celebrating the city's rich heritage. The article paints a vivid picture of the city of Prague and of the impact individuals can have as they try to look both to the past and to the future.



KALENDÁŘ

NOVEMBER

November 1 Fall Dinner. Featuring keynote speaker William Cabaniss, former United States Ambassador to the Czech Republic. 7:00 p.m. Marriott Hotel. For more information, call (319) 362-8500.

November 2 *The History of the Brave Czech Nation*, a touring exhibition from the Cultural Ministry of the Czech Republic, The success and popularity of her Children's Book of the Year: The History of the Brave Czech Nation has led to a new exhibition by Czech artist Lucie Seifertova. Visitors can experience the large and small joys and miseries of cartoon characters who wind their ways through the labyrinths of time. Closes January 27, 2008.

November 12 *Káva a Knihy (Coffee and Books)*. Selected readings from Toward the Radical Center by Karel Capek. 7:00 p.m. NCSML - WFLA Heritage Hall. (Free)

November 15 Learn at Lunch. Museum Guild of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library discusses the completion of their latest project, "Czech and Slovak Heritage...Family Stories. Traditions. Recipes." NCSML - WFLA Heritage Hall. Noon. (Free)

November 16, 17, 23 24 Master Folk Artist Marj NejdI personalizes Christmas ornaments. 10-3:00 p.m. Hruska Grand Hall. \$1 for name and year, \$2 for additional messages.

November 17 Holiday Make-and-Take Workshop. Want to add some Czech or Slovak touches to your holiday celebrations? Learn how to make simple ornaments and centerpieces. Keep what you make here and use it at home. 1:00 - 4:00. NCSML - Hruska Grand Hall. (Free)

November 20 The Immigrant Experience: Old and New. The NCSML is partnering with Hometown Perry Iowa to present a panel comparing the experiences of Czech immigrants to Iowa a century ago with those of recent arrivals. Panelists include museum educator Jan Stoffer and city historian Mark Stoffer Hunter. Moderated by Tom Morain of Graceland University. 7:00 NCSML - WFLA Heritage Hall. (Free)

DECEMBER

December 1 Sv. Mikulás Day. Meet Sv. Mikulás, the Angel and the Devil as they visit the NCSML and Czech Village. Stay for the puppet show by the Eulenspiegel Puppet Theatre Company. 10:00. WFLA Heritage Hall. Tickets are \$3 for adults and \$4 for children (includes materials fee for post-show puppet making workshop).

December 1, 8 Master Folk Artist Marj NejdI personalizes Christmas ornaments. 10-3:00 p.m. Hruska Grand Hall. \$1 for name and year, \$2 for additional messages.

December 9 Cookie Walk. Homemade holiday cookies for sale by the Museum Guild of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. 9:30 a.m. until they are gone! \$6.00 per pound, cookbooks are \$22.00 each.

Czech Heritage Foundation Membership

It's almost 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 Nase Ceske Dedicvi.

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

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Thanks to Jeannie Vondracek for the use of the car (driven by son Joey) at Hog Wild Days in Hiawatha. Participants were Emma Lehmann, the Czech Princess, Andrea Cada, Megan Lehmann, Cassie Lehmann, all members of the Royal Court.

Swisher is the heart of Czech Country and here we are at Swisher Fun Days. Participants are Jordan Netolicky, Czech Prince, Emma Lehmann, the Czech Princess, Megan & Cassie Lehmann both members of the Royal Court.



Marissa Cada
and Jordan
Uthoff



Puppetry!
Suspended Animation
See story inside



Czech Heritage Foundation Float
Royal Court: Andrea Cada, Kindra Kolthoff, Sara Sindelar, Holly Stepanek
Homestay Students: Kate Strittmatter, Laura Sauer, Austin Fererick

**SUMMER
DAYS**

