



Enthusiastic Cabbage Roll participants at Houby Days 2013!

Photo by John Rocarek

Spring/Summer 2013

From the Editor

What do you mean you don't have that sandwich on the menu anymore?! You reorganized the layout of the store?! The road is closed?!

I don't deal with change well. To some extent, I think we all get a bit regimented and stuck in our ways as we get older. I've tried to relax. I read all those helpful quotes people post on Pinterest relating to change being positive and productive. ("If you change nothing, nothing will change.") However, change is inevitable.

This will be my last issue as editor of this newsletter. I've enjoyed the experience for five years, but the time has come for me to move on. Oh I'll stay busy! As the mom of four girls, two grown and two at home, I'll be busy visiting the adult ones and attending the younger one's activities. Oh yeah, and there's also my job as a preschool assistant teacher which I love!

Sara Jacobmeyer will take over as editor. Sara is a recent college graduate with a Bachelor's degree in History from Mount Mercy University. Her interests are varied, but she has spent much of her time researching European and British history (with a special appreciation for the strange and the silly). She is a staff member at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, and has also worked at the Sanford Museum and Planetarium in Cherokee, Iowa. She and her two cats reside in Coralville, where she spends her spare time cooking, reading, and hoping to one day travel to Prague.

All the best!

KAREN LEHMANN



Karen Lehmann

CHF Held Meet and Greet

On Tuesday evening, April 30, 2013, members of the Czech Heritage Foundation of Cedar Rapids, Iowa gathered in Hruska Hall at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library for an informal general membership meeting. Notice of the meeting was sent to members whose dues were current and who lived within a 100-mile radius of Cedar Rapids.

Donna Merkle served as moderator for the event. She welcomed everyone and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to talk about what the Czech Heritage Foundation is doing and how members can help with various committees, projects and events. Then each officer and committee chairman in attendance gave a short presentation on their responsibilities for their positions. We also noted that some positions are in need of a leader: Secretary, Miss Czech Slovak Iowa, Parades and Events, Prince and Princess, and Home Stay.

Unfortunately, attendance was very light, but two members did step forward and express an interest in possibly helping with a committee or project. We are grateful to them for doing so. We hope to have another informal meeting for the general membership sometime in the fall.

The Czech Heritage Foundation wants to include as many of its members in its activities as possible. This first focus group was selected due to the members' proximity to Cedar Rapids. But we don't want to exclude those members who don't live so close who would also like to be involved. So if you would like to help, or if you have any ideas, suggestions, comments or complaints for or about the Czech Heritage Foundation that you would like to share with Donna Merkle, please write to her c/o Czech Heritage Foundation, P.O. Box 8476, Cedar Rapids, IA 52408 or e-mail her at



DONNA MERKLE

Sibřinky costume ball

Sokol Gymnastics brings back Czech tradition

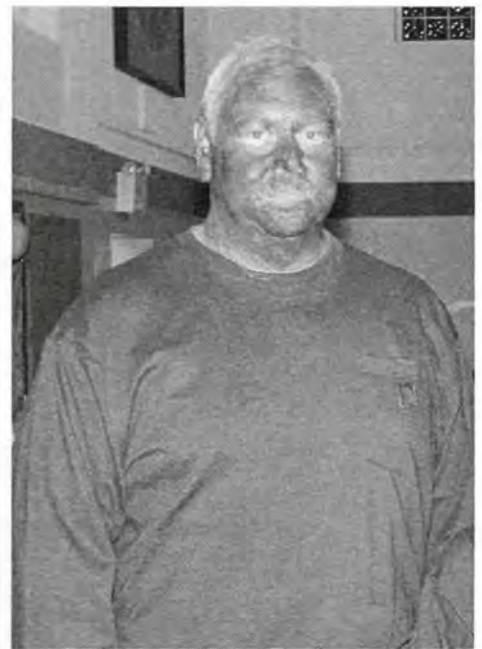


DeeAnn Nejd, dressed up as a crazed butcher, attempts to cut off an audience member's head . . . all in good fun of course!

Sibřinky, the Czech Mardi Gras, and Sokol fund raiser was held Feb. 10, 2013 at Sokol Cedar Rapids, 5200 18th Ave. SW. The second annual event included music by The Czech Plus Band, dance by Světlušky, plus food, games, and of course costumes! All proceeds went towards Sokol's efforts to build a kitchen in their facility. Sokol relocated to their new building in 2009 after the flood of 2008.



Sibřinky party-goers dressed up for the event.



Phill Nejd painted his face blue for the event.

St. Joseph's Day Dance



A large crowd danced to Barefoot Becky & the Ivanhoe Dutchmen.

Barefoot Becky and the Ivanhoe Dutchman were back to celebrate St. Joseph's Day with the Czech Heritage Foundation! This year's St. Joseph's Day Dance featured the popular band along with a raffle, door prizes, and bake sale. The dance was held at the Ponderosa Ballroom in Walford, IA from 2:00 – 6:00 pm on Sunday, March 10, 2013.



Czech Heritage Foundation royalty were on hand to help distribute door prizes. Pictured l-r: Dalynn Pokorny, Victoria Knight, Kelsey Pokorny, and Brennan Bell.

St. Joseph's Day Parade



Paige White, Holly Stepanek, Kelsey Pokorny, Brennan Bell, and Dalynn Pokorny pose on the CHF float.



Braylon and Peg Edwards of Cedar Rapids get into the spirit of St. Joseph's Day.



These Irish folks, Mary Wagner, John O'Connell, Sheryl O'Connell, and Brenda Decker dressed up as Czech Dr. Seuss characters for the parade.

Many were wearing red on Saturday, March 23, 2013 for the annual St. Joseph's Day Parade in Czech Village. Businesses served up red beer to go with traditional Czech food throughout the day. The parade traveled through New Bo across the 14th/16th Ave Bridge of Lions into Czech Village.

Houby Days 2013



Youngsters enjoyed carnival rides at the annual Houby Days celebration held May 15 & 16, 2013 in Czech Village.



Victoria Knight, CHF "Little Sister" enjoys a balloon animal.

Miss Czech-Slovak USA

Holly Stepanek to represent Iowa



2013 Miss Czech-Slovak, Iowa Queen Holly Stepanek is pictured with her "Little Sisters" Dalynn Pokorny and Victoria Knight.

The 2013 Miss Czech-Slovak US Pageant will be held August 3 and 4, 2013 at 7pm at the Wilber, NE Outdoor Theatre.

Holly Stepanek of Cedar Rapids will represent Iowa. Holly is the daughter of Tom and Sheila Stepanek.

The pageant will consist of a private interview, on-stage interview, kroj judging, and talent. Holly will play the accordion for her talent.

The Miss Czech/Slovak US national queen will receive a \$2000 cash prize, \$2500 towards a trip to either the Czech or Slovak Republic, a \$250 special scholarship from Alice Rokusek, and a jeweled crown, trophy, and flowers.

She will also receive the traditional traveling Fiala and Bohemian crystal crowns.

Memorial Day

Many attend observance held at St. Wenceslaus



Due to rain, the annual Memorial Day Observance for the Czech National Cemetery was held at St. Wenceslaus on Monday, May 28 at 11:30 am. Over 100 people attended the program. Hannah and Micah Van Deusen of Cedar Rapids played two violin pieces.



David Tyne, Linn County Veteran Affairs Director, was the keynote speaker.

Photos by Karen Lehmann



The Czech Heritage Singers performed a medley of songs. Pictured back row l-r: Fran Whitters, Marj Nejd, Ann Klobec, Barb Pulkrab, Larin Long, and Bernie Drahozal. Front row l-r: Helen Quass, Jeanne Vogt, Betty Gallagher, Olga Sedenka, Patty Yilek, and Milly Ortner.

Scholarship Students

Four recipients named



Holly Stepanek
University of Iowa

The Czech Heritage Foundation recently awarded four \$750 scholarships to the following students.

Holly Stepanek will begin her senior year at the University of Iowa and plans to graduate in May of 2014. Her upcoming school year will be focused on German, Political Science and Russian classes

preparing her for a degree in Political Science with a minor in German. She would love to work for the U.S. Department of State someday in foreign service.

Holly has been involved in the Czech community ever since she was seven, attending Czech School. She served on the Czech Royal Court for two years and when 17 had the life-changing opportunity to go on the CHF Homestay program and stay in Prague for a month with a host family. Holly is the current reigning Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Queen and will be representing Iowa in the upcoming national pageant this August.

During her college career she has made the Dean's list twice and also organized teams for intramural sports. For the last year and a half Holly has worked in the pharmacy of Hy-Vee Drugstore and is extremely dependable and hard-working. She has managed to maintain two jobs while going to school, all while excelling in some very challenging courses.



Emma Lehmann
Northwestern University

Emma Lehmann is a senior at Northwestern University in Chicago majoring in Magazine Journalism, Integrated Marketing Communications and English literature. She stated "journalism is my passion; it's how I hope to spend the rest of my

life."

As a child, Emma attended Czech school in the summers and when she graduated she came back to volunteer. Emma was the Czech Heritage princess and played the part of an angel in the Svatý Mikuláš Day celebrations one year. When Cedar Rapids flooded in 2008, Emma took over the publication of the Czech Heritage Foundation newsletter. Today her mother, Karen Lehmann, is the editor but Emma still volunteers to make the cover art. Emma also had the opportunity to travel to the Czech Republic as a cultural ambassador and learn much about the culture.

Last fall, Emma had the opportunity to travel to Australia for study abroad and in the spring interned at Coca-Cola Headquarters in Atlanta, GA.

Emma took a course at Northwestern entitled, "Enterprise Reporting in Diverse Communities." This class required students to leave the university campus and report out of a bureau in a Chicago neighborhood, developing their own story ideas and sources. They must be resourceful and persistent, consistently pushing themselves outside their comfort zones to succeed in the

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class. Emma's Associate Professor reported that Emma did very well in this course with a willingness to take risks to improve her skills.



Victoria Sedlacek
Kirkwood Community College

The scholarship being awarded to Victoria Sedlacek will allow her to spend more time focusing on her studies and require less time spent working so that she can further her education to its fullest potential. She would be able to make outstanding grades and complete her degree with minimal stress and much appreciation.

At the age of 18, Victoria moved out of her parents home to her rental home where she has lived ever since. She has always been a high achiever but has had some set-backs due to health. She has learned that no matter what life throws at you, you can still achieve high goals as long as you set your mind to it, you just have to be dedicated.

During high school she worked at Hy-Vee and Wild-Cat Golf Course in Shellsburg, Iowa. In March of 2009 she started working at Infinity Contact and worked there until starting her full-time job in October of 2012 at APAC.

With an interest in law, after completing her first semester of college in Business Administration, she changed her direction to Paralegal and Law Studies. At this time she is finishing up her summer classes at Kirkwood Community College and plans to take fall, spring and summer classes again in the 2013-2014 school year.



John Sevcik
Loras College

John grew up in a large family and learned at an early age the value of doing his part; and to always make sure to do his job well. His school grades always demonstrated his prowess in academic matters. High school brought with it a new era of success in a much diversified form. His 3.93 grade point average included some of the

most difficult courses Cedar Falls High School had to offer. These included top level Calculus, Chemistry and English classes. His collegiate transcript contained difficult classes including the highest entry-level Spanish class available, along with Biology and Chemistry courses.

Music has always been important in his life - both vocal and instrumental. In addition to music, he has put in countless hours into becoming the best distance runner he can be. His Catholic faith is important to him and he sees faith as a way of life. One of the most trying bumps in his life was his diagnosis of Crohn's Disease but with all his struggles he feels he eventually came out on top. He learned that even the darkest times will eventually come to an end. Whether in academics, athletics or other activities, life will go on if you allow it to. So long as you keep your nose to the grindstone, you can work out the seemingly most difficult struggles in life.

After looking at both what he is skilled at and what interests him, John came to the career path of becoming a podiatrist. To reach his goal, he is pursuing a Biology major, coupled with a Spanish major at college. Eventually he aspires to attend podiatry school somewhere across the nation and become the best that he possibly

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Albright Pin Collection Featured at NCSML



Madeleine Albright

Read My Pins: The Madeleine Albright Collection opened Saturday, May 11, 2012 at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

Pins became part of Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's diplomatic signature. Madeleine Albright was the United States Ambassador to the United Nations and the first female United States Sec-

retary of State. She used pins to emphasize the importance of a negotiation, signify high hopes, protest the absence of progress, and show pride in representing the U.S.

Comprised of designer creations, family heirlooms and dime-store pins, matched with Secretary Albright's compelling and often humorous stories, the exhibit represents the life of one of America's most accomplished and fascinating diplomats.



Czech School Year in Review

Bez práce nejsou koláče......an old Czech proverb that translates to "without work there are no kolaches". The Czech School Board heeds this advice and works hard to help keep a presence of the Czech language and culture in the Cedar Rapids area.

Participants in last summer's adult language classes continued to meet informally during the fall and winter. Several attendees who had visited the country last year shared many beautiful pictures and interesting stories. We are very grateful to the Mt. Mercy exchange students, Jarda and Nikol, for attending several times and assisting with pronunciation, past tense and for joining-in on songs and word games. These informal get-togethers are self-lead and that is the fun of it! Everyone contributes as we review topics studied in our summer classes and share happy memories of the language as we heard it from Babi and Děda.

March was a very busy month in our Czech community. We were fortunate to have had another successful Chili Supper & Bake Sale! It may have been a cold, rainy day outside of St. Ludmila's Social Hall, but inside, everyone was warmed-up by the delicious food. We are very grateful to St. Ludmila Church, everyone who attended, donated needed supplies, homemade cakes, items for the bake sale, and volunteered their time. Several local Czechs remarked that they

were happy to have Sykora's žitný chléb to go along with their chili. Old friends were glad to see each other again and new friendships were formed when someone would ask: "*Jak se máš?*".

JULIE WEIDNER

Editor

Sara Jacobmeyer

Memberships

Subscriptions for *Our Czech Heritage* are not sold. Members of the Czech Heritage Foundation receive the newsletter free of charge. Contributions may be sent anytime. Annual dues are \$10.00 and renewable on January 1 of each year and expire on December 31.

Website

www.czechheritagefoundation.com

Got news?

Contact Sara Jacobmeyer

Email:

Phone:

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can be.

John is a member of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association, formally known as the KD Lodge (Catholic Workmen). He has attended the St. Wenceslaus Corpus Christi Czech Festival on numerous occasions. Family gatherings on his paternal side always include his Czech heritage. In recognition of these celebrations, John provided 12 dozen kolaches at his graduation open house last year!

LEE THORNBLOOM

Be Careful What You Wish For!



A nice Czech couple were celebrating their 60th birthdays together. Suddenly, a magic genie appeared and said, "I'll grant you each one wish!"

The wife quickly said, "I wish we could afford to travel wherever we wanted!"

Poof! The genie granted her two free plane tickets to

anywhere in the world.

The husband sheepishly said, "Oh, I was going to wish for a wife 30 years younger than me."

Poof! The genie turned him into a 90-year-old!

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ANNUAL PICNIC!

The Czech Heritage Foundation invites
you to our Annual Picnic/Potluck.

August 13, 6:00 pm
Naxera Terrace at NCSML

Please bring a dish to pass.
Open to all CHF members and their
guests. Short meeting following picnic.

