

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

NAŠE ČESKÉ DĚDICTVÍ

OUR

CZECH

HERITAGE



Lisa Volesky Crowned Miss Czech-Slovak USA

(Story on page 3)

Volume 26 - Numbers 3 & 4 - December 2001

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Nase Ceske Dedictvi

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 Dedictvi* 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.

June Newsletter Volunteers

By Frank Novotny

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

Hedy Benish, Emma Davidson, Lenora Jiroutek, Peg Merta, Arlene Netolicky, Arlo Netolicky, Frank Novotny, Darlene Trachta, 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.

President's Message

By Sylvia Rohlena

Is it the beautiful fall weather of December or the business of our daily lives, for some reason I can't believe 2001 is just about gone. I look back and realize the very active and successful year Czech Heritage has had. The Czech Heritage Board of Directors worked hard to complete goals made last January and stay within the budget set.

- We are very proud of the four Homestay student ambassadors who visited the Czech Republic. This program in return is growing to include Czech students visiting the U.S..
- Four \$500.00 Scholarships were given to college students who showed meritorious efforts and an interest in our Czech heritage.
- We produced a special video on the accomplishments and life of Melvina Svec for her 100 years celebration.
- Four large parade floats took first place in various parades in Cedar Rapids.
- A new Czech Heritage membership brochure has been designed and printed.
- The educational kit continues to be used in many classrooms throughout the year. Work is in the process to develop a new Czech Heritage educational program for older students that would include cultural traditions, immigration, industry, and politics. This will be a series of four lessons.

The original kit will still be used for first through third grades.

- We are also excited about plans in progress for the first statewide pageant for Miss Czech Slovak Iowa to be held next May during Houby days.

I could go on and on with events taking place throughout the year, Czech singers, Czech language classes and more but space is limited. If you would be interested in any of these projects, drop us a line at our P.O. Box, we would enjoy hearing from you.

Czech Heritage has much to be thankful for and we, the Board of Directors believe each new year brings new dreams to follow and new joys to discover. We wish you all a happy and healthy New Year.

Na shledanou, Sylvia Blaha Rohlena

Editor's Message - by Russ Novotny

Yes, we only published 3 newsletters in 2001. Due to personal commitments, I was not able to publish the September issue. I now, however, have ample basic material for the next issue or two, and expect to resume a normal publishing schedule. Anyone who has ideas or materials for future Newsletters, please contact us at:

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

Be sure to check out the updated Web sites listed on the newsletter's back cover.

I. Special Notices:

Homestay Scholarships - Junior and Senior students interested in spending a month in Prague next year should look into the Homestay Scholarships being offered by the Czech Heritage Foundation. Applications are due by 1/20/02. See the article on page 11 for details.

Annual Meetings - The Czech Heritage Foundation and the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) will both hold their Annual meetings January 21, 2002 at the NCSML. The Czech Heritage meeting will start at 7:00 PM, and the NCSML meeting will begin at 8:00 PM.

Czech School Chili Supper - March 2nd, 2002, 5-7:00 PM at St Wenceslaus Church, Cedar Rapids, IA

St. Joseph's Dance - March 24th, 2002, 2-6:00 PM, Elks Club, 33rd Ave. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA

Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant

- Young women interested in competing for the title of Miss Iowa Czech Slovak Queen should apply by 4/1/02. See the article on page 5 for details.

Next Newsletter Previews - (Look for details of these stories in our next Newsletters)

- ❖ **Special Reports:**
 - 2001 Homestay Ambassador Observations by Regina Hogan & Kit Wobeter
 - 2002 Homestay Ambassadors Announced
- ❖ **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)

II. Cover Story:

Swisher Native, Lisa Volesky Crowned Miss Czech-Slovak USA

EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is a reprint of Press Release Issued by the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, by Jan Stoffer Tursi. We have added a photo from the 1999/2000 contest Lisa first competed in showing Lisa with Amanda Odvody, who served as her "Little Sister" at both pageants.



Lisa Volesky (center) of Iowa was named Miss Czech-Slovak USA 2001. At her side are first runner-up Karina Vanovsky (right) of Minnesota and second runner-up Rhonda Ptacek from Kansas. (Photo by BJ Fictum/The Crete News)

Lisa Volesky, daughter of Dennis and Debra Volesky, of Swisher, was crowned the Miss Czech-Slovak USA, Sunday, August 5, 2001, at the 40th Annual Wilber Czech Festival in Wilber, NB. Volesky, a past Czech Princess 1995-1996 for Czech Heritage, represented Iowa and was among 14 young ladies from 13 states including SD, OH, MN, NB, CA, OR, 2 from MO, WI, FL, TX, and OK to participate in the pageant. Contestants are judged on personality, talent, beauty, and costume. Volesky is the first Iowan to be crowned Miss Czech-Slovak USA in 15-year history of the pageant. She is a student at the University of Northern Iowa majoring in biology and education.

Allowed to wear three pieces of an authentic Czech *kroj* (folk costume), Volesky choose to wear parts of her great-aunt's, the late Leona Poduska, *kroj* and hired a dressmaker to make the rest of the costume. The competition required her to interpret the costume to the judges. As her talent, Volesky choose a dramatic telling of the life of famed entertainer Karel Hasler. Hasler is most famous for his tender and emotional song "Písnička Česká" ("Our Czech Song") and died in a Nazi concentration camp in 1941.

"The competition was really stiff this year. Anybody could have won," commented her proud grandmother, Adeline Volesky.

Volesky competed last year and met Amanda Odvody, a Wilber native, who served as Volesky's Little Sister. Throughout the year, she and Volesky fostered a strong friendship. When Volesky returned for this year's competition, Odvody was tapped to be her Little Sister again. Odvody accompanied Volesky, showed her around the town, and got her where she needed to be.



Photo from 1999/2000 Pageant
 Lisa Volesky, Iowa Czech Heritage Queen
 with her Little Sister,
 Amanda Odvody from Crete, Nebraska

In addition to the crown, flowers, and a trophy, Volesky received a scholarship to Florida Gulf State in Ft. Myers to cover a year's tuition for graduate or undergraduate studies, a trip to the Czech Republic with the travel company Linconnection USA, a compote in the shape of a crown from the Bohemian Crystalware Company from Podedbrady, Czech Republic, a \$2,000 bond, and necklace and earrings from the Czech Republic. She will be going to a number of Czech festivals throughout her reign and will be a hostess at next year's Czech Festival in Wilber. She will also crown next year's queen.

Wilber, located 32 miles southwest of Lincoln, has the largest Czech population in Nebraska. Czech pioneers came to Wilber in the 1850s. In 1986, Governor Frank Morrison named Wilber the Czech Capital of Nebraska. U.S. Senator Edward Zorinsky of Nebraska passed a proclamation on the floor of the U.S. Senate proclaiming Wilber to be the Czech Capital of the United States. Nebraska has the highest percentage of people claiming Czech ancestry in the nation; Iowa is second.

In 1961, a group of businessmen organized a festival to preserve the Czech customs and traditions of their Czech ancestors. The small community of 1,500 plays host to 20,000 - 30,000 visitors who come to the community to celebrate their Czech heritage. One of the main events of the festival is a Miss Czech-Slovak National Queen Pageant.

Comments from the Queen

By Lisa Volesky



I would like to first and foremost, extend my utmost and sincere thanks to the Czech Heritage Foundation for their continued support as the Iowa Czech Heritage Queen, and as the more recent Miss Czech Slovak USA 2001-2002. This honor strikes me as a dream every time I

hear, "the first Iowan to win in the 15 years of the national pageant". It is without a doubt that there were times in Wilber when I felt like I was out of place, or the underdog in such an event where these girls had such a journey to get there, in addition to my single application form. It was a life changing experience to have the opportunity to make friends with such an amazing group of women from across the nation and share such a beautiful heritage. Everyday I am thankful and honored to represent this organization, this state and the nation of Americans of Czech and Slovak ancestry.

I have had a lot to be thankful for in the year 2001. Among my many blessings are my family and friends, my education, and all of the opportunities that have made me feel like I can climb any mountain and touch the stars. There is no tiara big enough or crystal vase heavy enough that would convince me to trade my family, past, or memories for! I am addicted to life and even the downfalls, for that's what keeps it interesting! I am 20 years old, and a senior at the University of Northern Iowa. I am a Biology major and Chemistry minor, with an emphasis in Secondary Education. I keep myself busy at school where I am on the Dean's List, an active member of Kappa Delta Pi, a senator in the student government, and a tutor for two area schools. I work several nights a week and enjoy spending time with friends. When I come home I become consumed with helping to put Iowa's first ever Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant on its feet and handling any gracious invitations to Czech festivals!

As Miss Czech Slovak 2001-2002, I have made appearances in Traer, Iowa, where the Melodion Band from Prague gave a delightful concert. I shared my costume and talent from Wilber, and am still on cloud nine from being accompanied by the world-renowned Melodion Band when I played *Pisnica Ceska* on the flute! In September, I wrote an article for the Cedar Rapids Czech Village Newsletter. I was honored to help crown the new Czech Prince and Princess at the Fall Dinner in October. I was also present at the National Museum on *Svaty Mikulus Day* for the Xavier Choir, the delightful puppet show, and the Sokol group from Wisconsin's amazing performance.

Some of my upcoming events (tentative) include:

- Jan. 27 Youth in Heritage Talk at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library
- April 6 Czech Festival, Montgomery, MN
- April 14 Czech Folklore Festival, Omaha, NE
- May 18 Houby Days, Cedar Rapids, IA, including Iowa's 1st Annual Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant
- June Trip to Czech Republic!!

Plus many other various upcoming festivals throughout the nation ...

I am very excited about my new Kroj that has just been finished, to complete the one I wore on Wilbur. It is breath taking and I cannot wait to wear it! I am also anxiously anticipating my trip to the Czech Republic,

which will include exclusive stops and possibly some festivals! I cannot seem to thank John Fiala, the Czech Heritage, my family, and our wonderful Czech Village and community enough. It is with great pride that I drive home to Cedar Rapids, and feel truly at "home" on 16th Avenue.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lisa has represented the Czech Heritage Foundation and the state of Iowa twice now at the Miss Czech Slovak USA pageant in Wilbur. We're so very proud of her and her accomplishments.

She is so taken by the opportunities offered through this activity, that she and her family are spearheading organizing Iowa's own Miss Czech Slovak Iowa pageant. Read about that in the following article. Hopefully, we'll be hearing more from Lisa, and perhaps we can get a picture of her in that new Kroj she is so excited about.

Royal Proclamation: 1st Annual Miss Iowa Czech Slovak Pageant Czech Village, Cedar Rapids, IA

Iowa has many Czech families that have attended Wilber, Nebraska's Czech Days. This well known Czech Festival includes the Miss Czech Slovak USA Pageant. The festival has been held for 35 years, and the selection of a national Czech and Slovak queen has been in existence for 15 years. Many states are organized and send candidates to represent their state and compete in Wilber. States that have had queens win the national title in the past include: Nebraska, Florida, Virginia, Colorado, Texas, Missouri, California, and New York. This year's queen, Lisa Volesky, won the title, placing Iowa in the books as having a national queen. In efforts to organize a state pageant in Iowa and make this opportunity available to other girls wanting to compete in Wilber, a state pageant will grace Iowa in May!

At the October meeting of the Czech Heritage Foundation, the board voted to form a committee and sponsor the Iowa pageant, and then send the winning candidate to the national competition in Wilber, Nebraska to represent the state of Iowa. Iowa's contest will be held in conjunction with the Houby days celebration in Czech Village, on May 17-19, 2002. The Miss Iowa Czech Slovak pageant will be held on Saturday, May 18th, 2002 in Cedar Rapids.

The Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant committee is looking for a young woman, 16-26, who "possesses dignity, charm, poise, and talent" to meet the public and "represent her Czech-Slovak ancestry for her state and nation". The crowned Miss Czech Slovak Iowa will receive a jeweled crown, sash, flowers, a \$500 scholarship, sponsorship to the Miss Czech Slovak USA pageant in Wilber, NE, numerous appearances, publicity,

and various gifts. She will serve as a representative of Czech and Slovak ancestry for the State of Iowa.

Contestants must:

- be between ages of 16 and 26 as of 9/1/02
- be single, never married, and cannot have children
- be of partial Czech, Moravian, Selesian, or Slovak descent
- appear in authentic or Americanized costume
- participate in the following categories
 - Private Interview
 - Talent (5 minutes)
 - Costume modeling
 - Introduction/Interview
- Submit completed entry forms no later than April 1st, 2002.

Potential candidates wishing further information or application forms should write:

Miss Czech Slovak Iowa
% Lisa Volesky, Pageant Coordinator

You may also obtain addition information by calling Adeline Volesky _____, or Deb Volesky _____

III. Olga's Czech Language Corner:

Lesson 7

By Olga Drahozal



Answers to your translation exercise from the last lesson:

CZECH	ENGLISH
Tento muž je mladý.	This (here) man is young.
Tato cesta je nová.	This (here) road is new.
Toto město (mye-staw) je staré. (stah-reh)	This (here) city is old.
Ta kniha je tady. (Thah knee-ha)	That book is here.
To divadlo je velké. (vel-keh) (large)	That theater is large.

ENGLISH	CZECH
This map is old.	Táto mapa je stará.
This train is long.	Tento vlak je dlouhý.
That there passport is old.	Tam ten pas je starý.
That school is new.	Ta škola je nová.
That automobile is small.	To auto je malé.

This lesson – Adjectives with singular nouns.

Adjectives that modify (describe) singular *masculine* nouns end in "y". Consider these examples:

CZECH	ENGLISH
Tady je velký kostel. (vel-kee=big; kaw-stel=church)	Here is a big church.
Ten lístek je drahý. (lee-stek=ticket; drah-hee=expensive)	That ticket is expensive.
Dedeček je starý. (dye-deh-chek=grandfather; stah-ree=old)	Grandfather is old.

Adjectives that modify (describe) singular *feminine* nouns end in "a". Consider these examples:

CZECH	ENGLISH
Tam je hezká dívka. (hez-kah hawl-kah=pretty girl)	There is a pretty girl.
Tady je malá bílá kytky (mah-lah bee-lah kit-kah=small white flower)	Here is a small white flower.
Ta těžká kniha je stará. (tyez-kah knee-hah=heavy book)	That heavy book is old.

Adjectives that modify (describe) singular *neuter* nouns end in "e". Consider these examples:

CZECH	ENGLISH
Auto je červené. (ah-oo-thaw=auto; chair-ven-neh=red)	The auto is red.
Piano je velké. (pi-ah-naw=piano; vel-keh=large)	The piano is large.
To je nové rádio. (nove=new; rah-di-aw=radio)	That is a new radio.
To pivo je teplé. (pi-vaw=beer; tep-leh=warm)	That beer is warm.

Exercise for next time – Translate the following sentences:

- I have a red coat (kabat=kah-bahth).
- You have a new auto?
- We have a small white ticket.
- The old lady is here.
- The yellow lamp (lampa=lum-pah) is small.
- (My) máme ten velký domov. (daw-mawf=home)
- Máte modré auto?
- Ta velká zahrádka je hezká. (zah-hrad-ka=garden)
- Ten park je veliký. (pahrk=park; veh=lee-kee=big or large)
- Ten autobus je žlutý. (ah-oo-thaw=poos)

Remember that in Czech there are no articles, i.e., a, an, and the. Obviously, when you translate to English, you have to add the article for the sentence to make sense.

Next lesson we'll tell you how to add adjectives to the plurals of these nouns.

Na Shle! (as they say in the land of the Czechs!)

IV. National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library



Roads to Understanding Exhibit

**Due to Sept. 11 Events,
Roads to Understanding
Will Be at the NCSML Until
February 24, 2002**

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is proud to feature another special exhibition from the National Museum in Prague. Designed specifically for the NCSML by C.H. Expo Ltd. and the Library of the National Museum in Prague, *Roads to Understanding* is comprised of books from the late 15th through 20th centuries.

Roads to Understanding runs from October 25, 2001 through February 24, 2002. **Please note the change in the closing date from January 20 to February 24.** C.H. Expo Ltd. and the National Museum in Prague have generously agreed to extend the exhibition's stay in Cedar Rapids. This became necessary after the events of September 11.

The NCSML had arranged for a glass exhibition from the Corning Museum of Glass to show from February 14 – April 28, 2002. The Corning Museum was working with private glass collectors abroad on a separate, unique exhibition. Due to the uncertainty after September 11, these collectors elected not to send their items to the United States and the Corning Museum's exhibition was cancelled. The exhibition the NCSML was negotiating for will remain at the Corning Museum (to replace the exhibition that was cancelled) and will not travel to the NCSML. As a result, the NCSML requested and was granted an extension for *Roads to Understanding* and has moved the opening date for the next temporary exhibition, *KROJE – Dress for the Dance of Life*, to April 12, 2002.

The books tell amazing stories of exploration and discovery and the search for the essence of what it means to be Czech. To find the answers, the exhibition takes visitors on three "Roads to Understanding." The first

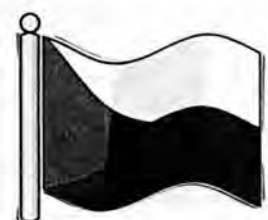
journey is religious. Invented circa 1436, the printing press capitalized on people's interest in religious materials. The first bible in the Czech language was printed less than 40 years after the invention of the printing press – some 50 years before the first bible appeared in English. Due to their geographic position, the Czech lands have historically been a meeting ground where the religious faiths of the Catholic South and the Protestant North have mixed and mingled. Religious disputes between Catholics, Ultraquists, and Protestants were often conducted via the printed word. Bibles and other religious books illustrate this rich history, the role and importance of religion to the people of the Czech lands, and illustrate how the Czech nation sought to find its own way to God.

The second path is the quest to understand the historical events that shaped the Czech lands. Early knowledge was passed on by oral traditions. Often, facts were lost from one generation to the next. Written accounts from the early 17th century through modern times include rare and valuable information about the early Czech leaders, genealogy, customs, and etiquette. As with the written history of other countries, some accounts were lost to censorship or are questionable because of embellishments made by the author.

The final journey includes trips to far-away lands as Czechs strove to understand their place within the context of the world. Many early pilgrimages were to Palestine. One journeyman attempted to reach Jerusalem two times before finally reaching the Holy City. As he traveled, he was able to provide for himself through his goldsmith skills. His travelogue will be among those exhibited. Religious zeal also inspired missions by Czech Catholic priests to Africa, Asia, and Latin America during the Baroque period. Later, Czech explorers wrote of their experiences in South America, Russia, Africa, Indonesia, China, and the United States.

C.H. Expo Ltd. and the National Museum in Prague prepared *Roads to Understanding* to illustrate early printing in the Czech lands as well as these incredible journeys. The earliest book in the exhibition, a Czech bible, was printed in 1488, less than 40 years after Gutenberg printed the very first bible. Many of the books are embellished with exquisite copperplates, maps, and other colored images.

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:

CZECH PRINCE & PRINCESS

Czech Prince and Princess Crowned for 2001/02



2001/02 Czech Prince Eric Gervais,
Miss Czech Slovak USA Lisa Volesky,
2000/01 Princess Bridget Samek, &
2001/02 Princess Rachel Wobeter

The Czech Heritage's new Czech Prince (Eric Gervais) and Princess (Rachel Wobeter) were crowned October 25, 2001 as a part of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library's Fall Dinner. Lisa Volesky, Miss Czech Slovak USA, crowned our new royalty. Our new Prince and Princess for the coming year will represent the Czech Heritage Foundation and the Czech community in several local events. They are sure to get a chance to ride in a few parades and be a part of our festivals.

We also wish to thank our last year's Prince and Princess, Matt and Bridget Samek, for their efforts this past year in representing our Czech community. We always appreciate seeing our youth taking an active part in preserving and promoting our heritage.



2000/01 Czech Prince & Princess
Matt & Bridget Samek

Our new Czech Princess is Rachel Wobeter. Her parents are Peter and Berleen Wobeter. Rachel and her parents live in Toledo, Iowa.

Our new Czech Prince is Eric Gervais. Eric's parents are Phil and Rita Gervais. Eric and his family live in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he is currently attending Kennedy High School.

As you can see by their Application Essays printed below, we again have found two very deserving candidates for these awards. Both candidates have strong Czech influences in their home lives, and both have already traveled to the Czech Republic. Another common point is that they both mention kolaches in their essays – they obviously know how to enjoy Czech food. We'll let their Application Essays introduce them further to you.

Rachel's Application Essay

By Rachel Wobeter



My Czech heritage is a part of my life that I am very proud of and enjoy learning about. Czech traditions and culture have always been in my life and I am now beginning to recognize those influences. I am learning that there is more about my heritage than just kolaches (though that is a great part)! I have

learned about my heritage through my school, church, and from my family.

I am first going to tell you how my family has influenced me. First my grandpa and grandma are still practicing Czech traditions like cooking Czech foods and putting the crèche underneath the Christmas tree. My family has studied our genealogy and took a trip to the Czech Republic in the mid 80's. We also have read and learned about many Czech traditions such as the Christmas Spider and the Christmas Pickle. My mom really likes to learn about these kinds of traditions and we like to do them. One thing we have done is make a traditional Czech Christmas tree with carp scale ornaments and other traditional things. My mom is also planning on having a Czech Dinner fundraiser at our church.

My brother took a trip through the Czech Heritage Foundation to the Czech Republic and I have learned many things from that. I went to the Sokol Pork and Dumpling Dinner where I learned the history of Sokol traditions and have also gone to the St. Joseph's Day Dance and parade in Cedar Rapids. I enjoyed getting to know the people who helped my brother go on his trip. My brother will be giving a presentation about his trip to our church too.

In school I have learned about my Czech background. At school we have a week called Culture Week. During

this week, we learn about many cultures including the Czech culture. We went on a trip to the National Czech and Slovak Museum and to the Czech Village in Cedar Rapids. I enjoyed going to the bakery and looking in the antique shops. On the final day of Culture Week students go to various workshops. My mom showed students how to make Czech eggs for one of the workshops. I have made Czech eggs at home too.

All of these things have broadened my knowledge of my Czech heritage. Watching my brother go to the Czech Republic and have many great experiences has excited me to learn and experience new things also. I hope that by being Czech Princess I will be able to learn more about my heritage and have many great experiences.

Eric's Application Essay

By Eric Gervais



My Name is Eric Gervais and my life has been greatly impacted by my Czech heritage. I've not only been to the Czech Republic once, but twice. This past summer my family and I hosted five relatives from the Czech Republic. From these experiences I have learned about Czech culture right from the source. Not only

was it fun, but I also learned how Czech people live and what they do for fun. I also discovered that most Czech teenagers are like me in how they spend their free time. But I appreciate what I have in America more because in the Czech Republic they don't have all the stuff we have here. They don't have a TV in every room or a lot of video games. Only the very rich people can afford the Internet and sometimes when I'm taking my web design class at Kennedy, I think about how good we have it here in America.

I have participated in Czech School for several years, which came in handy when speaking with my Czech relatives. I have grown up with the Czech culture. In my family we eat many Czech foods. I've noticed that we cook and eat many of the same foods we had in the Czech Republic. We sometimes eat food like port roast and dumplings and my mom makes the best kolaches.

One of my favorite things to do is run. I participate in the cross country and track programs at Kennedy High School. I've noticed that most Czech people I know are athletic. And I think that my Czech heritage gave me some natural talent for running.

In short, many things that I do are influenced in some way or another by my Czech heritage. It is something that I am very proud of.

HOMESTAY PROGRAM -

Sarah's Observations

By Sarah Fiala



When arriving in the Czech Republic one of the first things you notice is that everything is so different from the United States. The people are friendlier, the buildings more historic, and everyone seems to have flowers draped over a balcony. To try to put into

words what I experienced over there is difficult; it is an experience that everyone should have for himself or herself one day.



Ana and her family showed me all of the Czech Republic, from the cobble stone streets of downtown Prague to the mountains bordering Germany.

Never have I been made to feel so welcome as I did with the Czech people. They seem to savor all the little moments in life. Life seems to move at a bit slower pace and waiting an hour for a friend is not an inconvenience, but rather a part of the daily routine. It is not a rarity to see the whole family gathered around the table for meals. Even the meals are quite different. They eat things fresh from the garden, and you buy your bread from the store everyday. I was welcomed into Anna's whole extended family like one of their own.

Anna and her family took me all over the Czech Republic. We toured Prague Castle, climbed mountains, and lived in a historic family cottage. We even toured museums and other famous sites extensively in and outside of the Czech republic. I was even



able to tour the 1414 glass blowing factory and the master glass blower let me help him create one of his pieces. They even took me on a boat to see a play presented in Czech and English.



Sarah at Glass Blowing Factory

Probably one of the most memorable places they took me was to the town of Zeletava, where my grandfather's ancestors are from. I was able to meet a distant relative and visit the graves of my ancestors. It was amazing to make that sort of a connection and understand where you are actually from. I later received a wedding invitation from the distant cousin I met while over there.



The people that I met while there and the experiences I had will be something that I will treasure always.



Bridget's Observations

By Bridget Samek



I was given the privilege of visiting the Czech Republic for four weeks. I didn't know what to expect. I had no idea life seven time zones away could be so different.

I was placed with an ideal family, the Rufers, who lived in the town of Pribram 60 km south of Prague. My host family included my father, Petr, mother, Hana, sister Zuzana (18), brother, Filip (16), and sister, Lenka (11). I felt right at home since I have a brother and a sister around the ages of Filip and Lenka. And being with Zuzana was like having a best friend around all the time.



Zuzana and Bridget at the Prague Airport

The first week I was there, Zuzana was still in school. Their time at school is a lot shorter, 8:00- 1:00, and they have 15-30 minute breaks in between classes. It was nice to be around kids my own age and to see what school would be like if I lived there.

When school ended, the family went to their cottage in Zupanovice, a town on the Vltava River, for a week. It was very relaxing. We were there over the 4th of July and we even had a celebration with sparklers and everything!

My third week was spent in Prague with my grandfather's cousin, Vera. I had only met her once when she visited the U.S. when I was little. It was like having a third grandma! Zuzana and I had a lot of fun



hitting the tourist spots, my favorite being Prazky Hrad at night.



**Me on Golden Lane at the Prague Castle,
Where Doorways are Known for Being
Very Short (except for me)**

My fourth week was full of miscellaneous trips. We went to a concert of the band Cechomor, that plays folktype music. We visited Cesky Krumlov and even Ceske Budjovice, where I met Gabriela, one of the Czech School teachers this summer. Here, I am pictured on Golden Lane at the Prague Castle, where doorways are known for being very short (except for me).

I have been back from my trip for 78 days and I still think about my time there every day. I was fortunate enough to meet many wonderful people and see many wonderful things. I would like to thank everyone who made it possible for me to go. You have given me the most memorable experience in my life.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Look for the completion of our coverage of the 2001 Homestay program in our next newsletter as we publish the observations of our final two Ambassadors - Regina Hogan and Kit Wobeter.

Homestay Scholarships Available for 2002 – Apply Now!

By the Homestay Committee

The Czech Heritage Foundation is again offering partial scholarships to qualified students participating in the Foundation's International Homestay Program. Recipients of the scholarships will be able to live with a host family for four weeks in Prague next summer.

More than 50 high school students have received scholarships since the educational program began in 1983. Students experience first-hand, the culture and

daily life of their host family and the local Czech community.

Upon their return, our student "Ambassadors" share their experience with local clubs, church, trade groups, senior centers, civic, and fraternal organizations.

Applicants must have some Czech, Moravian, or Slovak ancestry, and be a Junior or Senior in High School during the 2001-2002 academic school year. Students must also live in Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, or the surrounding areas, and attend orientations and Czech language classes sponsored by the Czech Heritage Foundation in Cedar Rapids.

Interested students should contact their High School guidance counselor or call Jeanne Fee to apply. The deadline for completed applications has been extended to January 20th, 2002. Completed applications are to be returned to:

Jeanne Fee
Homestay Committee

Parade Float Wins Honors at Cedar Rapids Holiday Parade

Once again, the Czech Heritage entry in the Cedar Rapids Holiday Parade was an award winner. This year, our float was judged "Best Decorated Float" in the parade.



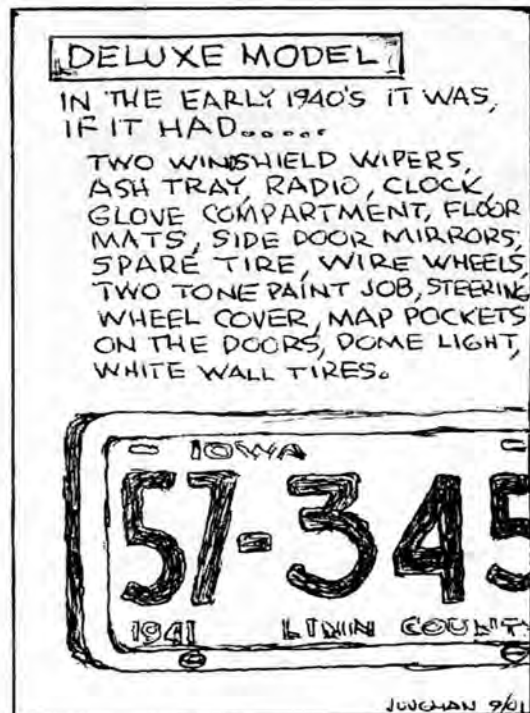
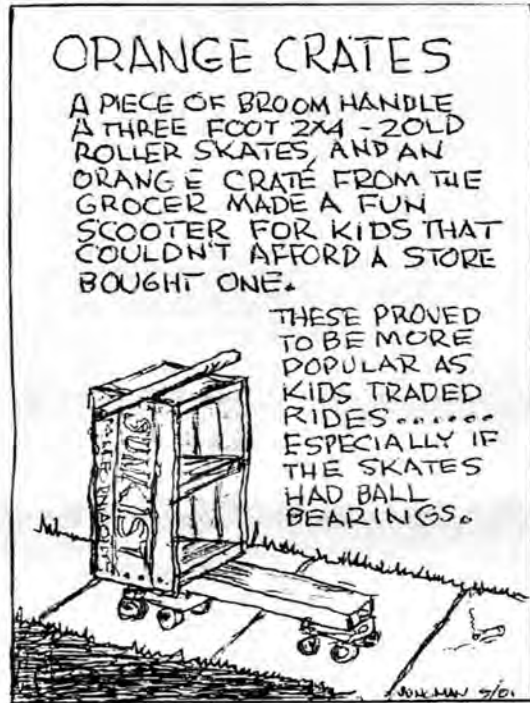
Thanks to Leonard Pfeifer for his creative visions and the massive amounts of time he dedicates to designing and making these visions become reality.



VI. Historic Perspectives:

EDITOR'S NOTE: Chuck Jungman has been doing illustrations of some of his fond memories of the past. He calls the series "Do You Remember?", but sometimes just refers to them as "Chuck"les! Chuck has agreed to let us publish several of these images. We hope these "tickle" your memories, and may remind you of a story you'd be willing to share.

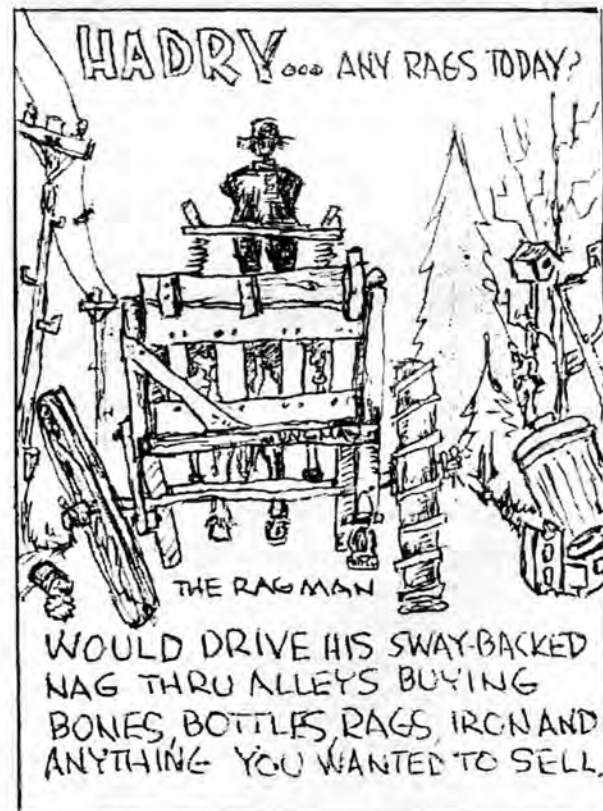
Jungman's Do You Remember?



More Jungman "Chuck"les



(Notice the water dippers hanging
on the side of the building.)



VII. Feature Story:

AOSSEY INFLUENCE ON SOUTHWEST CEDAR RAPIDS

Compiled by Evelyn Stejskal and Adeline Volesky from information provided by Joe, Albert, and Bill Aosseý

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article reflects how America has served as a melting pot for immigrants. Its story shows how a Muslim immigrant from Syria-Lebanon became important to the growth of the Czech community in Cedar Rapids. This article was compiled prior to September 11th, because of the significant impact on the Czech community by the Aosseý family. The timing of its publication is purely a coincidence, but perhaps a twist of fate to remind us how we all HAVE, and WILL continue to live together in peace.

Many Czech immigrants settled in southwest Cedar Rapids, Iowa, because it was a place of great opportunity to grow and thrive. Quaker Oats, Sinclair Co. and Pennick & Ford were eager to hire hard working and dedicated immigrants. The southwest quadrant of the city was rapidly getting settled.

In 1910, another immigrant, William Aosseý, arrived in the U.S. from Syria-Lebanon via Ellis Island with four brothers, without their parents. They settled in Fort Dodge, Iowa, peddling merchandise.



In 1918, all five brothers ran a general store in Urbana, Iowa. The AOSSEY GROCERY STORE was located by a railroad so products like sugar, flour, and basic staples came by train.



In 1923 William sold out his interest. With friends, he drove a Model T and spent five months in California. When he returned to Cedar Rapids in 1927 he purchased the property on the corner of Wilson Avenue and

Bowling Street from Mr. Leo Janesovsky. Realizing the needs of the Czech community, William Aosseý built a combination gas station with groceries and living quarters on the five acres.



BOWLING ST. & WILSON AVE 1955

The property was 500 feet on Bowling St. and 300 feet on Wilson Ave. At the same time the city limits were on 19th Ave. The post office and Colonial Bakery would not deliver because it was in the country.

In the mid 30's Mr. Aosseý owned the first licensed trailer park in Iowa.



Until the late 1940's the family businesses and properties continued to operate in the original form. In the late 1940's the grocery store and gas station expanded. In the 1950's a home addition was added to the original building. The neighborhood store was very successful and run well by Mr. Aosseý. After World War II things started to change. In 1950 Mr. Aosseý bought and paid for city sewer and water from Mallory St. and 19th to Bowling St. He had to pay for city utilities himself since this area was still considered on the "outskirts" of town at that time.

In 1947 William and Maheba Aosseý established and donated the Muslim National Cemetery on Bowling St. SW and located just north of the Czech National Cemetery. In 1948, William Aosseý set aside 6½ acres of land that was to be owned by the Muslim community to be used for all Muslims everywhere in North America. All the plats are surveyed so they face Qibla or Direction of Mecca. In 1953, the cemetery was turned over to the Cedar Rapids Islamic Center.

In 1959 the first piece of property was added to. It was purchased from John Stodola on Wilson Ave. In 1961 and 1962 two more properties were purchased, one from Mr. Leo Janesovsky on the corner of Bowling St. and 21st Ave., and the 2nd from John Stodola in the rear of the original purchase on 21st Ave.

In 1958, Jim Sholfelt and Albert Aossey circulated a petition to have Wilson Ave. paved to Bowling St. The petition was successful, and it was paved.

In 1959, William Aossey officially retired, and son Albert became manager and responsible for operations. In 1962, the Snow White Laundry was built at 12 Wilson Avenue.



The following year the Snow White Car Wash was built on Bowling Street. Dan's Barber Shop also joined the area in 1963.



In 1965, the HyVee was built at 12 Wilson Avenue. This was HyVee's number 50th store and the second HyVee in Cedar Rapids.



Aossey's Corner, with the Czech National Cemetery in the foreground

In 1965, Aossey's original building was leveled and a Sun Oil DX Station was built. At the same time the family had to relocate to a house at 131 Ely Ave. SW. Aossey moved the house from Jones Park. The Aosseys lived in the house until 1967, when their new home was built at the corner of Bowling St.

In 1969, at the rear of the property, the first Drug Town was built with land rent of \$150 per month. The HyVee chain ran a contest to name the store. The winning name was Drug Town, and the Bowling St. Drug Town was number 1.

In 1973, the last mobile home was removed to make room for the north building, which was built in two phases. The first phase housed Ace Hardware, and the last phase, which is occupied by three stores, was built two years later. The property contained high-grade sand used by Hargrave Asphalt Co. The Aossey sand was used for urban renewal downtown on the site of Brenton Bank and the ground of Coe College across the street from St. Luke's Hospital. William Aossey was co-developer of 21st Ave. SW. The lower of the property north of the Muslim Cemetery was sold to Gib Boxa Construction and developed. The street was named in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Aossey's love and dedication to Cedar Rapids.

In 1932, William Aossey married Maheaba Habbab. They had four children: Joe, Albert, William Jr., and Elizabeth (deceased), some of which were partners in Aossey's businesses. The family loved to travel and spent much time visiting sons Joe, in the army in Turkey, and Bill Jr., in the Peace Corps in Africa (63-65), who traveled and worked internationally before settling in Cedar Rapids in the 1960's.

Mr. Aossey loved gardening and received much recognition for his unique vegetables and flowers. He lived in his home until his death on October 17, 1969. His epitaph sums up his life very well: "Believed in God, Educated himself. Created prosperity, Traveled the world. He rests immortal, in the hearts of those who knew him."

Mrs. Aossey still lives in her home in southwest Cedar Rapids.

Evelyn and Adeline wish to thank the Aossey boys, Joe, Albert, and Bill, for providing these pictures and valuable historic information on Mr. Aossey.

Membership Application

Please check the proper item: Renewal New Gift

Name(s) Ms., Mr., Mrs. _____

Address _____ Zip + 4 _____

Make check payable and mail to :

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

Membership dues \$ _____ Donation \$ _____ Gift Membership \$ _____

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 sponsorship, financial support for the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, adult Czech language classes, the Homestay Program, along with publishing the quarterly *Naše České Dědictví*, and other numerous publications. The list of Czech Heritage projects goes on and on.

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

- Jan. 15 **Porcelain Painting Class:** Learn how to paint a scene on a plate with instructor JoAnne Neff - Museum, 6:30-8:30 PM (also Jan. 22 & 24). Advance registration required.
- 17 **Learn at Lunch:** Learn about Czech and Slovak Traditions - Museum, Noon
- 20 **Czech Heritage Hoestay Ambassador Applications Due:** See article on page 11.
- 20 **Muzika Muzika:** Linn-Mar Middle School Chamber Orchestras - Museum, 2:00 - 4:00 PM
- 21 **Czech Heritage Foundation Annual Meeting** - Museum, 7:00 PM
- 21 **National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Annual Meeting** - Museum, 8:00 PM
- 27 **Life Long Learning.** Miss Czech-Slovak USA Lisa Volesky will talk about the important role youth play in preserving Czech and Slovak heritage. - Museum, 2:00 - 4:00 PM
-
- Feb. 2 **Wheat Weaving Class.** Students learn to make a three inch wreath using a five straw spiral. - Museum, 1:00 - 4:00 PM. Advance registration required.
- 10 **Muzika Muzika (Music Music).** Franklin Middle School Honor Ensemble - Museum, PM.
- 11 **Káva a Knihy: I Am Snowing: The Confessions of a Woman of Prague** by Pavel Kohout - Museum.
- 12 **Czech Heritage Foundation Meeting** - Museum, 7:30 PM
-
- Mar. 2 **Czech School Chili Supper** - St Wenceslaus Church, Cedar Rapids, IA, 5:00-7:00 PM
- 12 **Czech Heritage Foundation Meeting** - Museum, 7:30 PM
- 24 **St. Joseph's Dance** - Elks Club, 33rd Ave. SW, Cedar Rapids, IA, 2:00-6:00 PM
-
- Apr. 1 **Miss Iowa Czech Slovak Applications Due** - See article on page 5
- 9 **Czech Heritage Foundation Meeting** - Museum, 7:30 PM
-
- May 14 **Czech Heritage Foundation Meeting** - Museum, 7:30 PM
- 17-19 **Houby Days Celebration** - Czech Village, Cedar Rapids, IA
- 18 **Crowning of Miss Iowa Czech Slovak**, Czech Village, Cedar Rapids, IA

CZECH HERITAGE FOUNDATION, INC.

P.O. Box 761
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

Non-Profit Organiz.
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National Czech & Slovak Museum &
30 16th Ave. SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

52404+5304 10



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