



Vol. 2 No. 1

"The Bridge"

Spring 1992

News Of The Czech & Slovak Museum And Library

"...Hence all who are born as human beings need education because they are destined to be real people, and not wild beasts, dull animals, and clumps of wood. Not only children of the rich and noble but all children ought to be educated in the same way whether they are nobles or commoners, rich or poor, boys or girls, or whether they come from cities or villages."

Jan Amos Komenský

This year marks the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Jan Amos Komenský. Hundreds of years ahead of his time, he advocated equality in education for boys and girls, instruction in the local language, teaching methods using drawings and examples, physical and health education, vocational training, and the use of drama in schools. An internationally famous educator, scientist, author, and philosopher, Komenský is credited with authoring the first illustrated textbook, *Orbis pictus*. "The Visible World in Pictures."

On the occasion of Komenský's four hundredth anniversary, the Iowa Masonic Library, in Cedar Rapids, graciously donated its collection of over one hundred fifty volumes, written by or about Komenský (often better known by the Latin version of his name, Comenius) to the Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

A reception was held on March 3, 1992, at the Iowa Masonic Library, at which the collection was formally accepted. Arrangements for this acquisition of the collection, and the reception were made by Library Director, John Ročarek.



HER EXCELLENCY, THE AMBASSADOR

The Czech and Slovak Museum and Library was privileged to host a reception, on Friday afternoon, March 6, 1992 for Czechoslovak ambassador to the United States, Rita Klímová.

Representing Czechoslovak president, Václav Havel, Ambassador Klímová was in Cedar Rapids from March 6th to March 8th to participate in the third annual Global Cedar Rapids Conference held at Kirkwood Community College. The reception offered her an opportunity to tour the museum facility, meet with some of the leaders of the Czech community and become acquainted with the Czech Fine Arts Foundation's developing plans for a new museum facility.

In remembrance of her visit, John Ročarek, president of the Czech Heritage Foundation presented Ambassador Klimova with a Rhea egg, designed and hand-painted by master folk artist, Marj Kopeček Nejdí.

On Saturday, Ambassador Klímová received the International Global Cedar Rapids Award, on behalf of Václav Havel, and delivered the address, "Citizens Making a Difference in World Affairs."



Woodcut from Orbis pictus

Arts 'n Facts

One of the most rewarding aspects of my job as executive director, was the opportunity to participate in the second Czechoslovak Cultural/ Genealogical Conference held in St. Paul, last October. Board member and traveling companion, Leora Zahorik, and I packed up our Museum treasures, consulted our triptych, and departed Cedar Rapids on Thursday morning, October 17th. After missing our frontage road exit, and spending about an hour and a half exiting and entering the Roseville Shopping Mall (because County Road B just didn't seem to want to take us to where we wanted to go - despite what the map said!), we reached our destination, the Holiday Inn. The accommodations were very nice, all the food we had, during our four and a half day stay, was sumptuous, and the people we met were delightful. We had an opportunity to network, to meet many interesting people, to be educated, to share, to be enlightened. Conference attendees came from all over the United States and Canada. Included in our "Cedar Rapids" contingent, besides Tom Hruska, Leora, and myself, were Bob & Marge Stone, Vic Naxera, Max Naxera, Robert & Sylvia Rohlena, and Don & Sheila Janda.

I am happy to report that as a result of the library reorganization project, the administrative staff now has a real, bonafide office and workroom. Shelving the west balcony, of the Museum, for library use effectively evicted us from the narrow section of balcony we had been calling "office." At the time, converting the upstairs storage room to office/work space seemed not only the most preposterous suggestion, but a totally impossible task to accomplish, filled as it was, from side to side, and from floor to ceiling with boxes of books, boxes of artifacts, and boxes of "boxes"!! But thanks to extra hours, diligent effort, and John's carpentry "skills" (??), that ridiculous idea has produced a more comfortable, more efficient office reality.

Due to our library project, office moving project, the ever-increasing number of requests for Museum services, and our demanding seasonal schedule, we have been delayed in our efforts to issue a Museum Newsletter.

"MOST"

The Czech and Slovak immigrants who came to settle in Iowa beginning in the late 1800's came for the opportunities the New World had to offer. An industrious people, they worked hard to become good Americans. But, although assimilation into the "American" culture was important, it was also important to try to preserve the best of the culture they had left behind. Ethnic communities, within the larger community were the result.

Czech Village, situated near the banks of the Cedar River, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is the location of the Czech and Slovak Museum and Library. With its outstanding collection of kroje (national costumes of Czechoslovakia), fully restored immigrant home, demonstrations of Old World arts and crafts, and celebrations of ethnic customs and traditions, the Museum serves to "bridge" the gap between the culture of the Czechoslovak homeland and the culture of the Czech immigrants in America.

For those of European ancestry, a visit to the Museum is like a walk across the "MOST" that imaginary bridge that leads back to the land and culture of their ancestors.

LIBRARY UP-DATE

Because of the efforts of Library Director, John Ročarek, and funding made available by the Czech Heritage Foundation, the Museum's collection of books has begun to take on the semblance of a library.

Acting upon the recommendation of library consultant, Jim Sixta, John arranged for the purchase and installation of library shelving so that both the east and west balconies, of the Museum, could be used to hold the collection. He then hired Libor Pragr, an exchange student, from Czechoslovakia, to begin the identification, grand sorting, and preliminary categorization of the more than 6,000 books currently housed in the Museum. Working, conscientiously, throughout the summer months, Libor completed this initial phase of the library reorganization project prior to his return to Olomouc and Palácky University in August.

CFA UP-DATE

Serving on the Board of Directors, of the Czech Fine Arts Foundation for 1992 are:

Georgiana Brejcha	Dennis Hrabak
Shirley Drahozal	Tom Eckstrom
Don Janda	Steven M. Dolezal
Tom Hruska	Evelyn Lamparek
Milo Lanka	Irma Modracek
Leo Modracek	Vic Naxera
Marj NejdI	Mae Novotony
Mildred Ortner	Zula Oujiri
Robert Schaffer	Donald E. Smith,
Marjorie Stone	Robert Stone
Mary Ann Pochobradsky	
Leora Zahorik.	

COLLECTIONS POLICY

With professionalism as the byword, the Board of Directors approved and accepted a new comprehensive "Collections Management Policy." The mission statement, of the policy reads as follows: The Czech & Slovak Museum & Library was formed to collect, preserve, and share the physical objects and intangible manifestations of Czech and Slovak culture. These activities permit persons of that heritage to maintain their sense of cultural identity and allow all people to understand the significance of Czech and Slovak culture and appreciate the contributions of these people to the diversity of the nation.

Responsible for the administration of the Museum and the Library/Archives sections is Executive Director, Patricia A. Hikiji. Curator, Nan Wolverton, is the manager of the Museum Section. John Ročarek, Director of the Library/Archives, will manage the library and archival collections.

Acquisitions may be by gift, bequest, transfer, or purchase. Persons interested in donating an item should contact the Curator, Library Director, or the Executive Director to arrange an appointment. Telephone Number : (319) 362-8500 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 5398 Cedar Rapids IA 52406-5398

WHO CAN ...?

Who can:

- assemble and costume credible looking mannequins out of a jumble of assorted body parts
- inventory a wide variety of artifacts, from cobbler's tools and immigrant trunks to delicate hand-work pieces and fragile porcelains
- create appropriate forms for various record-keeping tasks
- do lettering and matting, sewing and mending
- research inquiries and reply to correspondence
- design special exhibits and displays?

Nan Wolverton can, and does, do all the above, and more, in her position as Curator of the Czech and Slovak Museum. An Iowa Community Cultural Grant award, from the Department of Cultural Affairs, enabled the Museum to hire Nan, on a part-time basis, in the summer of 1991.

Educational and practical experience have well-qualified her for the requirements of the position. Nan worked as an artifact conservator for the historic Palmer Mansion, in Davenport, Iowa, has done exhibit design work for the Johnson County Historical Society, and has worked as a research/graduate assistant for Old Capitol Museum, In Iowa City. Since 1984 she has been a National Register Consultant.

She received a BA, in Art and Art History, and an MA, in American Studies, from the University of Iowa. Her other training has included Victorian Society of America Seminars in London, England and Newport, Rhode Island, a Workshop in the Conservation and Restoration of Historic Costumes & Textiles, and Cooperstown Seminars in New York. In addition to her curatorial duties, Nan teaches courses, in the American Studies Department, at the University of Iowa and is completing work on her Ph.D.

Nan's primary objectives, have been to review and evaluate record-keeping procedures and registration methods, develop comprehensive record-keeping forms to serve the needs of an ever-expanding collection, and format this information for computer filing.

CULTURAL CONFERENCE

Executive Director, Patricia A. Hikiji, was invited to present a program, on the Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, at the Second Czechoslovak Cultural/Genealogical Conference, held in St. Paul, Minnesota, on October 18 & 19, 1991. Through the cooperative efforts of Board member, Leora Zahorik, Curator, Nan Wolverton, professional photographer, Brook Lightner, Board president, Tom Hruška, and Director Hikiji, a slide program was prepared.

The slide program was divided into five parts:

- the history of the Museum
- an overview of the collection
- preservation of the intangible aspects of the Czech culture (through special events, activities, outreach programs, etc.)
- the spectacular collection of kroje
- what the future plans for the Museum are

It was presented at two conference sessions on Friday and one conference session on Saturday. In addition to the slide program, the Czech Heritage "mini-museum" traveling exhibit was on display. Mounted conceptual drawings, illustrating the plans being developed for a new Czech & Slovak Museum facility of national and international significance, were available for conference attendees to examine.

The Museum was also offered the use of a lighted, glass display case, in the main hall area of the Earle Brown Education Center (where the Conference was being held) to showcase some of the Museum's treasures. Included in the display was a collection of seven exquisitely beaded and embroidered bridal and married ladies' caps, a porcelain "Bartered Bride" tea set, a hand-carved pipe, a selection of mounted hand-work pieces, and Moravian bride and groom doll.

VISITING PROFESSORS

The Czech Heritage Foundation, of Cedar Rapids, participated in welcoming Jan Pišut, Slovak Minister of Education for the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic to the state of Iowa. Minister Pišut was visiting, here, as part of the Eastern European Educational Exchange, that took place, in May, 1991, between governors and education ministers.

The Czech & Slovak Museum & Library was the location for a reception, the evening of May 14th, 1991, at which Minister Pišut was able to tour the facility and meet with Dr. Stephen Daeschner, Superintendent of the Cedar Rapids Community School District, and some of the leaders of our local Czech organizations.

The following morning, Minister Pišut was the honored guest at a breakfast at the Gallery Restaurant. Following the breakfast, he was conducted on a tour of Wilson Elementary School by Principal Gregg Petersen. (Wilson School is also the home of the Czech Summer School, a five-week program to acquaint youngsters with the language and culture of Czechoslovakia.) Dr. Pišut concluded his tour of Iowa with a visit in Des Moines, where he visited other schools and met with state education officials.

Visiting the Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in October 1991, was Dr. Ivan Dubovicky. Dr. Ivan Dubovicky is an assistant professor, in the Department of Ethnology at Charles University in Prague.

He was in the United States to participate in the Second Czechoslovak Cultural/Genealogical Conference held in St. Paul, MN. There he presented workshop sessions on "Czech & Slovak Christmas Traditions." He also participated in a panel discussion on "Life in Czechoslovakia Before and After the 1989 Revolution."

On Sunday, October 27, 1991 he was the featured speaker, for a program presented at Coe College, in celebration of the Czechoslovak Independence Day. He spoke about life in Czechoslovakia, today, and about the problems and adjustments the people of the country are facing as they make the transition from a socialistic to a democratic form of government.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 16 - 17	"Houby Days" Spring Festival in Czech Village, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
May 17 - Sept. 27	"Goosetown: A Bohemian and German Neighborhood" at Johnson Co. Historical Society Heritage Museum, Coralville, Iowa
May 23 & 24	"Ethnic Festival 1992" at the "Roundhouse" in Czech Village
June 15 - 26	"Folk Fest IX" at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics in Iowa City, Iowa
August 8	"Dedication Day" Hoover Presidential Library & Museum in West Branch, Iowa
September 12	"Fall Festival" (<i>date might change</i>) in Czech Village
September 13	"Radiothon" Fund-Raising Event at Czech & Slovak Museum & Library
December 5	"Sv. Mikuláš Day" in Czech & Slovak Museum and Czech Village

The Museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. beginning the first Tuesday in March, through the Friday before Christmas. The Museum is open year-round on Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



Museum Gift Shop

The Museum Gift Shop features unique, ethnic gifts created by local Czech artists and craftsmen, and imported items from Czechoslovakia.

Choose from:

- Beautifully hand-crafted & hand-painted ceramic items
- Intricately decorated Easter eggs
- A one-of-a-kind "needle holder"
- Delicate bobbin lace
- A variety of wooden items
- Unique peroutky (*feather pastry brushes*)
- Hand-blown, glass Christmas ornaments each one a miniature work-of-art, are available year-round, as well as dolls, eggs, and lovely ribbon trim, all imported from Czechoslovakia.

Stop by the Museum during business hours or write to the Gift Shop Manager (P.O. Box 5398, Cedar Rapids Ia 52406-5398) for information regarding orders by mail.

Czech & Slovak Museum and Library

Czech Fine Arts Foundation, Inc.

10 - 16th Avenue S.W. P.O. Box 5398

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406-5398

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