

### HOUBY DAYS FESTIVAL

MAY 18th, 19th, 20th



CZECH HERITAGE FOUNDATION, INC.

Spring 2012

#### Editor

Karen Lehmann

### 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

Visit www.czechheritagefoundation.com

#### Got news?

Contact Karen Lehmann at:

#### CHF 2012 Officers

President - Frank Edmunds

Secretary - Joyce Netolicky

Treasurer - Dennis Hrabak

### CHF Scholarship Deadline July 1



The Czech Heritage Foundation encourages all eligible students to apply for a scholarship by July 1, 2012. CHF provides financial assistance to students of Czech/Slovak heritage who are attending an accredited post-secondary education institution on a full-time basis. Scholarships usually range from \$500-700 per recipient.

Every applicant must complete an application form which can be found online at www.czechheritagefoundation.com. The application must be postmarked on or before July 1, 2012 and mailed to:

Lee Thornbloom, Scholarship Coordinator

### Czech Memorial Day Observance May 28

The annual Memorial Day Observance at the Czech National Cemetery will be Monday, May 28 at 11:30 am. Refreshments following the program will be sponsored by WFLA. In case of rain, the observance will be in the St. Wenceslaus Gym.

### NCSML Looking for Czechs Who Love to Sing!

(Are there any other kind?!)



Be part of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library's Grand Opening, July 14 & 15. NCSML is seeking enthusiastic singers to be part of a choir Saturday, during the opening ceremony, and Sunday, during the blessing of the

museum. The Czech, Slovak, and United States an-

thems will be sung. The choir will also sing other pieces as part of the blessing service.

NCSML would like to assemble a chorus that is a mix of members of the various churches in the area that have a Czech connection. They would also like to include students from Czech School, both present and past, so that this is a mixed generational chorus. For more information, call Jan Stoffer at (319) 362-8500 or email jan@ncsml.org.

# Sibřinky costume ball

Sokol Gymnastics brings back Czech tradition



Marie Webster, Marj Nejdl, Brad Hess and Aileen Pease got in the spirit of Šibřinky.

Photo by Karen Lehmann

After a 40 year lull, Sokol Gymnastics was proud to bring back an old Czech tradition called Šibřinky, Friday, February 17, at Sokol Gymnastics 5200 18th Ave. SW.

Šibřinky, which means practical joking and clowning around, dates back to 1865 when Sokol Prague decided to hold the first Sokol costume ball called Šibřinky.

Prior to the 1970s, Sokol Cedar Rapids had a long tradition of celebrating Šibřinky every February. Unfortunately, over the years it lost popularity and had not been observed until current Sokol President Brad Hess brought it back this year. "We're trying to reintroduce Šibřinky. I strongly feel it's important to keep these traditions alive in our community," said Hess.

Longtime Sokol member Marj Nejdl recalled all the fun she and her husband Ed had years ago attending Šibřinky. "We were good friends with six other couples and we would all dress up. Over the years we dressed up as the Fruit of the Loom fruit, a circus train, ballet dancers and a prison gang."

Šibřinky had many venues in Cedar Rapids. It was originally held in CSPS Hall, then the 3rd floor of Sokol Hall, and now, most recently, at Sokol Gymnastics.

Young and old had a fun time donning costumes and masks, dancing, and enjoying refreshments at Šbřinky,

Sokol President Brad Hess hopes to bring back this fun Czech tradition every year.

# "Egg"ceptional Class Offered

Artist Marj Nejdl teaches three sold out sessions



Marj Nejdl demonstrates the batik method.



Some of Marj Nejdl's masterpieces.

Over 50 enthusiastic people gathered to learn the traditional Czech folk art of egg decorating using the batik (also called wax resist) technique on Friday, March 16 and Saturday, March 17 at Hus Memorial Presbyterian Church in Cedar Rapids.

Marj Nejdl, who has been decorating eggs for many years and is a noted master of the batik style, taught the classes. The batik method involves the repeat application of wax and dye to create a colorfully decorated egg. "We salvaged all the eggs and didn't have any disasters!" laughed Nejdl.



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# Internationally Renowned Czech Girls Choir in CR

Jitro performed for full house at St. Wenceslaus



The Czech girls' choir, Jitro, performed at St. Wenceslaus March 4, 2012. Jitro was on a tour of the Midwest. St. Wenceslaus hosted the choir once before in 2005.

Photo by David Martin

St. Wenceslaus Church, 1224 5th St. SW, hosted a concert March 4, 2012 presented by Jitro, the Czech Girls' Choir. Jitro is considered one of the best children's choirs in the world. It has won numerous competitions and awards and has toured throughout the U.S. fifteen times, but not every year. St. Wenceslaus also hosted Jitro in February 2005.

Jitro was touring the Midwest

bringing goodwill and great music to audiences. The support of several sponsors helped enable them to offer this wonderful opportunity free of charge.

Jitro, meaning "Daybreak" in Czech, is a concert choir from Hradec Kralove, a town in the Czech Republic. It is an organization of 500 children in seven preparatory ensembles, of which only the best 25 or 30 qualify to tour. For 35 years they have been admired all over the world for their tonal brilliance, superb intonation, distinctive rich blend of sound and energetic vitality.

Jitro is today seen as one of the best children's choirs anywhere in the world. Many golden awards have been bestowed on the choir by international juries.

# St. Joseph's Parade

Hundreds line 'The Avenue' with a sea of Czech Red!







Top left - CHF Royalty ride on the St. Joseph's Day float built and designed by Tim Pfeifer. Pictured back row l-r: Little Sister Sydney Rieckhoff and CHF Princess Kelsey Pokorny. Seated in front Dalynn Pokorny.

Top right - Decked out in Czech Red and waiting for the parade to start are Vikki Novak (left) of Cedar Rapids and Rochelle Barnes (right) of Sealy, TX.

Bottom - Brian O'Dwyer and Tracy Williams both of Cedar Rapids portray the Houby King and Queen.

Photos by Karen Lehmann

# St. Joseph's Dance

#### Barefoot Becky & the Ivanhoe Dutchmen bring in the crowds

What beautiful day for the Czech Heritage Foundation to hold their annual St. Joseph Day Dance on Sunday. March 18, 2012. It was held at the Elk's Lodge in Cedar Rapids with 236 paid in attendance. As before, many beautiful red outfits filled the dance floor. The hall was nicely decorated with the help of Tim Pfeifer and family.

The music was provided by Barefoot Becky and the Ivanhoe Dutchmen and was truly enjoyed by all that were there. The students. some in their kroje did a wonderful job selling the raffle tickets for the wonderful items that were donated and given out at 6:00 pm. Many thanks to Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa, Marissa Cada, Little Sister Cassandra Lehmann, Czech Heritage Princess Kelsey Pokorny and her sister Dalynn Pokorny and a guest that was a great help, Makayla Ozmun. These gals set an all time high in the number of tickets that were sold.

2012 Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa, Marissa Cada, polkas with her date at the St. Joseph Day Dance March 18 at the Elks Club. The annual dance raises money for CHF Youth Programs.

Photo by Karen Lehmann

Congratulations and many thanks!

The bake sale had some great looking baked goods, lots of kolaches and other items, honey, maple syrup, candy.

many people donated several items. Thanks to all.

There were a wide variety of items donated for the door prizes and to the raffle table. Again, thanks to all that donated items and all that bought tickets to be winners.

We held a silent auction again this year and we thank Jeanne Vogt for her wonderful donated items. Thank you to all that helped make this 2012 dance a success this year. All the money raised will go to support the Czech Heritage Foundation's Youth Programs.

Donna and Guenter Merkle had the Czech Heritage Book table at the dance and were able to secure membership applications also.

We had two people who sold the most tickets again this year, Elaine and Leo Shima and helped us out at the door. We are so grateful to have friends like this.

In the next newsletter we will have a list of the companies and people who made donations to this year's dance.

Hope to see all of you in March 2013 for another great dance and fellowship time.

FRANK & BARBARA EDMUNDS

### Lamb Cake Contest

Whimsical cake wins!



Vicki Thompson's Lamb Cake design won first place at the NCSML Annual Lamb Cake contest held March 24 in the lower level of the NCSML Kosek Building.

Photo by NCSML

There were no "baa . . . d" entries in the NCSML's Annual Lamb Cake contest held March 24. Seven people entered their lamb cake designs and Vicki Thompson of Marion took first place.

Thompson, a Czech who grew up near Czech Village, said this was the first time she entered the contest. "I bake a lamb cake every year for Easter anyway, that's what my grandma and great-grandma did, so I thought I'd try my hand at it."

Thompson said she chose a whimsical design in honor of her grandchildren. "I always try to gear it towards something they would appreciate with candy around it and things they like to snack on."

The cake was not made from scratch. She used a pound cake mix, frosted it with homemade butter cream frosting, and surrounded it with chocolate covered eggs and mini baskets with candy.

KAREN LEHMANN

# NCSML Grand Opening!

Festivities planned for July 14 & 15

The expanded and relocated National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library will open to the public on Saturday, July 14, 2012. A two-day festival will be held featuring music, dancing, food, entertainment and gallery opening.

When completed, the building will have a 55-seat auditorium; three galleries including a 7200 sq. ft. permanent exhibition hall; a classroom; a 5500 sq. ft. library; a reception hall for seating up to 400; a river view terrace; catering kitchen and an expanded store.

Additionally, the opening exhibit, Alphonse Mucha: Inspirations of Art Nouveau will feature more than 230 pieces including paintings, lithographs, jewelry and sculpture.

Go to NCSML.org for a full schedule of events.



# **Cultural Diversity Day**

CHF proudly displays Czech heritage at UI



Amanda De Hoedt, DaLynn Pokorny and Donna Merkle volunteered selling Czech pastries and books at the Annual Celebrating Cultural Diversity Festival at the University of Iowa. Dozens of ethnic organizations attended.

Photo by Karen Lehmann

CHF participated in the University of Iowa's annual "Celebrating Cultural Diversity Festival" which occurred on March 31, 2012 from 12:00-5:00 p.m.

Members from the community come together to share their culture through food, dance, and music. There were multiple performances presented throughout the day to watch. Also, booths with food items, products, and educational media were represented which provided an opportunity to promote, showcase, and share new and different aspects of various cultures.

This year CHF promoted the sale of their books and various pastries such as: kolaches, Czech garnets, bublanina, Czech sugar cookies, babovka, poppyseed/

apricot tea ring, kuchen, apple strudel and poppyseed cake. Also provided was a roast pork, dumpling and sauerkraut casserole to sample.

The committee that worked this event would like to extend a big "THANK YOU" to everyone that took time to provide pastries, set-up/take-down, provided their talents and materials, or volunteered during this event!

The Czech Royalty were available to assist with sales, questions regarding the Czech culture, and to provide photo opportunities to the public.

ZELDA DE HOEDT

# MISS CZECH Slovak Iowa Pageant 2012

Saturday, May 19 Kosek Bandstand 5:00 pm



2012 Miss Czech Slovak Iowa, Marissa Cada. Marissa is the daughter of Jerry and Ida Cada.

Miss Czech Slovak Iowa Pageant planning is underway! This year's pageant will be held on Saturday, May 19 during the Houby Days Festival.

Contestants participate in a private interview with judges, and a kroj demonstration which will begin at 2:00

pm around the Kosek Bandstand. The talent show, impromptu questions, and crowning ceremony will begin at 5:00 pm at the Kosek Bandstand. New Miss Czech Slovak "Little Sisters" will also be crowned.

The event is free and open to the public. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy!

### More Houby Days Fun!

Other events during the day that the CHF Royalty will be attending include the May Pole Dance, the Houby Days Parade, and the Parade of Kroje.

Royalty and community members will display their kroje (Czech costumes) in conjunction with the St. Paul Czech Slovak Folk Dancers. This will be from 2:00-4:00 pm at the Kosek Bandstand.

If you would like to participate in the community members portion of the Parade of Kroje, please contact Joyce Netolicky at or Zelda De Hoedt at

All ages are welcome!

ZELDA DE HOEDT



Abbie Frerick is one of many models during the CHF sponsored "Parade of Kroje" event during Houby Days.



Everyone enjoys the traditional May Pole Dance.

Photos by Karen Lehmann

Be watching for a complete Houby Days schedule at: czechvillagecedarrapids.com

# Village Meat Market & Cafe

#### New style, old-fashioned favorites



Hugh Lamont talks with a customer at the meat counter.

"Jitrnice...
as soon as we
make it, they
buy us out!
It's just amazing, it's all
they want to
eat!"

Lou Thompson Village Meat Market



Lou Thompson wraps smoked BBQ ribs in the kitchen.

After years of anticipation a good old-fashioned meat market is back in Czech Village. Village Meat Market made it's opening debut this March to an excited, if not discriminating, crowd of meat loving Czechs and non-Czechs, many of whom were raised on Polehna's brick smoke house meats.

After over 80 years in business, Polehna's called it quits after the 2008 flood destroyed their business. Lou Thompson and Hugh Lamont look forward to honoring and expanding on Polehna's legacy.

"Everyone would congregate in Polehna's for meat and wonderful conversation, which was great," said Thompson.

Village Meat Market will carry on that tradition of offering homemade wieners, sausages and jitrnice along with high quality smoked beef, pork and chicken. They have also added grocery staples and a 32 seat casual dining cafe that will feature a wall-sized bulletin board displaying flyers from all the neighboring businesses.

"We want to become a "meet and greet" center. This could be a place where visitors can stop and figure out where they want to go for the day. They don't even have to eat with us," explained Thompson.

But of course she hopes you will try both their meat market and cafe items.

"The locals have dictated. We tested the wieners and sausages over and over again and they did not hold their tongues! 'That's too smoky, that's too salty.' We did it 'til we made all the locals happy. That's a feat unto itself!" laughed Thompson.

Thompson and Lamont have a lot of food industry experience. Thompson spent years in the restaurant and casino industry on the Gulf Coast before Hurricane Katrina brought her back to Iowa. Lamont brings his experience from 10 years at Polehna's and several years at Red Frog and Blue Toad res-

taurants.

"He's just an icon down here, that's why I wanted him to be my partner in crime. Everyone just loves him! He's also one of the best salesmen I've ever seen because he believes in his product," said Thompson.

Thompson believes in her product too. Meat is delivered three times a week from a great locker south of the Amanas. "It's so nice to be able to say I promise you, you're gonna love this!"

Located at 92 - 16th Ave. SW, Village Meat Market and Cafe features a full service meat market and a wide variety of homemade cafe items such as New American, barbecue, Cajun/Creole, hot dogs, sandwiches, soul food, and southern food.

Meat market and cafe hours are M-F 6-5:30 and Saturday 6:30-12:00. Walkins and take-out are welcome. Phone 265-6328.

KAREN LEHMANN Photos by Karen Lehmann

# The Copper Alligator

### A fun place to shop for all things vintage and retro

Mia Suntken has a fondness for all things vintage and retro, despite her young age. Her hobby eventually morphed into a new business in the Czech Village called the Copper Alligator, a vintage and retro clothing, accessory, (as well as other fun things) store.

"It all started because my sister Ali and I really liked dressing in vintage clothing. It (vintage and retro clothing) is usually pretty unique and always makes you stand out," said Suntken. Her favorite era is the 50s and 60s. "Women dressed so classically and everything seemed so dainty and detailed. I probably tend to dress more from the 80s though when I'm not wearing modern clothes," said Suntken.

The two sisters started buying vintage and retro clothing just to wear themselves. Eventually their collection grew to where they didn't need to own it all and thought other people would probably enjoy it too.

After several years scouring flee markets, holding mini sales out of her mom's house and renting out a room in 1st Class Finds (a mid-century modern furniture store located at 277 14th Ave. SE) Suntken is happy to have found her niche in the old Village Hair site 65 - 16th Ave. SW (Village Hair has moved to the rear of the building with a separate entrance.)

"We wanted to be either in NewBo or here because both areas are really taking off," said Suntken. Adding a new wall, dressing room, and fresh paint colors were the extent to the 700 sq. ft store remodel.

Customers entering the store will see a fresh colorful decor and artful merchandise displays. Her mom, Deb Suntken, helps choose inventory and arrange displays. "We get a lot of compliments on our displays and how cute they're set up. We've heard our prices are very fair too," said Suntken.

Suntken explains where the unusual name for her store came from. "My sister's name is Ali and we call her Alligator sometimes. To sound like the other eclectic stores similar to ours (Brass Armadillo, Silver Spider, etc.) we picked a descriptive to go in front and just landed on Copper . . . Copper Alligator."

When not tending to the store, Suntken scours the internet and attends flee markets looking for interesting merchandise. "Our merchandise is changing everyday. Literally everyday. I have a large inventory that I store elsewhere. When I see a hole in my display or just plain get sick of looking at it, I swap it out."

Two of her favorite finds are a lamp made from a large



Mia Suntken and her guard dog, Lola, are the new owners of The Copper Alligator in Czech Village. The store features vintage and retro clothing, accessories and just about anything else fun and interesting from many eras.

Photo by Karen Lehmann

piece of driftwood with a bright orange ceramic shade hanging in the middle. "I'd never seen anything like it and it now belongs to one of my regular customers." She also likes a record player credenza with built-in speakers that she got from her boyfriend for Christmas. "I play it at the shop sometimes. It's not for sale. I love it too much!" said Suntken.

Though most of her customers are women, they also sell men's clothing, furniture, artwork, music albums, magazines and numerous miscellaneous items.

"I think men walk in and see all the dresses and think there's nothing in here for them; and we try to point out that we do have men's clothes and things that men enjoy," she said.

If you love vintage and retro you'll find it here. Suntken, a Cedar Rapids native, defines vintage as being older, more antique and chic items while retro refers to things from the 70s or 80s that are funkier and brighter.

Copper Alligator hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6pm.

# New Kids on the Block

### "Czech" out their swag

James Weatherford said he loves being a barber so much that he'd do it for free. Fortunately, he has more than enough loyal clients at his newly relocated barbershop called The Chop Shop, 96 - 16th Ave SW in Czech Village located in the old Polehna's building, to support his business!

"I feel that I was called to be a barber. To make someone look better and exude confidence in themselves makes me feel good. For me, coming to work, that's the highlight of

my day," says Weatherford.

Weatherford, a Chicago native, attended the American College of Hairstyling in Cedar Rapids after high school graduation. He credits a mentor for helping him achieve his dream of becoming a barber.

"My mentor attended Coe College but was also an alumni of my high school. He asked if I wanted to go somewhere where there are a lot of black people but no black barbershops," recalled Weatherspoon. "He enrolled me in the American College of Hairstyling on 1st Avenue, dropped \$700 on me for an apartment, and left me here . . . and I've been here ever since. I'm doing what I love to do and living my dream; and hopefully educating other young men that they can do the same thing."

After graduating from barber college and working in pretty much every ethnic shop in town, Weatherford branched out on his own in 2006 and opened The Chop Shop.

It grew quickly in the first year from a two chair shop to five employees plus himself. In 2008, needing a larger space, he relocated to 3rd Ave. SE by the Salvation Army building. The current location in Czech Village has six barbers, including Weatherford, and one hairstylist.

Weatherford knew from the beginning of his career he had a real niche in the Cedar Rapids community because it's so multi culturally diverse. He also has many clients from the Iowa City area.

Weatherspoon credits his success to diligence, patience and most importantly, consistency. Despite having had many opportunities to leave Iowa throughout his career, he's stayed because he feels there's a great need for culturally diverse barbershops and he wants to be a positive role model for the black community.

"God doesn't respect quitters. Anything I start, I work to finish," says Weatherford. "I really want to prove to people that a man of color can run a successful business and really change the idea of business in Cedar Rapids. There are black entrepre-



James Weatherford, right, owner of The Chop Shop, has relocated his successful barbershop to the Czech Village.

Photo by Karen Lehmann

neurs out here and we're here to stay and better the community, and not be a downer on the community. We want to live a nice, healthy, successful life and raise our kids."

Weatherford's employees Jesse Vazquez, Eric Mayes, Emmanuel Taylor, Ivan Clay, Erik Vazquez, and Miss Betty are all graduates of the American College of Hairstyling. "Each one of my barbers love what they do, it's their livelihood. It's how we feed our kids. If you have a profession that you love to do, that's a great thing."

Thanks to his landlord, employees, and business neighbors, the transition to the new location couldn't have gone better ac-

cording to Weatherspoon.

"Everyone has been very receptive to us here in Czech Village. I'd like to thank Baron Stark, my landlord, for believing in my idea, my barbers for being so loyal, "Mama Lou" next door in the meat market and all the restaurants and specialty shops here. It just seems that we fit in just fine," smiles Weatherford.

Business hours are 9-6 Tuesday-Friday, 8-5 Saturday. Appointments are taken Tuesdays and Wednesdays. First come, first serve Thursday-Saturday. Phone 247-CHOP.

## 1st Class Finds

### Mid-century modern store opens in NewBo

To anyone over 50, walking into 1st Class Finds, a mid-century modern furniture resale shop, is sure to bring back memories of the home they grew up in.

Owner David Owens has filled his store located at 277 - 14th Ave. SE with furniture and accessories from the 50s and 60s.

Owens calls himself a normal bluecollar guy who caught the bug for this stuff. "Some of the people that know me said they would have never guessed I'd be doing

this," laughed Owens. "I've been collecting mid-century modern furniture for quite awhile. My house was built in '56 and I just kind of filled it up with this furniture. The more I bought, the more I started researching and learning about it."

Owens also works as an iron worker and juggles his time between both jobs. He hopes one day his store will take off.

1st Class Finds has been in this location nine months. Owens previously rented a spot at 12th Ave. and 2nd St. for only three months before it was bought by the city and he was forced to find a new location. "I knew I wanted to stay down here (NewBo/Czech Village) with all the



Dave Owens, owner of 1st Class Finds located at 277 - 14th Ave. SE sells, buys and consigns household furniture and accessories from the 1950s and 60s.

Photo by Karen Lehmann

arts and culture in the area this is the ideal spot for what I'm doing."

Owens says he gets his wide inventory from many resources: auctions, estate sales, vendors who travel the Midwest finding deals, and people downsizing. "A lot of times people will call and say, 'Hey we got a house full of 50s stuff. Come take a look and see if any of it's for you."

If not for his store, Owens believes a lot of people would send it to the dump. "I like the idea of saving it because it's all so well built! A lot of people come to 1st Class Finds because the particle board furniture they bought at large retailers falls apart." 50s and 60s furniture appeals to many people because it's stylish and well built says Owens. "It's hard to buy a solid wood dresser these days and if you do it costs about \$800. In this economy people want something nice, but can't afford that. Second hand quality furniture is a good alternative."

The 2,000 sq. ft building has furniture for every budget. Owens caters to everyone from collectors who are looking for higher end brands and designers to young

adults who are just starting out and trying to furnish an apartment.

Whatever your budget, if you're in the market for quality pre-owned mid-century modern furniture or want to sell or consign 1950 thru 1960 era furniture and accessories contact Dave Owens at 319-533-8162 or dworld024@hotmail.com.

Business hours are Wed.-Sun. 11:30-5:00. Delivery is available.

# Czech School 2012

#### Youth and adult classes offered

The Czech School organization held another successful Chili Supper on March 10 in the St. Ludmila Church Social Hall. We thank everyone who attended, volunteered their time and effort, and donated supplies, cakes and baked goods.

Czech School 2012 for children ages 6 – 14+ will be held weekday mornings beginning Monday, June 11 from 8 a.m. – 11 a.m. The session will end Friday evening July 13, with the Final Program and Ice Cream Social. The teachers are Czech. A registration form will be mailed to last year's students. Information is posted in Czech Village and registration forms are available at several businesses there. Those needing further information can email: czechschool@gmail.com or call Bernie Drahozal at or Julie Wiedner at

Adult Czech Language classes will be held five consecutive Thursday evenings beginning Thursday, June 14 in St. Wenceslaus Church facilities from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. The Thursday dates are June 14, June 21, June 28, July 5, and July 12. The focus is beginning conversational Czech language. Pre-registration is required and registration is limited. Those needing further information or to request a registration form can email: czech-school@gmail.com or call Julie Wiedner at

We thank all of our friends who help make it possible for us to once again offer Czech language learning opportunities to those from our Cedar Rapids Czech community and beyond!

CZECH SCHOOL BOARD



2011 Czech School students learn about their ancestry during an outing to the Czech National Cemetery.

Photo by Michelle Simoneau

Czech Heritage Foundation, Inc. P.O. Box 8476 Cedar Rapids, IA 52408

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