



OST
THE BRIDGE

News of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library



Volume 7, Number 5 — Summer 2002

Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!

Dances into the Hearts of NCSML Visitors

Since its opening April 11, more than 2,900 visitors from five foreign countries and 32 states, including California, New York, Vermont, Oregon, Thailand, Ireland, and Germany, have toured *Kroje—Dress for the Dance of Life*. Many recorded their impressions in a single word in the exhibit's comments book.

"Awesome!" ... "Extraordinary!" ...
"Gorgeous!" ... "Beautiful!" ... "Inspiring!"

Others shared longer thoughts:

"I'm very proud of my Czechoslovakian heritage..." —M. Reznicek, Wisconsin.

"Výborný!" (Excellent!)

—Frank & Betty Hosticka, Seven Hills, Ohio.

"Wonderful! We loved it!"

—Catherine & Alan from Texas.

"Brought back memories of Grandma ..." —Barbara Benischek.

"An art that I hope has not been lost." —Jean Ames.

"Lovely costumes - Keep up the tradition." —Milene Lauciello.

"Reminds me of my childhood attendance at the Czech dance in St. Louis, the Saturday before Lent began." —Pat Blumenkemper, St. Louis, MO.

"Very pleased to see the old traditions." —Gary Stodola.

"I'm very humbled, learning what my ancestors produced...." —Anonymous.

"The craftsmanship is unbelievable! Will its beauty ever be duplicated?" —Dr. Clarence & Jean Hosford, Marion, IA.

"A marvelous exhibit, reflecting the wonderful spirit and imagination of the people." —Birgit & Stan Hardcastle, Sidney, Maine.

"Krásná výstava! Many people living in the Czech and Slovak Republics could learn from the efforts of Czech-Americans to preserve their cultural heritage." —Kristýna Píchová, Praha, Czech Republic.

Kroje—Dress for the Dance of Life! also wowed more than 210 NCSML members who attended the exhibit grand opening and reception held April 11. Many members wore their kroje to the festivities. Desserts were served in the Grand Hall, and in



More than 400 items illustrate the wide variety and complexity of Czech and Slovak folk costumes in *Kroje—Dress for the Dance of Life!*



Visitors marvel at the intricate beauty of the kroje in the NCSML's newest temporary exhibit.

the WFLA Heritage Hall, Don and Jeanette Pafko demonstrated Slovak folk dances in two lively performances before appreciative audiences. Following remarks by President/CEO Dan Baldwin, Curator Carmen Langel opened the doors to the Petrik Gallery. Many members commented that there was so much to see that they would need several visits to do justice to the exhibit.

Kroje—Dress for the Dance of Life! continues through Oct. 13, 2002.

Until Oct. 13, 2002, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is open Monday through Saturday from 9:30 to 4:00 pm, and Sunday, noon to 4:00 pm. Admission is FREE to members.

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library

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FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The opening of *Kroje—Dress for the Dance of Life!* our wonderful new special exhibition, has in many ways completed an important cycle in the museum's development. This cycle began in 2000 when we introduced *Slovo* and opened the Robert J. Petrik Exhibit Hall, our first major temporary exhibit gallery. Rather than jump headlong into subjects that are most familiar to many 3rd and 4th generation Czech and Slovak Americans, we made the decision to spend the first few issues of *Slovo*, and the first couple years of exhibits, exploring the unexplored. Czech cars and motorcycles. The Velvet Revolution from new viewpoints. Czechs and Slovaks and their impact on pop culture. This helped us make a statement that NCSML is committed to interpreting a broad expanse of Czech and Slovak history and culture, something which allowed us to develop a much wider audience and properly set the stage for *Kroje—*

Dress for the Dance of Life! which opened April 12. This depth of material points to programmatic sustainability. There is a never ending supply of subjects, some familiar and some not, that will engage our audience.

In conjunction with this public aspect of operations, the NCSML has been planning and working toward the development and growth of its endowment. A strong endowment fund will provide a financial base for sustaining collections, programs, and exhibits forever.

Last year we received notice of an estate gift from a woman named Anne Manley. She lived in Perry, Iowa. She made provision in her will for the museum to receive \$100,000, and she wanted that gift to honor her parents, Frank and Kristine Uherka, who came to this country from

Czechoslovakia. Mrs. Manley's foresight will enable the museum and the memory of her parents to share a bright future. Her gift will help sustain the telling of a very large story that will attract a continually wider audience. Within that audience will be people touched in a similar way who will then make similar provisions so their identity as Czechs and Slovaks will be a permanent part of America's cultural landscape.



In March 2002, Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic Pavel Dostal [at left] visited Cedar Rapids to present NCSML President/CEO Dan Baldwin with the Artis Bohemiae Amicis award, honoring the NCSML for its service to Czech culture.

There are an infinite number of cycles ahead for the NCSML. Our ability to sustain the museum with the level of excellence we have established will in part be dependent on people like Anne Manley, who understood that her parents are emblematic of a very large and important story, and whose memory is fittingly honored through the telling of that story.

Grounded in memory, given with faith, gifts like that of Anne Uherka Manley make the future of this institution possible, and promising. Please consider a gift to the Endowment Fund of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library to honor the memory of a loved one, and to record for all time the Czech and Slovak chapter of the American story.

Dan Baldwin, President/CEO
dbaldwin@ncsml.org

Museum Store Offers Pottery, Dolls, Czech and Slovak Glass, Books on Kroje

Cedar Rapids Museum Stores Invite You to "Shop Your Cultural Treasures" in June

Every Thursday in June, participating museum stores will offer their shoppers a 10% discount. A 20% discount will be given to shoppers showing a membership card from any participating museum. Pick up a punch card, have it punched at all participating locations, and enter a drawing for gift certificates redeemable at any of the participating stores. Refreshments and fun! – see you in the NCSML Museum Store June 6, 13, 20 and 27!

Visit the NCSML Website

Did you know that you can visit the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library website to

- preview the newest exhibit?
 - read the latest press release?
 - renew your membership?
 - check the program schedule?
- Visit NCSML online at www.NCSML.org.

The Museum Store is wall to wall with new merchandise, including dolls, children's toys, books, pottery, glass animals and paperweights. We just received our largest-ever shipment of dolls dressed in folk costumes. The dolls are from all three regions, Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, and range in size from 6–18 inches. If you enjoy porcelain dolls, please order early as these dolls sell quickly.

Are you looking for a unique Czech-made toy? Your child or grandchild will love playing with our wooden trains, trucks, pull toys and push ups. Or how about a marionette or hand puppet or a twirling top that sparks dazzling rainbow colors?

Are you a Czech glass or pottery collector? We offer several reference books that will help you explore the history of the glass or pottery company, learn about the company's "mark," and establish a value for your collection.

- *A Guide to Czech & Slovak Glass* by Diane E. Foulds \$20.00PB.
- *Made in Czechoslovakia* by Ruth A. Forsythe \$23.00PB.
- *Bohemian Decorated Porcelain* by Dr. James Henderson \$42.95HB.
- *Czechoslovakian Pottery: "Czeching" Out America* by Bowers, Closer, Ellis \$40.00HB.
- *Czechoslovakian Perfume Bottles and Boudoir Accessories Revised Edition* by Jacquelyne Jones-North \$40.00HB.

Other new books will be arriving soon on Kroje (folk costumes). The books will be in the Czech language,

but include wonderful color photos. Some have patterns for making a costume and instructions for tying the headpieces. If you need braided trim for your costume or other handiwork, the museum store has a new supply from the Czech Republic in several colors and sizes.

Pottery from Chodovia, in Western Bohemia, Czech Republic, has just arrived. One pattern has a black background with a design of bright red poppies, blue cornflowers, white daisies and wheat. The second pattern has a white background with brightly painted flowers in red, purple, blue and yellow. You can choose from vases, plates, baskets and bowls.

Another pottery comes from the town of Modra, Slovakia. Modra pottery has a white background with brightly painted flowers on each piece. Several styles of vases, plates, baskets, candleholders, tiles, cups, wine glasses, bowls, heart-shaped boxes, round covered boxes and pitchers are available.

Also new: Robert Kurka's world premiere recording of the Chicago Opera Theatre's performance of *The Good Soldier Schweik* (Svejk). 2 – CD set: \$35.00.

For more information on store merchandise and shipping costs, please call Shirley Rosencrans, Museum Store Manager, at (319) 362-8500. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover cards, as well as checks or money orders in USD.

Dance Festival Will Take Place Sunday, July 28, 2002

We're so excited!

We've been dreaming for years of holding an invitational folk dance festival here at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, and this summer, our plans are coming to fruition! In July, dancers from across the nation will gather to perform the folk dances of the Czech Republic and Slovakia for hundreds of festival participants.

Please join us on Sunday, July 28, 2002, here in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for *Dokolačka, dokola: The 1st National Bohemian, Moravian, and Slovak Folk Dance Festival*.

Dancing will begin at 1:00 pm. Performances will be held in the street between the NCSML Garden and Sokol Park. The 16th Avenue Bridge (Bridge of Lions) will be closed during the festival. The Chicago-based traditional central and east European band, MOST, will also perform. For more information, call Jan at 319.362.8500.



Don and Jeanette Pafko, and the Lipa Slovak Folk Dancers will be one of the dance groups performing at *Dokolačka, dokola*, July 28, 2002.

The First National Koláč Bake-Off Was a Sweet Success

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library invited koláč bakers to participate in the National Koláč Bake-Off on March 23, 2002. Bakers entered in the following categories: Open Koláče with Traditional Filling (poppy seed, prune, cherry, apricot), Closed Koláče with Traditional Filling (poppy seed, prune, cherry, apricot), or Specialty Koláče – including large traditional koláče and non-traditional fillings. The panel of distinguished judges included Linn County Supervisor Lu Barron, radio personality Dave Franklin of KMRY, Gazette food editor Anne Rutter, and Dwayne Bourret of Penfield Press, Iowa City, publishers of many ethnic cookbooks. The judges selected first place winners in each category. A People's Choice Award was also presented.

Thirteen participants each brought 6 dozen koláče to the event. One dozen were reserved for judging. The remaining five dozen were available for public sampling. Samplers cast their vote for their favorite koláče. The highest vote-getter received the People's Choice Award.

And the winners were:

Specialty Koláč – Violet Kycek of Albert Lea, MN.

Closed Koláč – Cheri Franke of Ely, IA.

Open Koláč – Leona Smith of Mt. Vernon, IA.

People's Choice – Marge Sedlacek of Cedar Rapids, IA.

The bake-off was held in conjunction with St. Joseph's Day festivities in Czech Village and was wildly successful with more than 300 tasters present. Plans are already in motion for next year's National Koláč Bake-Off, March 22, 2003. Hope to see you there!

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Will Host September Symposium on Kroje

Plan now to attend the two-day symposium on Czech and Slovak traditional folk wear September 6–7, 2002, at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library.

Participants will have an opportunity to see and learn about the great variety of kroje in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and about motifs in kroje embellishments. There will be presentations on the geographic, fashion, and foreign influences that played significant roles in the development and diversity of kroje. Speakers include Dr. Jirina Langhammerova (Director of the Ethnographic Section of the National Museum in Prague), Mary B. Kelly, Linda Welters, and Helene Cincebeaux.

Participants will also have the opportunity to have pieces identified, seek advice about textile care and conservation, observe lace making and embroidery techniques, tour the NCSML's textile collection center, examine kroje books from the NCSML library, and (of course) spend time in the NCSML's summer exhibition, *Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!*

For more information, see the symposium brochure inserted in this newsletter, check the museum website at www.NCSML.org, or call Jan at 319.362.8500. Expect good food, fascinating programs, lively conversation with others from around the U.S. who are interested in kroje, and a colorful "Parade of Kroje." Register soon because registration is limited.

NCSML Plans Motorcoach Trip to Spillville and Decorah

On Thursday, September 5, 2002, the NCSML will sponsor a motorcoach trip to northeast Iowa.

First stop is Spillville, an early Czech settlement and the 1893 summer home of Czech composer Antonin Dvorak. In Spillville, we'll tour the building where Dvorak stayed, see the famous Bily Brothers' clocks, and visit St. Wenceslaus Church and the neighboring cemetery with its ornate iron crosses. During the drive to Spillville, Loren Horton, Retired Senior Historian for the State Historical Society of Iowa, will tell us the story of the blacksmith who created the crosses.

We'll spend the afternoon in Decorah. Following a light Norwegian lunch, we'll visit Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum for a special tour of Norwegian textiles led by Vesterheim's textile curator. Participants will also have time to tour the museum on their own or shop in historic Decorah.

We'll return through Waverly, where we'll stop for a family style traditional German dinner at Martin's Brandenburg Restaurant.

The motorcoach departs from the NCSML parking lot at 7:15 am and will return about 8:00 pm. Registration is limited. Tour price is \$65 and includes morning refreshments, lunch, dinner, and all admission fees.

This tour will also be offered to those attending the Kroje symposium to be held Sept. 6-7 at the NCSML. [For more information about the symposium, see the insert in this newsletter.] Registration and full payment of \$65 is due by August 15. For more information or to register, please contact Shirley Rosencrans at Giftstore@NCSML.org or 319.362.8500.

NCSML Offers Summer Classes

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library will offer several classes this summer. Classes are for all levels of experience from novice to master. For more information or to enroll, email Jan at Jan@NCSML.org or call her at 319.362.8500.

Beading Workshops

Instructor Mary Ann Buresh teaches you how to make your own jewelry using Czech glass beads.

- Bracelet! Make a unique bracelet with your choice of beads and accessories. Czech rhinestones, crystals, pewter beads and caps and more will be included in your choices. July 9, 2002. 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. Heritage Hall. \$35.00 fee. Please enroll by July 8.

- Necklace! Create a one-of-a-kind necklace. Match it to any of the other beading workshop projects, design it around a piece of jewelry or outfit you already own, or make someone a very special gift. You will be able to choose from various Czech glass beads in all colors and sizes. July 20, 2002. 10:00 – noon. Heritage Hall. \$35.00 fee. Please enroll by July 2.

Matching Funds Sought

Many contributors to the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library multiply their gift by making use of their employer's matching gift program. Some of our members have had the satisfaction of participating at a higher level of giving with the help of a matching gift from their employer. Please see your employer's human resources department to inquire about matching gifts.

Porcelain Painting Classes

Instructor JoAnne Neff teaches students how to paint on porcelain.

- Czech Dancers! Paint a pair of Czech dancers in their folk costume on a plate. Three nights, June 20, 25, & 27, 2002. 6:30-9:00 p.m. Heritage Hall. \$20.00 fee. Class size limited to 15. Please enroll by June 19.
- Crock! Students will choose a pattern for their crock. Three nights, Aug. 8, 15, & 22, 2002. 6:30-9:00 p.m. Heritage Hall. \$20.00 fee. Class size limited to 15. Please enroll by Aug. 7.

Wheat Weaving Classes

Students learn to make straw art from instructor Robin Buckalew.

- Wall Hanging. Create your own beautiful wall hanging. Aug. 17, 2002. 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Heritage Hall. Fee of \$20.00. Class size limited to 7. Please enroll by Aug. 15.

NCSML Offers New Membership Benefit

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is excited to announce a new benefit for its members. The NCSML is now part of the Time Travelers network, which includes more than 100 museums, historic homes and historical societies in 42 states. NCSML members can receive a variety of special benefits, such as free admission or gift shop discounts, when you visit our Time Travelers affiliates. Check the NCSML website at www.NCSML.org/timetravelers.htm for a full list of participating organizations. A variety of institutions are listed there, including the Battleship Massachusetts in Fall River and the Pony Express Museum in St. Joseph, MO. When you travel, be sure to present your NCSML membership cards to take advantage of this program!

NCSML Learns More About Immigrant Home

Most visitors to the NCSML are familiar with the museum's late 19th century immigrant home. It was acquired by the museum and moved from across the river to its current site on the museum campus in 1984. Volunteers put thousands of hours into cleaning, furnishing, and painting the house. Today the 19th Century Immigrant Home is an integral component of NCSML programming.

Although the house has been owned by the museum for 18 years, until recently very little was known about its history. A grant from the General Endowment Fund of the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation allowed the NCSML to re-shingle the house and to hire architectural historian Marlys Svendsen to research the structure's history.

Svendsen's research confirmed that original property owner Joseph Platz likely built the house between 1884 and 1888. Based on newspaper summaries for the time, construction of the house would have cost \$300 to \$600. The Busek family acquired the house in 1888 and carpenter Joseph

Sleger and his wife Helena bought it from the Buseks in 1890. The Slegers raised three children in the house, Joseph Jr., Frank, and Anna.

Several elements from Svendsen's report will soon be incorporated into the NCSML's docent-led interpretation of the house. For example, on its original site across the river from the museum, the house was oriented 90 degrees from its current position, with the long side of the house perpendicular to the river and the road, and the short side facing First St. SE. Houses were often built with the short side facing the street in that period because this configuration accommodates more homes (each with narrow property boundaries) in a single block.

Regarding the home's construction, for years it was assumed that the house was built in two parts. However, Svendsen's examination of Sanford maps (maps drafted for fire/insurance companies), suggest that the house was originally built in an "ell" shape with a recessed porch in

what is currently the kitchen. Modifications by the Sleger family sometime between 1895 and 1913 likely included extending the length and width of the kitchen and building the porch in its current configuration. Svendsen also confirmed that the house never had indoor plumbing. Even into the early 1980s, residents of the house used an outdoor pump for water and had an outhouse.

Information about interior furnishings and wall treatments may also change how the house is furnished in the future. An interview with Frank Sleger's granddaughter revealed that the elderly gentleman kept his bed in what is currently furnished as a formal parlor. She also indicated that her grandfather stored valuables in a safe in the parlor closet.

Research on the house continues. The NCSML was recently awarded a grant from the State of Iowa's REAP - Historic Resources Development Program to conduct further research on the interior. The final report from this grant will guide staff regarding furniture, floor coverings, and wall treatments for the house.

South and East (river side) views of the NCSML immigrant home in its current configuration. The south end that currently has two windows and a door was originally oriented east toward 1st St. Individuals entered the house through one of two doors on what was then the south side of the house. Photo by Marlys Svendsen.



NCSML Receives Rare 440-Year-Old Hymnal

The NCSML has recently received a rare and significant piece of Czech history in the form of a 16th century hymnal donated to the NCSML by Marge Lala Stone, of Marion, Iowa. The English translation of the title is *Songs in Praise of God. Evangelical Spiritual Songs*. Printed in 1561, the hymnal was published during the era when the Czech Lands were independent of the Catholic Church.

Later, when the Austrian Hapsburgs defeated the Czech nobility at the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, the Hapsburgs encouraged the Jesuits to re-Catholicize the Czech Lands. During the years from 1620 to about 1790, non-Catholic religious books like this hymnal were banned. If the Jesuit authorities had become aware of this book, they most certainly would have destroyed it and placed its owners under arrest. For at least 130 years during this period, it was actually a capital offense to own such books: The last person to be sentenced to death for owning a banned book was executed in 1755. So books of this nature were often hidden. The family story that accompanies the hymnal has it that the book was baked into a loaf of bread to protect it from confiscation.

A registry of rare Czech books indicates that only seven complete and two incomplete copies of this book still exist. This one has recently been added to the list.

What makes the book even more interesting is that we know its "pedigree." Marge's book was passed down to her from her great-grandfather George (Jiří) Bureš. George Bureš immigrated to the United States September 18, 1861, with his parents and siblings and settled in the rural area near Ely, Iowa. The ancestral home of the Bureš family was a short distance west of Český Brod, Czech Republic.

Marge kept the hymnal in a safe deposit box for many years. However, Marge and her husband Bob believed the most appropriate place for the book was the NCSML because of its ability to preserve and exhibit it under archival conditions. We are honored that the Stones chose the NCSML as the permanent guardian of this wonderful expression of Czech faith and culture.



Third Biannual History and Culture Conference Will Take Place March 7 – 8, 2003

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is proud to host its third History and Culture Conference. The program, "20th Century in Retrospect: A Decade of Turmoil, 1938 – 1948," will survey some of the most dramatic years in Czechoslovak history. We will examine how the Czech and Slovak people survived, fought, and died during the tumultuous decade that began with the German invasion and ended with the rise of Communism.

The conference will take place Friday and Saturday, March 7 – 8, 2003, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Participants will have the opportunity to expand their knowledge of Czech and Slovak history and its impact on world history. The conference will also offer opportunities to hear an internationally renowned keynote speaker, meet people from all around the world and engage in stimulating discussion. Registration is limited. Please email jan@NCSML.org or call Jan at 319.362.8500 for more information.

Call for Papers

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) invites proposals for presentations for the conference "The Czech and Slovak 20th Century in Retrospect: 1938-1948" to be held at the NCSML in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, March 7-9, 2003. Accepted topics will include those pertaining to Czech and Slovak history, culture, literature, politics, foreign relations and military affairs during the 1938-1948 time period, especially personal accounts of historic events. Presentations should be in English and no more than 45 minutes each. If you are interested in being a presenter, please submit an abstract or summary of no more than 500 words and a c.v or a description of your research by Oct. 15, 2002 via mail to David Muhlena, National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, 30-16th Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404 or by e-mail to dmuhlena@NCSML.org.

National Collection

From time to time, NCSML offers an exhibit that features recent or never-before-seen acquisitions from the institution's own collections. This summer, the South Hall Gallery is the site for *A National Collection*, an exhibition of a variety of items donated to the NCSML's collections by members and friends of the NCSML.

Some of the highlights of the exhibition include Czechoslovak perfume bottles from Rose and Dan Bodien, original locomotive identification plates, a Z.C.B.J. band hat from Robert Modracek, painted plates from Ray and Dorothy Snilil, Slovak molds and cookie cutters from Katarina Kulhankova, and a beautiful Rindskopf vase donated by Ronald and Sandra Lemelin.

See *A National Collection* from June 14 through September 8, 2002.

How Long Have You Been a Member?

We're trying to identify our earliest members: Were you a member of the Czech Fine Arts Association in the 1970s? If you were, please let Laurie or Josie know with a phone call to 362-8500 or an email to Lrobinson@NCSML.org.

GRANT NOTICES:

The operations of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library are supported this year, in part, by a grant from The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Cultural Enrichment Grant Program.

The exhibit, *Kroje—Dress for the Dance of Life!* is funded, in part, by a grant from Humanities Iowa and the National Endowment for the Humanities.



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