



# OST

THE BRIDGE

News of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library



Volume 3, No. 1 — Spring 1997

## A Thousand Years of Czech Culture: Treasures from the National Museum in Prague Scheduled to Open May 24

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is proud to announce that the special exhibit *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture: Treasures from the National Museum in Prague* will open in our gallery on Saturday, May 24. The exhibit features 207 artifacts from the vaults of the National Museum and tells the story of Czech people from the Middle Ages to the forming of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The exhibit was a four-year project between the National Museum and Old Salem, Inc., a living history museum located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. It opened September 14, 1996 at Old Salem and closes March 30.



Painted wooden cherub from a baroque church, c. 1720.

"The acquisition of *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture* is a major event for our museum and the City of Cedar Rapids," explained Dan Baldwin, Executive Director. "This exhibit represents the

very finest in museum programming. I think our members, the community, and visitors from all over the Midwest will find this to be a fantastic experience. We're very proud it is coming to our museum."

Major funding for the exhibit has been provided by The Hall-Perrine Foundation, Rockwell, The Gazette Companies, and DeLaRue. Other major contributors are Western Fraternal Life Association, Aegon, CSA Lodge #137, the Witwer Trust Fund, Norwest Bank, Jenny Craig, Henry Russell Bruce Advertising and Public Relations, and the Cedar Rapids Convention and Visitors Bureau. (Additional primary donors will be announced shortly. See box at right for more information.)

*A Thousand Years of Czech Culture* has received strong reviews in publications ranging from the *New York Times*  
Continued on page 2.

### TAKING NOTE

On January 28, we received a \$100,000 grant from the Hall-Perrine Foundation, contingent on a 2 for 1 match. We are currently raising \$200,000 to meet this match and bring *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture* to our museum this spring. Our board of directors has made a commitment to have 100% financial participation in this project and invite you, as members of the institution, to also help us achieve our matching gift challenge with the Hall-Perrine Foundation. For details on how you can be part of this wonderful opportunity, see the pledge on page 7. ■

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library has been offered an opportunity to sponsor a trip to the Czech Republic. A special tour from September 23 to October 4 is being developed by Travel Advisors that will feature the National Museum in Prague, visits to Ceske Budejovice, the spa town of Karlovy Vary, fairy tale castles and chateaus, Prague Castle, and a dinner cruise on the Vltava River. The tour will be hosted by the museum's director, Dan Baldwin, and his wife, Monica. Call Vin or Eunice at 319-395-9920 or 1-800-373-5970 for more information. ■

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to *USA Today* to the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. The Cedar Rapids venue hopes to attract 60,000 visitors during its seven-month run, which ends December 31.

"The process of bringing this exhibit to Cedar Rapids began at its opening in Winston-Salem," Baldwin said. "We have been in steady negotiations with both the National Museum and Old Salem, raising the significant funds necessary to stage such a wonderful show, and working internally to make sure our building is ready to accept the challenge."

The opening weekend (Memorial Day weekend) will feature a three-day



Artifacts from the Prague exhibit as they appear in Old Salem.

special event celebrating Czech Culture.

Admission prices for *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture* will be: Adults, \$6; Seniors, Groups (10 or more), \$5; Children, \$3. Members receive free admission. ■

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## DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Dan Baldwin,  
Executive Director

The announcement that the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is bringing *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture: Treasures from the National Museum in Prague* to its gallery represents an enormous step forward in the development of our institution. *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture* is one of the finest temporary exhibits currently being shown in this country. The care and thought that Old Salem and the National Museum put into this four-year project is clearly evident in the finished product. As of this writing, there are no plans for another United States venue; the artifacts will return to Prague.

I have worked on many exhibits during my museum career. I am well aware of the difficult process of selecting artifacts, developing an interpretive line, preparing text, designing the exhibit space, fabricating exhibit cases, making sure the artifacts are safe, installing proper lighting... the list goes on and on. That Old Salem and the National Museum were able to work collaboratively through these and many other issues, working across time zones, a language barrier, and cultural differences, to produce something of such great value is simply amazing. They are to be congratulated.

And now we can enjoy and benefit from this wonderful exhibition.

What will *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture* mean for the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library? It has always concerned us that the exhibits in our main gallery were not up to the standards visitors expect of a National Museum. Though we have strong attendance we were not providing a full museum experience. Planning for a new "permanent" exhibit has been underway for some time, but we were still quite a ways from completion.

For the seven months that A

*Thousand Years of Czech Culture* will be in our gallery, the expectations of our visitors will be met and often exceeded. When it closes, we will install our own new permanent exhibit, taking advantage of exhibit cases, temporary walls, lighting, and other design enhancements funded through *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture*. While *A Thousand Years...* is in the gallery, we will be giving our artifacts a needed rest, preparing them to go back on exhibit in Spring 1998.

So we will, in effect, be getting two exhibits for one, and placing the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library at the forefront of museums in Iowa and the Midwest. A place we have yearned for all along. ■

## HERITAGE HALL

The Heritage Hall had a very busy year in 1996 and is off to a strong start in 1997. Be sure to think of all those unique situations when Heritage Hall would be the perfect solution to your event. A special thank you to all who have used the facility. There are several days awaiting reservations. Call 362-8500. ■



## Collections Update

Although we are in the middle of the "slow winter months," there is certainly no lack of work to be done with the collections. Among the many tasks at hand include accepting and processing new acquisitions, catching up on the backlog of items that need to be cataloged, dealing with storage concerns, and preparing for *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture*. (I should add that the addition of a librarian to our staff is a particularly welcome relief to me since books and archival material makeup more than 75% of our donations. Welcome Martha!)

Organizing the collection will be much easier with the new computer we purchased at the end of the year. The computer will allow me to keep track of all the information we have recorded about each item in the collection. It will also be invaluable for keeping track of artifact location, creating lists of similar or related items, sorting artifacts by specified categories, and recording donor information. (Of course, we have to enter all the information into the computer first!)

In the midst of this and other projects, we continue to receive many wonderful additions to the collection. One recent donation I find particularly intriguing is a large wooden immigrant

trunk. Although we have several trunks in the collection, this one is unique because it has original information still recorded on it. Written across the top of the trunk is the trunk's owner ("F. Loufek"), his destination ("Cedar Rapids, Iowa, North Amerika"), the names of his sponsors in the U.S., the name of the ship he traveled on, and a number ("2"). It is equally interesting to note that the Museum already has a trunk from F. Loufek, donated by another member of the Loufek family. These are likely a pair of trunks brought to the U.S. by the same individual, and passed down to different members of the Loufek family.

Some other new acquisitions include: a silver tatting shuttle, an amethyst cut glass vase, two kroje dolls, tatted lace, dozens of books, and photos. Many thanks to our generous donors for these and the many other gifts we received over the last couple months.

As we move forward into 1997, there are so many exciting things to look forward to: the growing staff size makes all our jobs easier; the permanent exhibit continues to progress well; and the opening of the library (this summer?) will make exhibit and collection research much easier.

— Carmen Langel

## Gift Store Happenings

We are in the process of obtaining many new items for the arrival of *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture*. We have already ordered a pewter lapel pin the Czech Lion on it to be available soon in the Gift Store. Many new Slovak items are also in store. We will have hand embroidered blouses, aprons, and custom-made blouses from Domazlice, as well as men's shirts from the same area. Slovak wooden dolls, wooden tankards, and hand painted plates, will be available. Bohemian Garnet Crystal will also be on hand for the Fold Art persons on your gift list. We will have a large map complete with town, and kroj — pictured, and suitable for framing. Also to arrive in several short weeks will be a coloring book printed in the Czech Republic by Daniela Mahoney on Kroj for children. You will not want to miss her to autograph your copy May 23, 24, 25 in the Gift Store.

— Sheryl Nejd



Pictured left: Former U.S. Senator Roman Hruska (left) is shown with Astronaut Captain Eugene Cernan (right), — the main speaker at a dinner held October 26 as part of the dedication weekend of the Roman L. Hruska Grand Hall. Center: Senator Charles Grassley speaking at the Roman L. Hruska Grand Hall Dedication. Right: Adeline Volesky (left), Irene Hamous (right) and Quentin Hruska, representing his father, at the Roman Hruska dedication ceremony.



## WE APPRECIATE OUR CONTRIBUTORS...

### OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS to the MUSEUM OCT 1 through DECEMBER 31, 1996

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### IN HONOR

- For: **DELBERT DITCH**  
C.S.A. Lodge Prokop Velky



## PROGRAM NOTES

Many Museum programs are being developed for 1997 and 1998. They include short programs, such as "brown bag" tours, and longer programs such as lectures and discussions, classes and workshops, concerts and seminars. Interest has been expressed in a week-long educational seminar covering topics relating to the Czech and Slovak cultures as well as in a short course on Czech embroidery. These ideas are being explored as possibilities for 1998 and 1999 respectively.

The popularity of "armchair travelogues" was evident at the Museum's first offering for 1997. "Armchair Travels Through the Czech Republic," presented by retired teacher and avid traveler, George (Max) Naxera, was attended by 100 people and was well received. Look for Max to return in the fall with, *Land of Fairy Tales — Castles and Churches of the Czech Republic*. Individuals interested in traveling to Europe, and specifically to the Czech Republic or Slovakia, will want to attend a *Let's Take A Trip* program to be presented April 20th by Mark Bigaouette, founder and president of Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International of St. Paul, Minnesota.

Easter customs and traditions will be celebrated at the Museum on the two Saturdays before Easter, March 22nd

and 29th, with demonstrations on egg decorating, wheat-weaving and lace-making — bobbin lace, tatted lace, and netting. Adults will see how a few goose feathers can be transformed into a useful pastry brush. Children will be able to try making a pomlazka or willow whip. Samples of a pound-type cake, baked in the traditional lamb-shaped mold, will be available for tasting.

Plans are progressing for "Kava a Knihy," a reading-lecture-discussion series featuring Czech authors, to be offered in the fall. Short programs will include "gallery talks" by museum staff members. Programs for children will

include monthly "story times," seasonal crafts classes, and puppets.

Memorial Day weekend visitors for the opening of *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture* will be greeted by music and song and individuals dressed in colorful, "kroje" (national costumes). They will be able to tour the exhibit, reminisce in the Immigrant Home, watch the crafts demonstrators, enjoy ethnic foods, join in with the singers, twirl with their partners in time to a polka beat, and shop for unique folk art and Czech and Slovak imported items in the Gift Store. ■

— Patti Hikiji

### Dates to mark on your calendar:

**March 22 & 29 — Easter Customs & Traditions:** Demonstrations in egg decorating, wheat-weaving, lace-making, feather-baster making, braiding a pomlazka

- 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Roman L. Hruska Grand Hall
- Admission: \$2.00 per adult, \$1.00 per student

**April 20 — "Let's Take a Trip" with Mark Bigaouette**

- 2:00 p.m., WFLA Heritage Hall
- Admission: Free to the public

**April 24 — "Before and After the Velvet Revolution" lecture by Dr. Jim Grove**

- 7:00 p.m., WFLA Heritage Hall
- Admission: Free to the public

**May 16 & 19 — Ethnic crafts classes Sidonka Wadina, instructor**

- WFLA Heritage Hall
- Call the Museum for registration information



A craft demonstration (left) held December 7 at the Museum & Library included a visit by Svaty Mikulas, (St. Nicholas) played by Cedar Rapids resident, Frank Novotny (center).



Mark "Vasko" Bigaouette presented a Czech travelogue on October 13.



## LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

I am completing my second month as librarian of the NC&SM&L. Many thanks to all those who have welcomed me so enthusiastically. Thanks also to the Czech Heritage Foundation and the Iowa Community Cultural Grant Program for funding the librarian position. Your generous financial support makes it possible for the first time to have a full-time staff member continue the efforts of dedicated volunteers. I am excited to be a part of the team that will build a world-class research library and archives.

Development of the library is progressing on several fronts. In the next month, we hope to make three important purchases: a reference desk, a computer, and library automation software. The desk will provide a clear registration point for library visitors as well as a work area for me and volunteers. The computer will be the site of our online library & archives catalog. It will also be our gateway to an online union catalog of research libraries from which we can

copy catalog records for materials in our collection and make our collection accessible to scholars throughout the world. Library automation software will speed our work and help us apply accepted library standards. Purchase of these items has been funded by a grant from US West and several private donations.

Building the catalog will take time, but we have also made changes that make the collection more accessible immediately. The WFLA collection, 1400 volumes donated to the library in 1981, has been partially cataloged. We have gathered those volumes together and they can be accessed through the card catalog. We have also sorted the rest of the items in the library into categories. I can access those volumes by browsing the shelves. Finally, current periodicals can now be found in a separate section arranged by title.

Other exciting developments in the library include:

- taking delivery of a large collection of sheet music donated by the Lyra

Society of Chicago;

- planning an archival exhibit for the library which will be open while the exhibit gallery is being prepared for *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture*;
- beginning plans to install mobile shelving to house more books and protect them from harmful elements;
- and helping develop programs focusing on reading (e.g., book clubs and children's story time).

You will hear more about these developments in future issues of *Most*.

**A note to volunteers:** The library needs Czech speakers and others to help catalog and process library and archives materials. Please contact us if you are interested. Those of you who have already volunteered have not been forgotten. I will contact each of you when our plans are finalized. ■

— Martha Wilding

Please cut along dotted lines and mail contribution with pledge form below. Use enclosed self-addressed envelope.

### *A Thousand Years of Czech Culture: Riches from the National Museum in Prague*

I would like to support this world-class exhibit at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library with my tax deductible contribution.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Donor (Up to \$499)

Curator's Level (\$1,000 to \$2,499)

Contributor (\$500 to \$999)

Director's Level (\$2,500 to \$4,900)

President's Level (\$5,000 and above)

I have enclosed my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support this international exhibit.

I would like to pledge \$\_\_\_\_\_ in support of this exhibit. Please bill me as follows:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your support!*

## NATIONAL NEWS

### ♦ Folk Dress and Textiles of Slovakia, Moravia and Bohemia Tour

• April 20 – May 2, 1997

(Optional Prague Extension May 2 – 5)

Presented by Helene Baine Cincebeaux and Helen Zemek Baine with the Costume and Textile Council of San Diego

For information, call Michael Mansfield, or Helene Cincebeaux,

### ♦ Centennial of Bohemian National Hall, Home of Sokol Greater Cleveland

• April 20 — APOLLO'S FIRE concert at Bohemian National Hall

• May 4 — American & Czech vintage fashion show and brunch

• June 1 — Sokol Greater Cleveland summer exhibition

• Sept. 6 & 7 — Bohemian National Hall Open House

• Sept. 27 — Grand Ball/Dinner Dance

For information, call Dorothy Cummings,

♦ Trip to Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland upon Pope John Paul's visit to these countries, celebrating the 1000th Anniversary of St. Adalbert's death, a patron of these countries.

• April 24 – May 8, 1997 • Sponsored by the Czech Catholic Union Fraternal Insurance Society, Cleveland, and the Cleveland District Alliance of Czech Catholics.

For information, call 216-749-7459 or 1-800-515-TRIP.

### ♦ XIX American Sokol Slet and Competitions

• June 25 – 29 • Activities include gala opening ceremony, festive banquet, competition in apparatus, gymnastics volleyball, golf, bowling, mass calisthenics, folk dances and more.

Naperville Central High School, Naperville, IL and Morton West High School, Berwyn, IL

For information and reservations, call the American Sokol Organization, 708-795-6671 or fax 708-795-0539.

### ♦ Dvorak Statue Project

*In collaboration with the Stuyvesant Park Neighborhood Association*

Project needs your financial support for the placement of life-size bronze statue of Antonin Dvorak in landmarked Stuyvesant Square, the great Czechoslovakian composer's historic Manhattan neighborhood. More than \$50,000 will be needed for relocation, restoration, pedestal and maintenance of the work by celebrated sculptor Ivan Mestrovic (1883 – 1962).

For more information about the Dvorak American Heritage Association, write P.O. Box 332, Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10276 or call 212-475-2850.



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