

17.11.1989

A Conversation with H.E. Peter Burian, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States of America

By Leah Wilson, director of marketing and communications

Wilson: Where were you on November 17, 1989, and what was your immediate reaction to that day's events?

Burian: I started my diplomatic career at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FMFA) in Prague in 1983 as a junior diplomat. In 1989, I was posted abroad. Thus, I was following the developments in Czechoslovakia from a distance. When I learned about the events in Bratislava and Prague my first reaction was fear that there might be major bloodshed and that the head of the Communist Bloc, Miloš Jakeš, would suppress the demonstrations by force. Fortunately, the regime collapsed quickly and peacefully, under the pressure from the people in the streets, without inflicting further harm.

Wilson: It appeared to outsiders that the Velvet Revolution ended almost as quickly as it began; that it was like spontaneous combustion. Is this accurate, or had a fire been smoldering under the surface for many years?

Burian: I believe the communist system in Czechoslovakia had discredited itself over time, through constant violations of basic human rights and freedoms. In 1968, many hoped that the system could be corrected by giving socialism a "human face." But they saw, rather dramatically during the Soviet invasion on August 21, that attempts at such reforms

would be violently quashed. The suppression continued into the 1980s, during the process of "normalization." This brought about a growing dissatisfaction with the communist regime. So, yes, as you put it, a fire had been smoldering under the surface for many years, and it was only a matter of time before the system would collapse.

Wilson: Describe the dynamic between Czechs and Slovaks during and following the Velvet Revolution.

Burian: It is my opinion that the processes of national emancipation in the former Czechoslovakia had also been smoldering under the surface for a long time, but that they were put on hold until the democratic processes in Czechoslovakia were fully unfolded. These processes took on a vivid shape after the Velvet Revolution that led to disagreements between the political leadership of both countries. There was a feeling among Slovaks



and Slovak leadership, that the existing, centralized federal state was not fulfilling their ambitions. On the other hand, the Czech leadership was not able to come up with satisfactory compromises or the flexibility that would lead to a mutually acceptable agreement. In the end, those irreconcilable differences led to the non-violent dissolution of Czechoslovakia.

Continued on page 7

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The NCSML is funded in part by a grant from the Cultural Enrichment Partnership Program administered by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT



As most of you know, the NCSML board of directors is in the process of determining how, what and where to rebuild our exhibition center and library. A public input process commenced in June to help inform their decision, and the results are in. Over 806 members and friends of the NCSML filled out surveys — a staggering response rate of 27%. Many also came to public sessions and small-group stakeholder meetings.

The take-away is clear — the NCSML is in good hands. You demonstrate day after day, month after month, and year after year, that you share our passion and energetically support our mission. Thank you.

The NCSML board must choose a rebuilding option that meets numerous criteria. Most importantly, we must 1) continue to serve our mission 2) be protected from flood 3) remain operationally efficient and 4) position the NCSML as a world-class visitor destination.

The board is considering three options:

- 1 Repurpose the existing building for programs, events and rentals, and add a flood protected addition for exhibitions and library services.
- 2 Repurpose the existing building for programs, events and rentals, and build a flood-protected, stand-alone structure to serve as the exhibition center and library.
- 3 Build a new flood protected structure that will serve as the exhibition center and library, and will house all other mission-related activities. The NCSML will not use the existing building.

During our public input process, we asked participants to rank these three options and to share opinions on other related topics. The results of the public input process, which are summarized on page 11, are illuminating.

The board is reviewing the data and comments provided, looking into potential sites, and examining projected operating budgets. A determination on rebuilding options is expected in September. We cannot thank you enough for your support and guidance. Please stay engaged. With your help, we are poised to make the best of challenging circumstances. Visit our website for a full report on the public input process, and watch for an update this fall.

Best regards,

Gail Naughton



Participants view a map showing Cedar Rapids' plan for future flood mitigation at a public input session held in June.

From our Board Chair

I am pleased to announce that The State of Iowa has allocated \$10 million to stimulate the NCSML's recovery from the 2008 flood. The funds were made available through the I-JOBS Fund, approved by the legislature and signed by the Governor in June 2009.



These much-needed funds will allow the NCSML to move ahead in earnest with rebuilding plans. The first project to use some of the I-JOBS money is the restoration of the historic Kosek building in Czech Village. When completed, the Kosek building will house an exhibition entitled, *Rising Above: The Story of a People and the Flood*, program space, a museum store and administrative offices. Construction is currently underway and is expected to be completed in early 2010, so please plan your visit to see this exciting and interactive exhibition.

The bulk of the state funds we have received will be used to construct the new exhibition center and research library. A fundraising campaign is underway to provide additional funds for the total rebuilding cost estimated at \$25 million.

Site selection team formed

We must build an exhibition center and research library in order to continue serving our mission. A site selection team has been formed to better analyze all possible options. President/CEO Gail Naughton and board members Sue Olson, Bob Vancura, Jim Sattler, Danielle Rings and I serve on the committee. Other committee members include Cedar Rapids

developer Kyle Skogman, engineer Dick Ransom, and city property manager Marty Hoeger. We have consulted with the City of Cedar Rapids, members of the Army Corps of Engineers project team, city planners and others.

The team is using weighted criteria to compare a list of viable building sites within the Czech heritage neighborhoods, including the site of our existing building. Many factors are being considered, such as acquisition cost, visual prominence of the site, scale of the building site in relation to its surroundings, infrastructure issues, proximity to existing NCSML buildings and operational efficiency. We have also considered the city's plans for



IOWA'S INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

future development and flood protection. After thorough analysis, the committee will make a recommendation to the board of directors.

As you can imagine, this is not an entirely straightforward process. Therefore, we are working hard to think holistically and plan strategically; we are thoughtfully, prudently seizing opportunities to position the NCSML as a world-class institution. Thanks to all of you who share this vision.

Sincerely,

Gary Rozek

Czech Village/New Bohemia Urban Neighborhood Main Street Designation

On May 18, 2009, the Iowa Department of Economic Development's Main Street Iowa Program officially recognized the Czech Village/New Bohemia Urban Neighborhood Main Street District. The designation and involvement with Main Street Iowa will greatly support flood recovery efforts in these two key ethnic neighborhoods. President/CEO Gail Naughton serves as president of the Czech Village/New Bohemia Urban Main Street board. Director of Operations and Education Jan Stoffer and NCSML board member Lu Barron also serve on the Main Street board of directors.

The mission of the Main Street Iowa Program is to improve the social and economic well-being of Iowa's communities by assisting selected communities to capitalize on the unique identity, assets and character of their downtown area. Main Street promotes economic development within the context of historic preservation. The Czech Village/New Bohemia Urban Neighborhood Main Street District is among the first urban districts recognized by the State of Iowa. ←

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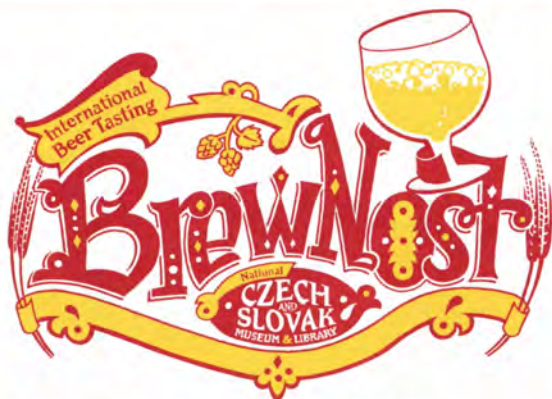
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Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
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Doug Alberhasky is the fourth generation owner of John's Grocery, a quaint neighborhood store tucked inconspicuously into downtown Iowa City. Though small, this grocery is mighty. It has gained a national audience and earned mentions in dozens of publications from beerdorks.com to *O* (Oprah's magazine). Here is a man who takes his suds so seriously he could only be of Czech descent — and how fortuitous!

On Friday, October 16, at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Doug will once again offer up his personal picks from across the globe, including a robust menu of Czech and Slovak beers, and as always, the best of the Belgian inventory. This year's line-up will spotlight new entries from Croatia and Greece, as well as American-style Belgian beers from Boulevard Brewing's Smokestack series, giving patrons a chance to measure these new domestics against the imports when it comes to hallmark opulent sweetness and caramel-chocolate flavors. But be warned, with alcohol content ranging from 8-11 percent, they're not for guzzling.

Come ready for an evening of exploration and learning. Doug will explain why malty lagers go great with chicken and pork, why fruity ales are best with red meat, and how beer and ice cream can become a to-die-for dessert. These premium international beers (you'll find wine and non-alcoholic options as well) will be expertly paired with hearty helpings of divine hors d'oeuvres prepared by some of the area's best chefs.

BrewNost tickets are \$55 or \$65 at the door, entitling guests to a night of unrivaled merriment. Make reservations by visiting the beer page and clicking the event calendar at www.johnsgrocery.com, or by calling Kelly Otto at 319-447-5533. ←



Doug Alberhasky (shown here at the Chodovar family brewery in the Czech Republic) sports the expectant grin of a man eager to embark upon an authentic gustatory adventure. Tough job, huh, Beer Guy?

Staff Update

Business Manager Esther White recently retired after 14 years of service. Esther worked tirelessly to automate the bookkeeping system and establish operational controls that resulted in clean annual audits. A favorite with volunteers, she once donned a feather boa to entertain the crowd at the 2008 volunteer appreciation dinner and auction.



Carol Malecek

In June, the NCSML hired Carol Malecek as director of finance, to carry on with Esther's good work.

Carol graduated from the University of Iowa with a BBA, with high distinction, in accounting. She is a licensed CPA with 20 years of experience in financial analysis, auditing, budgets, administration, compliance and project management.

Carol and her husband Don recently moved back to Cedar Rapids after living for 10 years in Madison, Wisconsin. They have four children. ←



Czech School Still Going Strong

Česká Škola (Czech School) in Cedar Rapids, as far as we know, is the longest continuously-operating Czech language school in the country. Many things have changed since its inception, but the mission is steadfast: "Preserve and promote the Czech language, culture and history."

Every year, students from all backgrounds, ages 6 – 14, carve out five weeks from their summer vacation to discover Czech culture and music, and to develop conversational language skills. For the past 10 years, Czech School has hosted teachers from the Czech Republic to provide language instruction. Adult language classes were a new addition this year, held in cooper-



Carolyn Morrissey, Madison Voss and Katy Saba, left to right, keep each other in stitches as they whiz through an assignment.

ation with Mt. Mercy College. Registration for the 2010 school year begins in March. Please contact Elaine Samek at elaine@csk.org or czechschool@gmail.com to learn more. ←



Christmas Open House

November 20 – 29
NCSML at Lindale

Visit the NCSML during our Christmas Open House November 20 – 29. The 2009 collection of beautiful mouth-blown, hand-painted Czech ornaments will be unveiled. Buy 3 ornaments from the wall display and get 1 free from the Christmas tree. Marj Nejd, master folk artist, will be available to personalize your ornaments on November 21, 27 and 28, from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Czech and Slovak History and Culture Conference Set for March 4 – 5, 2011

Mark your calendars for the upcoming History and Culture Conference, now scheduled for March 4 – 5, 2011, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This exciting conference is the fifth installment in the “Twentieth Century in Retrospect” series. It will cover the Velvet Revolution and Velvet Divorce, making connections with current events.

During the past 10 years, the NCSML has carefully examined different periods of the 20th century and how historic events affected Czechoslovak culture, politics and economics. Conference attendees will learn about one of the most dynamic periods in history. We plan to explore topics including nation building, human rights and cultural change. Send your topic and speaker suggestions to Jan Stoffer: Jan@NCSML.org. ←

Humanities Iowa Grant Supports *Slovo*

We wish to thank Humanities Iowa, a state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for supporting the winter 2008-2009 publication of *Slovo*, entitled, “Investigating Iowa’s Czech Heritage: How Eight Communities Are Saving and Sharing Their History.” The mission of Humanities Iowa is to promote understanding and appreciation of the people, communities, cultures, and stories of importance to Iowa and the nation. ←

Click. NCSML Gets a New Website

The NCSML is launching a new website. You’ll notice a clean design, enhanced usability and great content. You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter. Visit www.NCSML.org to see our new look! ←

IN THE GALLERY

I’m Over Here! With *Paul and Andy*

By Stefanie Kohn, curator

Some art is just plain extroverted. It has the power to transform the mood of a room and a magnetism that draws a crowd. *Paul and Andy* has that kind of energy. It boasts a height of six feet and is drenched with vivid purple and green hues that burst from the canvas. It starts the conversation and the party. Walk a little closer, and you’ll see that, yes, those really are chicken tracks — the peculiar trademark of none other than Paul Warhola.

John, Paul and Andy Warhola were the American-born sons of Ondrej and Julia Warhola, who emigrated from what is now the Slovak Republic. Andy, who would go on to become a Pop Art icon by the early 1970s, dropped the final ‘a’ from his name early in his career. Big brother Paul Warhola spent most of his working life in the scrap metal business, then he retired in Pittsburgh

in the 1980s. It was there he took to raising chickens and painting in his spare time.

Paul and Andy features an image of Paul and Andy Warhola as teenagers. Warhola transferred the family photograph to a silkscreen on canvas, adding a wash of bright colors and finishing the piece in his signature style: he dipped the feet of one of his chickens in red paint and walked them across the canvas.

Paul Warhola gave *Paul and Andy* to the NCSML in 2000, where it was displayed in the permanent exhibition, *Homelands: The Story of the Czech and Slovak People*.

Unfortunately, the painting was damaged in the flood of 2008. A temporary wall fell and tore a hole in the canvas, and the bottom half of the canvas was soiled by the dirty water. The experts at the Chicago Conservation Center successfully cleaned and restored the painting, and returned it just in time for our exhibition, *Treasures*



from the National Collection, which opened in June at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. It is one of over 170 gorgeous artifacts from the NCSML, representing folk art, the decorative arts, and fine art — but with this much personality, *Paul and Andy* isn’t lost in the crowd. ←

PERMANENT EXHIBITION

Pack Your Bags: Journey to America.



Pack Your Bags: Journey to America asks you to imagine the choices Czech immigrants faced, by interpreting the significance of the personal possessions they brought with them. You'll also learn about the history of emigration from the Czech lands to the U.S. and about the traditions they passed down through generations.

NCSML at Lindale Mall

Open Mon – Sat: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sun: Noon – 5 p.m.
Free admission.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

Treasures from the National Collection.



Over 100 glorious objects from our renowned collection!

Beautifully embellished folk costumes, ornate crystal, Royal Dux porcelain, colorful glass and one of Paul Warhola's famous silk-screens come together in this vibrant exhibition.

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
410 Third Avenue SE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
319-366-7503/www.crma.org

SEPTEMBER 2009

Sept. 5: **Walking Tour of Historic New Bohemia.** Take a guided tour and learn about this eclectic ethnic neighborhood with local historian Mark Stoffer Hunter. 11 a.m. NCSML Clock Tower. \$6 for members, \$7 for non-members. Part of New Bohemia Arts Festival.*

Sept. 5: **Walking Tour of Historic Czech Village.** Take a guided tour and learn about the interesting history of this legendary ethnic neighborhood with local historian Mark Stoffer Hunter. 1 p.m. NCSML Clock Tower. \$6 for members, \$7 for non-members. Part of Czech Village Fall Festival.*

Sept. 21: **Káva a Knihy (Coffee and Books).** Read the book and come ready to discuss *The Florist's Daughter* by Patricia Hampl. Contact Patricia Hikiji at 319-294-5354 or phikiji@ncsml.org for more information. 7 p.m. Guaranty Bank on Bever Avenue SE. Free.*

Sept. 22: **Return to Spillville Lecture Recital by Red Cedar Chamber Music.** 2:30 p.m. Sykora Bakery. Free.

Sept. 26: **Cooking in Babi's Kitchen.** Learn how to make *jablečný strudel* (apple strudel). Presented by Janelle Kamerling, Bakery Instructor in the Culinary Arts Program at Kirkwood Community College. No pre-registration required. Door prizes and samples. 10 a.m. – noon. St. Ludmila's Church Social Hall, 211 21st Avenue, SW. Free.*

Sept. 26: **Red Cedar Chamber Music Presents Firefly.** 2 p.m. Reception by the NCSML Museum Guild to follow. First Presbyterian Church. Tickets \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door. Call 319-377-8061.

Sept. 30: **Druha Trava Performs at CSPA/ Legion Arts.** For more information go to www.legionarts.org.

OCTOBER 2009

Oct. 12: **Káva a Knihy (Coffee and Books).** Read the book and come ready to discuss *Found on 16th Avenue* by Karen Roth. Contact Patricia Hikiji at 319-294-5354 or phikiji@ncsml.org for more information. 7 p.m. Guaranty Bank on Bever Avenue SE. Free.*

Oct. 16: **BrewNost! An International Beer Tasting Event.** Savor over 30 beers from around the world paired with sweet and savory hors d'oeuvres created by corridor chefs. Silent auction, live music, and a raffle drawing for a trip to Prague. 6 – 9:30 p.m. Advance tickets - \$55, at the door - \$60. To make a reservation, contact Kelly Otto, 319-447-5533. Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, 410 Third Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids. Sponsored by Alliant Energy and CRST International, Inc.

VISITOR INFORMATION

**Lindale Mall/
NCSML at Lindale**
1st Avenue NE & Collins
Road NE, Cedar Rapids,
Iowa 52402

NCSML at Lindale Hours
Mon – Sat:
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sun: Noon – 5 p.m.

Mailing Address
4444 1st Avenue NE,
Suite 18, Cedar Rapids,
Iowa 52402

Phone/Fax
NCSML at Lindale:
319-294-5354
Fax: 319-363-2209

Administrative Offices
319-362-8500
Fax: 319-447-5540

Oct. 16 – 25: **Tom Stoppard's Play "Rock 'n' Roll" Performed by Theatre Cedar Rapids.** "Rock 'n' Roll" dramatizes the significance of this genre of music during the emergence of the democratic movement in Czechoslovakia from 1968 – 1989. The play contrasts the opinions and attitudes of a young Czech student, Jan, concerned with the oppressive communist regime in Czechoslovakia, with that of his British professor, Max, who defends the communist ideal. Ticket information at www.theatreocr.org.

Oct. 24: **Jarmila Jewelry Trunk Show.** Following a time honored tradition of glass and jewelry-making, Czech artist and designer, Jarmila, will be available to present her many new designs for 2009. Her jewelry consists of Czech glass beads, Bohemian crystals and gemstones and hand-lamped beads. All pieces uniquely designed in brass, sterling silver and other metals. Nickel free and quality guaranteed. Excellent Christmas, anniversary, birthday and "just because" gifts for you or someone special. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. NCSML at Lindale. Free.

NOVEMBER 2009

Nov. 14: **An Afternoon with Two Authors.** Karen Roth has just finished her latest book, *My Portion Forever*, a sequel to her popular *Found on 16th Avenue*. This book is set in World War II, and follows the hero through his adventures in the European Theatre. Dr. Thomas Flagel's book, *The History Buffs Guide to World War II*, provides an easy-to-read historical account of the events of this great war. Both will be present to read from and discuss their books with the public. Book signings to follow. Moderated by David Muhlena, NCSML library director. 2 p.m. NCSML at Lindale. Free.

Nov. 16: **Káva a Knihy (Coffee and Books).** Read the book and come ready to discuss *My Portion Forever* by Karen Roth. Contact Patricia Hikiji at 319-294-5354 or phikiji@ncsml.org for more information. 7 p.m. NCSML at Lindale. Free.*

Nov. 20 – 29: **Museum Store Open House.** Buy 3 ornaments from the wall display and receive 1 free ornament from the Christmas tree. No limit. Mon – Sat: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sun: Noon – 5 p.m.

Nov. 21: **Master Folk Artist Marj Nejd Personalizes Christmas Ornaments.** 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. NCSML at Lindale.

Nov. 21: **"Brundibár" Performed by Cedar Rapids Opera Theatre.** This opera, written by Hans Krása in 1938,

inspired and gave hope to the children at the concentration camp in Terezín. It remains a poignant statement of the power of creativity and the human spirit. Performances are at 1 and 3 p.m. CSPS/Legion Arts, 1103 Third Street SE, Cedar Rapids. More information at www.cr-opera.org.

Nov. 27 – 28: **Master Folk Artist Marj Nejd Personalizes Christmas Ornaments.** 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. NCSML at Lindale.

DECEMBER 2009

Dec. 5: Svatý Mikuláš Day.

Celebrate the holiday season with Svatý Mikuláš, Anđel, a Čert (Saint Nicholas, Angel, and Devil) during this annual event. Free family fun for everyone. Sponsored by Iowa Arts Council and US Bank.

10 a.m. **"The Amazing Adventures of Willy the Woolly."** Eulenspiegel Puppet Theatre Company premieres their newest production, a delightful tale of the lovable mammoths who roamed the Iowa prairies 10,000 years ago! Follow Willy the young woolly mammoth and his friend Bonny the Bunny as they overcome the dangers of sinkholes and saber tooth tigers. Performed with a cast of tabletop marionettes, rod puppets, shadow puppets, and the whimsical live music of Ron Hillis! Science Station Education Center (center court, lower level) at Lindale Mall, 4444 1st Avenue SE. Free.

Following the puppet show: **Světlušky Children's Folk Ensemble Performance.** Science Station Education Center (center court, lower level) at Lindale Mall. Free.

Dec. 12: **Cookie Walk.** 10 a.m. until they are gone. Sponsored by the NCSML Museum Guild. NCSML at Lindale. \$8 per pound.



10 a.m. – 3 p.m. **Master Folk Artist Marj Nejd Personalizes Christmas Ornaments.** NCSML at Lindale.

Noon – 4 p.m. **Holiday Make-and-Take.** Learn how to make traditional Czech and Slovak holiday decorations. NCSML at Lindale classroom. Free.

12:30 p.m. **Světlušky Children's Folk Ensemble.** NCSML at Lindale classroom. Free.

2 p.m. **Czech Heritage Singers.** NCSML at Lindale classroom. Free.

3 p.m. **Iowa Accordion Club.** NCSML at Lindale classroom. Free.

Dec. 12: **Master Folk Artist Marj Nejd Personalizes Christmas Ornaments.** 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. NCSML at Lindale.

Dec. 31: **NCSML at Lindale Closes.** New Museum Store opening in early 2010. Watch the website for details.

Note: Káva a Knihy will recess from December – March

* Sponsorship note: Sponsored by a generous gift from the United Fire Group.

Sometimes plans change. Visit www.NCSML.org for updates!

"The kind of hope I often think about (especially in situations that are particularly hopeless, such as prison) I understand above all as a **state of mind**, not a state of the world. Either we have hope within us or we don't. ... Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an **orientation of the heart**. ... Hope in this deep and powerful sense... is an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed. ... It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the **certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.**"

—Václav Havel, from his national bestseller, *Disturbing the Peace*.

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17.11.1989

A Conversation with H.E. Peter Burian, Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to the United States of America

Continued from page 1

But today, I would not dwell upon the differences which brought us to a "Velvet Divorce." What is important in my view today is that 20 years since the fall of the Iron Curtain in Central and Eastern Europe, both Slovakia and the Czech Republic are modern, democratic and prosperous countries; and both are fully integrated into trans-Atlantic and European political and security structures. I could claim that Slovaks and Czechs nowadays enjoy the best relationship they have ever had. We are equal partners.



*H.E. Peter Burian,
Ambassador*

Wilson: How did the country balance the elation of a newly forged democracy with the fear of the road ahead?

Burian: It was only natural that the expectations that came after more than 40 years of communist rule were high. In addition, they were often rather exaggerated, as if the benefits of a free-market economy and European integration would arrive almost automatically — and without any necessary reforms and related hardships. Newly achieved freedoms and basic rights brought moral dilemmas. We had to embrace them, and yet, we had to deal with the legacy of the past.

Wilson: How, as a diplomat, did you help shape the world's view of Slovakia as an emerging, independent country? How did the Velvet Revolution affect the trajectory of your career?

Burian: I have been privileged to serve my country as a diplomat since it has emerged as an independent country. I remember that our first steps were not without difficulty. Our role, as diplomats of a newly established country, was to present Slovakia as a country fully committed to the values that Europe and the whole trans-Atlantic community was built on, and to then strengthen its position on the international scene.

I am truly happy that I could contribute to this endeavor as one of the first acting heads of the embassy in Washington. I helped establish relations with the U.S. from 1993 – 1994, and also later, as Ambassador and Head of Slovak Mission to NATO in Brussels, during the time Slovakia was invited to join the Alliance. Recently, I served as the first permanent representative for Slovakia in the UN Security

Council. Throughout those years, Slovakia proved that it could contribute to not only stability and prosperity in our region, but also to global peace and security. Today, I serve as the Slovak Ambassador to the U.S. My goal is to build on the solid fundamentals established in recent years. These are, I believe, clear and tangible results and products of processes which were started by the Velvet Revolution.

Wilson: Describe the major changes you've observed during the last 20 years regarding the relations between Slovakia and the U.S.

Burian: The change has been dramatic and almost unimaginable. Just imagine that in 20 years the United States and Slovakia have gone from standing on the opposite sides of the Cold War barricade to being the closest partners and allies in NATO, the United Nations and other international organizations. Our soldiers are fighting side by side with their American partners in Afghanistan. We are working closely in the Balkans and other parts of the world on bringing security, stability and prosperity to other nations. Our presidents, government officials and high-ranking representatives meet regularly and consult on all major foreign policy issues affecting the world. I would say that Slovakia and the United States of America enjoy the highest level of relations in their history.

This Euro coin commemorating the Velvet Revolution and the fall of communism will be minted in November at the Kremnica Mint in Slovakia.



Wilson: What have been the biggest triumphs?

Burian: The obvious triumphs were the entry of Slovakia into the EU and NATO in 2004. In just fifteen years after the Velvet Revolution, which is not even a span of one generation, the country has become an equal member of the most democratic, stable and prosperous nations in the world. That is an extraordinary achievement. However, this achievement was a culmination of a long, difficult and demanding process, which necessitated complex changes in all aspects of Slovak society. The biggest triumph, in my view, was the determination with which the people of Slovakia traveled the sometimes arduous yet necessary road of reforms, in order to get to where we are today. It is this determination that will ensure our continued success. ←

Note: See next page for background article on the Velvet Revolution

Twenty Years Later...

The Velvet Revolution Revisited

By Jan Stoffer, director of operations and education

“In Poland the transition [from communism to democracy] lasted ten years, in Hungary ten months, in Czechoslovakia ten days.”

— Timothy Garton Ash

On November 17, 1989, a student-led protest that began as a legally sanctioned event to commemorate the death of Jan Opletal, a Czech student murdered by the German occupiers during World War II, turned into an outcry for democratic reforms. The non-violent march ended with riot police beating the students with night sticks. A total of 167 people were injured. The reformation fever spread.

Mass protests took place in major cities across Czechoslovakia from November

18 – 27. It was not uncommon to go to the theater, expecting to see a show, and instead become part of a politically charged discussion. The Civic Forum and the Public Against Violence (VPN), attracted members ranging from university students and staff to factory workers and employees from other institutions. Leaders of the communist regime were unprepared for the anti-communist movement.

Massive, peaceful demonstrations continued until the Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee met. The communist party leader resigned, and a new leader was elected, to give the impression that the party had reformed. Reminded of the cosmetic changes of 1968, the public was not swayed and protests continued.

Demonstrations on November 25 and 26, and the general strike on the 27, forced the prime minister to hold a series of meetings with the Civic Forum. The group presented a list of political demands, including a new coalition government and the deletion of three

constitutional articles that had guaranteed a leading role for both the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the National Front, and mandated Marxist-Leninist education. These amendments were unanimously approved by the communist parliament on November 29, 1989. Shortly thereafter, a new government was formed that included nine members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, two members of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, two members of the Czechoslovak People’s Party, and seven ministers with no party affiliation — all of whom were Civic Forum or VPN activists. President Gustav Husak resigned on December 10. Nine days later, a joint session of the two houses of the Federal Assembly met to elect Alexandr Dubček as the speaker of the federal assembly. One day later, parliament elected Václav Havel as president of Czechoslovakia. The first free elections were planned, and on July 5, 1990, Václav Havel was re-elected as the Czechoslovak president. ←



A memorial plaque hanging in the arcade of a building on Prague’s National Avenue honors the events of November 17. The “V for Victory” gesture was deeply symbolic of the time, as was the jingling of keys. En masse, the peacefully defiant clangor insisted the door of communism be closed and locked, and the entrance to democracy flung wide open.

Seize the Day

Ludek Sequens describes his revolutionary decision

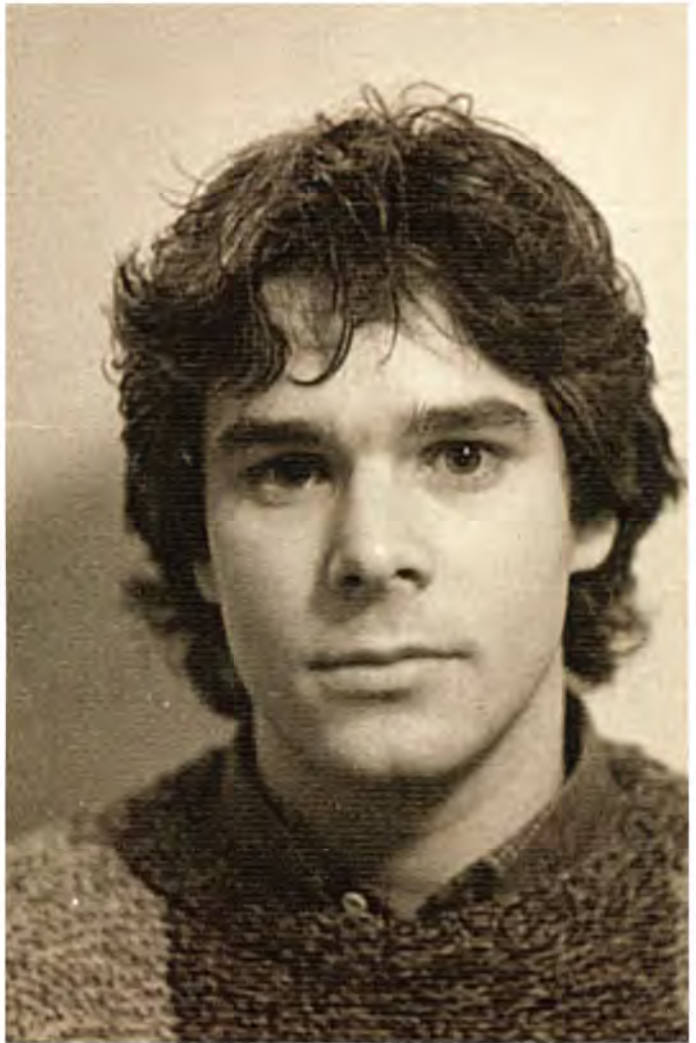
Narration by Leah Wilson

“The police knew everything about you. They knew your girl, they knew your parents...and they knew at what time you boarded the train to school, what you were studying, what you hoped to be. They pervaded and controlled every part of your life. And if you openly questioned the communist regime, or if you jeopardized the status quo, they threatened to take away what you loved most.”

Ludek Sequens was 22 the year the Velvet Revolution toppled communism. He described himself as a normal boy, not the radical kind. He didn't have a political background, but as a student at Comenius Theological University in Prague, he could not be oblivious to the changing political atmosphere. Even as some professors hushed their students and warned them not to participate in the anti-communist movement, the energy of revolution was inescapable.

“This was the time of the students. We didn't know anything about politics, but we knew we wanted freedom. We were very afraid of the consequences. But, we had to decide what to do. We had to decide what we were fighting for and what price we were ready to pay.”

By November, the scattered anti-communist activities coalesced to form a movement. People whose hopes for democracy had been trampled by the Soviet invasion in 1968 could now see the vitality of the



Ludek Sequens, Fall of 1989.

communist party beginning to wither. They realized that they had an opportunity to change history. Shortly after the protest on November 17, Ludek and his fellow students congregated in a small room on the university campus.

“It was crowded and everyone could feel the tension. You could cut it with a knife. Again, we confronted this basic, yet terrifying question, ‘Do we help overthrow the regime?’ Leaders of underground resistance groups urged the group to volunteer for the cause. Principally, they needed messengers. I raised my hand and said, ‘I’m here to do something. I will help.’ After that night, there was only work — hiding in the streets, running in the

night, delivering letters. It was hard work, and there were no heroes, no way to know if we were making a difference; but we kept on going because we knew there would be no future for us if the revolution failed.

“More than anything else, I wanted to keep my life in my hands. Even now, I believe I will always have to struggle for that right. But it is worth it.” ←

Ludek Sequens is an entrepreneur living in Nové Hamry, a small village nestled in the Ore Mountains of the Czech Republic.

Sponsorship Opportunities for Kosek Project

Is there someone in your circle of family and friends that you would like to honor or memorialize? If so, please consider making a donation that will support the NCSML's Kosek building project. In recognition of your gift, naming opportunities are available for a room or a portion of the exhibition entitled, *Rising Above: The Story of a People and the Flood*. The room or exhibit section you sponsor will have a plaque acknowledging your gift. In addition, your name will be listed on the donor wall near the exhibition. Naming opportunities begin at the \$5,000 level.

For more information, please contact Jason Wright, vice president for development, at 319-447-5534 or jwright@ncsml.org.



Did you know that NCSML volunteers worked over 9,868 hours last year? That generous contribution of time has a monetary value of a whopping \$158,875, according to the Independent Sector, a coalition working to strengthen America's nonprofit organizations. Far more significant are the ways that each and every volunteer helps us to passionately deliver our mission. Please consider joining our volunteer team — contact Patricia Hikiji at 319-294-5354 or phikiji@ncsml.org.

Become a Member Today!

When you become a member of the NCSML, you join about 2000 other households, businesses and Czech & Slovak affiliate organizations around the world who share your interest in the preservation and interpretation of Czech & Slovak history and culture.

All members enjoy:

- A subscription to *Slovo*, our award-winning, biannual journal
- A subscription to our newsletter, *MOST*
- Admission to more than 100 museums in 42 states by free enrollment in the *Time Travelers Program*.
- Reciprocal admission to the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art through June, 2010, and to both the History Center & Iowa Children's Museum while NCSML is not in its permanent building.
- A Museum Store discount

Choose a membership that's right for you! Use the enclosed remittance envelope or contact Kelly Otto, director of membership and special events, at 319-447-5533 or e-mail kotto@NCSML.org.

Report on Public Input Process: Survey Findings

By Lynn Manternach, PhD

Summary

This survey was much more complex and challenging than most surveys. It required the respondents to read and process a fair amount of information before answering the questions. There were a number of open-ended questions that were answered thoughtfully by respondents. It is clear by the quality of the responses and the response rate that NCSML stakeholders are very engaged with the organization, and care deeply about the decisions that need to be made.

Respondents

Survey respondents live all over the United States, with a handful of respondents from outside the country. Four out of 10 respondents live in the Cedar Rapids area, while six out of 10 live outside of the local area.

For the most part, there were no differences between local and non-local respondents, with one significant exception. Those who live in the Cedar Rapids area were much more likely to support an option that uses the existing building than those who live outside the Cedar Rapids area.

The demographic profile of respondents skewed older — 55% of the respondents were age 65 or older.

Opportunities and Challenges

Respondents see this as an opportunity to make the NCSML even better than before. It is a chance to rebuild with the benefit of experience, to build smarter and better than before. Respondents also see this as an opportunity to move forward with the expansion plans that were in place before the flood.

Respondents are most concerned about the financial aspects of this situation. The current economy worries them as they consider the fundraising needs.

The Existing Building

More than half of the respondents indicated they would like to see the existing building repurposed for NCSML programs, events and rentals. There was not much support for leasing or selling the building for another purpose, and even less support for removing the existing building.

The Rebuilding Options

Of the three options presented, there was no dominant winner. The two top options were option 3 — build a new building and have everything contained under one roof, and option 1 — to use the existing building with a flood-protected addition. There was less support for option 2 — using the existing building plus a new building in another location.

Priorities

The top priorities for respondents are to keep the building and its contents safe from future floods, and to be able to pay for the annual operation after it opens.

Visit www.NCSML.org for full report. ←

Fashion Jewelry Trunk Showing



Saturday, October 24
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.



Czech artist and jewelry designer, Jarmila, is coming to NCSML at Lindale to present her new fall designs for 2009. Bohemian crystals and gemstones, hand-lamped beads and creative designs make every piece one-of-a-kind. Come meet this famed designer and take home a wearable work of art that is uniquely you!

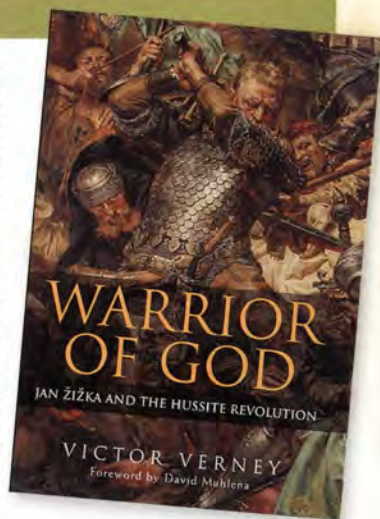
New book tells the story of Czech military hero

By David Muhlena, library director

One of the most satisfying aspects of my job as librarian has been to assist students, scholars and authors with their research projects. So, when one of our researchers, Vic Verney, was looking for new material to write about for a military history magazine, I suggested Jan Žižka, the medieval Czech military genius who led the Hussite revolution, the first of the religious wars during the Protestant Reformation.

Verney quickly realized the story of Žižka and the

movement he helped defend was too far-reaching to be confined to an article. "This is surely one of the most incredible — and woefully neglected — episodes of European history, one with profound religious and political effects we're still feeling today," states Verney. He revamped his article as a book proposal, which was accepted by Frontline Books, a British publisher specializing in military history. Verney spent the next 18 months researching and writing the book, appropriately titled *Warrior of God: Jan Žižka and the Hussite Revolution*. He asked me to write the foreword to his book, which I was pleased to do.



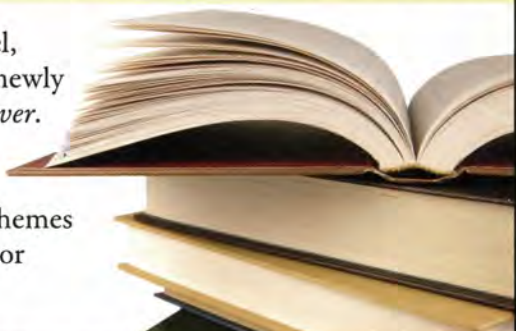
More information about the book can be found at <http://verney.us>.

Vic Verney is an independent writer living in Des Moines, Iowa.

Two Authors! November 14 • 2 p.m. • NCSML at Lindale

Karen Roth, author of the acclaimed novel, *Found on 16th Avenue*, will read from her newly published sequel entitled, *My Portion Forever*.

Dr. Thomas Flagel, recently published *The History Buff's Guide to World War II*, and will be on hand to discuss the major themes of the book and share an excerpt. An author signing and reception follows.



Lindale Mall/NCSML at Lindale
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Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

NCSML at Lindale Hours
Mon – Sat: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sun: Noon – 5 p.m.

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