



## HOUBY DAYS 2011



CZECH HERITAGE FOUNDATION, INC.

Summer 2011



## Editor

Karen Lehmann

## Subscriptions

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. Dues received today apply to the following year for new members.

## Website

The Czech Heritage Foundation's newly updated website is something you have to see. Visit [www.czech-heritagefoundation.org](http://www.czech-heritagefoundation.org) anytime for all things Czech.

## How Can I Become Involved in CHF?

Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm in the Kosek Building, lower level. Anyone interested in promoting our Czech Culture is welcome!



## President's Message



Lud Svoboda  
CHF President

What we all need to survive in this day and age is enthusiasm. Why do we need enthusiasm? Enthusiasm seems to be the driving force in each one of us, that gives us the gumption to accomplish an act or to complete a project from start to finish.

As we lay on the nice green lawn staring at the sky and dreaming of the projects or goals we expect to achieve, we can vividly see each enthusiastic dream we wish to accomplish in our lifetime. Something small like cruising down "The Avenue" in a brand new convertible, possibly even with a blonde in the seat next to you.

Wouldn't that be nice dream to pursue? However, you won't accomplish much by lying there and visualizing. You have to buy that car and then you have to court that blonde . . . and that may be harder than buying the car!

So much for dreaming about a convertible and a blonde. Let's say you want to build a float for a parade. I'll bet as you prepare for this venture you visualize what that float is going to look like and all the parts you must collect to make it happen. Then you must go out and "court" that float so it will look pretty and appealing to the judge and the public. That's the way we win trophies and ribbons.

A dance teacher sees herself with a group of young people, who when neatly assembled and instructed, bring joy to the people watching them. She must lineup the youngsters, outfit them to catch the eye of the public, lineup the music, and dance. She must practice, practice, practice.

If she is leading a group of seniors to sing in a language that they are not familiar with, she must line up the music and be prepared to translate and polish up those voices. She must find some music that she thinks they would be interested in singing. Again, she must practice, practice, practice.

Then there are dreamers. They sit in a corner and dream of catching that big fish, however they never make an attempt to buy a pole to "court" those fish to bite on that hook. I have had several people come to me and say, "You know, I thought of that! How did it work?" If you thought of it why didn't you speak up a year ago when we could have used that idea? Then there are those that throw cold water on everything that is not their idea. Equipment is bought and never used, ideas brought up and never acted on, interested people never asked to help, and on and on.

Another way we must keep the enthusiasm up is by preserving the fading treasure of our Czech language. I know that is not something that is required, however it is appreciated by visiting people to our area. I've been in the museum store when vacationers stop and one of the things they always ask the tour guide is, "Do you speak Czech?"

I have a dream that someday the Czech Heritage Foundation along with the Czech Village Association will be the center of the Czech Community of the great state of Iowa. We have the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and a good core of people of Czech ancestry.



# Worldwide Fundraising Nets \$25 Million to Begin Anew

*National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library  
Overcomes Disaster, Moves and Rebuilds*



The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, NCSML, is pictured July 14, 2011. It has moved 480 feet, pivoted 90 degrees, and is in the process of being elevated 12 feet on to the new foundation/parking garage.

## 30,000 sq. ft. to be added

The new 50,000-square-foot museum and library will feature:

1. A permanent exhibition doubled in size, covering the dramatic immigration story of Czech- and Slovak-Americans.
2. A 5,500-square-foot library and archives that will encompass genealogy services, oral histories, and research.
3. Multi-purpose public and educational programming space that hold 400 for programs and 250 at tables.
4. Three galleries for permanent and temporary exhibitions.
5. A 55-seat theatre for films, lectures, and programs.
6. Outdoor amphitheater for heritage, musical, and theatrical programs.
7. Collections, original artwork and artifacts on display throughout the building.
8. Protection from future flooding; the museum will be elevated three feet above the 2008 flood level.
9. A terrace with view of the river and downtown skyline.
10. Underground parking for 65 vehicles.
11. LEED certified energy efficient design.

## Diary of “The Move”

June 8, 2011 - The 17,000 sq. ft museum began it's move of 480 ft. at a speed of roughly 50 ft. per hour.

June 13, 2011 - Rainy weather delayed the pivot of the museum. Progress continued once the road was dry and graded.

June 18, 2011 - The historic 90 degree pivot was completed. It needed to move 100 more feet to be parallel and centered with the new foundation/parking garage.

June 21, 2011 - Around 7:30 p.m., the building rolled the final 70 feet to complete its journey to a new location.

July 09, 2011 - This phase, which will take six to eight weeks to complete, involves removing the 40 dollies, inserting roller beams and elevating the building about 12 feet. Then the building will slide on top of the new foundation/parking garage.

\*The new and expanded NCSML is scheduled to open midsummer 2012.



# Czech Youth Out & About



Czech royalty participated in the Cedar Rapids Freedom Festival Parade on June 25, 2011. The float, designed by Leonard Pfeifer (pictured), won first place in the parade. Pictured back row: Marissa Cada, Middle row: Elijah Wolter and Megan Lehmann. Front row: Cassie Lehmann.



Světlušky, the Czech Folk Music & Dance Group has been busy performing this summer. They have appeared at the Iowa City Library, Lovely Lane Day care, and the Ely Library. On Aug. 7, they will perform at the "75th CSA Get-together" in Cedar Rapids. Pictured front row l-r: Caitlyn Hoffman, Sarah Schirm, Makayla Langhurst, Charity Barker, Elijah Barker, Micah Van Deusen, Hannah Van Deusen, Megan Lehmann. Back row l-r: Cassie Lehmann, Morgan Simoneau, Henry Fefjar, Michael Simoneau, Jack Fefjar.



Czech School teachers and students toured the Czech National Cemetery on July 7, 2011. Czech School runs for five weeks every summer at Wilson School, Cedar Rapids.



# Czech Singers Celebrate Founder Olga Drahozal's 84th Birthday

by Donna Merkle

On Monday afternoon, June 27, 2011, a bright and sunny day, the Czech Heritage Singers from Cedar Rapids met at the Solon Care Center to sing for resident Olga Drahozal. It was a special opportunity for us to pay tribute to the group's founder and to honor her on the occasion of her 84th birthday.

Olga Drahozal founded the Czech Heritage Singers in the fall of 1986 in order to perpetuate old Czech popular music and, through it, the language, history, and culture of the Czech people – and, simply, for the enjoyment we get from singing our songs. Olga served as director and accompanist until 2008 when health issues forced her to retire. Donna Merkle now accompanies the singers.

Our repertoire consists mainly of old Czech folk songs and brass band dance songs (polka, waltz, tango), songs that were popular with the Czechs who immigrated to this area during the first half of the 1900s. Sometimes we sing English translations of the Czech songs, and sometimes we sing Czech translations of well-known English songs. Our Christmas repertoire consists of ancient Czech car-

ols, most with English translations, as well as popular English carols and songs.

Our membership has ranged from a charter group of 15 to a peak of 30, and now has settled to a basic corps of 12. Most (not all) have been, and are, of Czech and Slovak ancestry, although this is not a requirement. New singers of any ethnic background are welcome at any time. If you are interested in learning the Czech language, this is a fun and easy way to do it.

Olga's birthday celebration actually began on Saturday, June 25th, when the Solon Care Center celebrated the birthdays of all the June residents. Olga informed us that she stepped aside in order to allow "Greta Garbo" to attend in her place. Apparently, both ladies enjoyed that day immensely.

The singers were honored and privileged to perform for Olga a set of Czech songs that were actually arranged or created by Olga herself. It was an experience that was both stimulating and humbling at the same time. To you, dear Olga, the Czech Heritage Singers say "Všechno nejlepší k narozeninám!" (Happy Birthday!) and "Děkujeme mnohokrát" (Thank you very much.)



Olga Drahozal, the founder of Czech Heritage Singers, dressed up as "Greta Garbo" for her 84th birthday.



The Czech Heritage Singers performed for their group's founder, Olga Drahozal, on her 84th birthday June 27, 2011 at the Solon Care Center. Pictured standing, l-r: Bernie Drahozal, Mike Papich, Fran Whitters, John Kostle, Donna Merkle, Patty Yilek. Sitting, l-r: Helen Quass, Marie Cada (94 years old), Milly Ortner, Olga Drahozal. Not pictured: Betty Gallagher, Annie Klobec, Marj Nejd, Lud Svoboda, and Lenora Watson.



# HOUBY DAYS

## May 14 & 15, 2011



Czech royalty kick-off Houby Days 2011.



Dancing around the maypole.



Lace-making demonstrations in Kuncel Mall.



The Domáci Czech Folk Dancers from New Prague and Montgomery, Minnesota performed. The group is directed by Arnie and Deb Ziskovsky.



Sokol Gymnastics performed.



Pony rides on "The Avenue."



Carnival rides.



# Czech Park & Dance Hall to be Restored

*ZCBJ Park Gets \$40,000 in FEMA Grant Money, Seeks Donations Also*

by Karen Lehmann

A once popular park that Czechs loved to frequent since the 1940s, ZCBJ Park, is being revitalized thanks to grant money and the work of Bob Wolff and others of Cedar Rapids.

ZCBJ, Západní Česko-Bratrská Jednota, (Western Bohemian Fraternal Association) was a Czech insurance company established in the early 1900s to provide insurance to the Czech community. The company is now called Western Fraternal Life Association. The original office was located in what is now the Chrome Horse Saloon building on 3rd St. Upstairs was the ZCBJ Dance Hall in what is now 3rd St. Live.

ZCBJ believed in providing its members recreational perks. The upstairs dance hall was used in the winter for weddings, birthdays and other Czech celebrations. In 1939, ZCBJ Park was purchased as a summer-time member perk. Located six miles southwest of Cedar Rapids, on Old River Road, the park offered about 12 privately owned cottages and a Dance Hall, "Dvorana", with stage for all members to enjoy.

"On Sundays after church, members would go to ZCBJ Park. The women would cook lunch and the men would drink beer and play horseshoes," said Wolff. "In fact, music and dancing went on late into the night."

In 2002, Wolff's company, Wildwood LLC, bought the 12 acre park. They managed it and leased it out to the public. In 2008, however, the

flood partially destroyed Dvorana Hall washing away the stage and rest rooms. Six of the eight cottages on the property were also destroyed.

"We are working to have the Dvorana Hall building and park put on the Register of National Historical Places. Once that's approved, we hope to apply for more grant money. So far, FEMA has given us \$40,000 in grant money to 'rehabilitate' the dance hall," said Wolff. The privately owned cottages are being restored at each owner's expense.

When completed, Dvorana Hall will measure 26'x26' with 18'x14' vestibules on each corner. It will be an old-style pole barn building with

a vaulted ceiling. It will include plumbing and electricity plus a full kitchen with flip-up windows for serving food, similar to those in the old Roundhouse Building.

Once completed, the park will remain private, but the Dvorana Hall will be open to the public for rent.

The \$40,000 FEMA grant will not cover all the expenses of restoring Dvorana Hall. Wolff said he hopes to raise an additional \$150,000 through donations to finish the project.

"The eight of us who comprise Wildwood LLC are doing this to preserve a Czech landmark. Any money we get from renting it out will go towards the upkeep and taxes."



The original 1939 Dvorana (Dance) Hall at the former ZCBJ Park along Old River Road was damaged in the 2008 flood. Wildwood LLC is restoring the once popular Czech dance hall through grants and donations. The Dvorana Hall had a rich history among Czechs as a popular place to picnic, dance, play outdoor bowling, play horseshoes and enjoy the summer.

## How Can I Help Restore Dvorana Hall?

If you have photos or stories about ZCBJ Park and Dvorana Hall, this will help get it on the Historical Register and thus be eligible for more grant money. Please contact Bob Wolff with any information or photos you have at:

or Phone:



# Meet the 2 Miss Czech-Slovak Iowas



Samantha Hubler, Iowa's 2011 Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa will represent Iowa in the Miss Czech-Slovak U.S. Pageant in Wilber, Nebraska Aug. 5-7, 2011.

by *Samantha Hubler*

The past year has been an exciting year for me. I went to the Czech Republic last summer and studied at Charles University. My two friends and I were in Prague for a month and then backpacked for a week. We went many places while we were in Europe including Berlin, Dublin, Munich, Paris, London, and many places throughout the Czech Republic.

In the fall I student taught in Cedar Rapids and graduated a semester early in December. As fortunate as I was, I was offered two teaching positions both to teach kindergarten through fifth grade English Language Learners (ELL). I currently teach at Cleveland Elementary in Cedar Rapids and love it! I have students who are from about ten different countries and speak many different languages. Teaching is truly my passion.

I have been taking dance classes to help me prepare for Wilber. My talent is a polka with other dance elements as well. I have also been able to share about my experience in Prague with many different groups of people and have met many more Czechs and Slovaks in the area.



Marissa Cada was newly crowned Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa 2012 at Houby Days 2011. She will represent Iowa in the Miss Czech-Slovak U.S. Pageant in Wilber, Nebraska Aug. 6-8, 2012.

by *Marissa Cada*

Dobrý den! I am very honored to be representing Iowa for the Czech Heritage Foundation. I have served as one of the first "Little Sisters" and in 2010 as Czech Princess.

The past several years have given me many opportunities to immerse myself into Czech activities in our local community. I have attended the Minnesota Pageant, the Masopust Festival in Protovin, Iowa and I have modeled my kroj in several events. I attended Czech School and my family was the host to a teacher from the Czech Republic (she also happened to be my relative!), so I had the opportunity to assist her in the classroom.

One of my favorite events was demonstrating my Czech Sugar Cookie recipe for Babi's Kitchen through the Czech-Slovak Museum and Library, and repeating that performance as my talent for the Czech Heritage Foundation's Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa Pageant during the Houby Days Festival this last May.

Děkuji že jste mi dala tuhle příležitost (Thank you for giving me this opportunity!)



# Meet the New “Little Sisters”

Miss Czech-Slovak Iowa has a court of “Little Sisters” who accompany her.  
Meet the newly crowned 2011-12 “Little Sisters.”



**Cassandra Lehmann**  
*Parents Steve & Karen Lehmann*

*by Cassandra Lehmann*

My name is Cassie Lehmann and I am 10 years old. This is my second year being a “Little Sister.” I have three older sisters: Rachel, Emma, and Megan.

I like many things including cats, gym activities, softball, playing outside, traveling to different states, and visiting water parks. Doesn't everybody have a collection? Mine is collecting bouncy balls.

I'm also involved in softball through Hiawatha Kids League, Girl Scouts at my school, and I also do intramurals at my school. I dance at CR Spirits and I also do dancing, singing, and playing the accordion in a group called Světlušky.

I'm interested in sports, mostly softball. My favorite author is Mary Downing Hahn, she writes fantastic ghost stories. I like spending time with family and friends. I'm also interested in making cool, funky papers on Microsoft Word.



**Sydney Rieckhoff**  
*Parents Bill & Robyn Rieckhoff*

*by Sydney Rieckhoff*

My name is Sydney Rieckhoff and I am a 13-year-old “Little Sister” who enjoys volleyball, track, swimming, tennis, mock trial, math, reading, writing, hanging out with friends and family, and helping out around the community.

I was a kid reporter for Scholastic news during the 2008-2009 school year and had the chance to interview most of the 2008 presidential candidates, including Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton (as well as Bill & Chelsea Clinton), Fred Thompson, John Edwards, and more. I also got to interview Taylor Swift at her concert in downtown Cedar Rapids where Taylor donated \$100,000 to victims of the 2008 flood.

When I grow up, I hope to be either a reporter, entrepreneur, or a pediatrician.

I'm excited to be involved in many Czech activities throughout my time serving as a “Little Sister” and I hope to eventually be voted queen, when I'm old enough.



**Emily NejdI**  
*Parents Phil & Michelle NejdI*

*by Emily NejdI*

My name is Emily and I'm 12 years old. I have two brothers. My younger brother is ten years old. His name is Tom. My older brother, Scott, is 25 years old. He is married and has three kids.

We have two dogs. One is a mix breed named Lucky Bear and the other one is a beagle named Copper.

Some of my hobbies are reading, riding my bike, decorating eggs with my Babi, going camping and swimming and I really like making crafts. I like to play sports including: basketball, softball, and soccer. I also enjoy going to the Sv. Mikuláše Day Parade and I love going to Houby Days.

My interests are history and teaching. I really like history. When I grow up I want to be a historian and travel to historical sites and study artifacts and try to discover new things. Then I want to teach what I've learned to people. That's basically me!



# CHF Awards Three \$750 Scholarships



Laura Sauer  
University of Iowa

by Lee Thornbloom

Laura is working towards a degree in history and secondary social studies education with minors in Spanish and geography at the University of Iowa.

In the summer of 2007 Laura had the amazing opportunity to spend a month living in the Czech Republic with a wonderful host family as a student ambassador and in turn had the opportunity to co-host her host sister thanks to the Czech Heritage Foundation Homestay Program.

During the summers of 2009 and 2010 Laura traveled to China twice for mission work, teaching English at the Huzhong University of Science and Technology.

This summer Laura is participating in the JAX Summer Training Program in Jacksonville, FL, for two months through the Navigators organization as a team leader. She is leading and mentoring a group of fellow college-age women.

One of Laura's recommendations mentioned three qualities that stand out most about Laura: her love for people, her enjoyment of traveling, and her ability to lead and influence others.



Andrew Frerick  
Grinnell College

by Lee Thornbloom

Andrew has finished his first year at Grinnell College and plans on double majoring in Math and Economics. He plans to attend graduate school after Grinnell.

While in high school, Andrew was involved in his school's football program, won multiple awards, was a National Honor Society student, and was highly active with the peer helper program where he worked with kids with mental disabilities.

His family hosted a young man from the Czech Republic in the summer of 2007 through the CHF Homestay Program.

The CHF Scholarship Committee was impressed with Andrew's ability to maintain an excellent grade point average given the difficulty of his courses. One of his recommendations stated that Andrew is highly intelligent with good analytical skills and a good ability to understand applications of concepts. He has good communication skills and has demonstrated good team-working skills in group activities and tends to help others in understanding assignments.



Leah Podzimek  
Wartburg College

by Lee Thornbloom

Leah will be a senior at Wartburg this fall and will be receiving a Bachelors of Music degree in Vocal Performance. The course of study is extremely rigorous and doesn't allow much free time. She ultimately wants to end up performing in opera houses around the country and the world. When she retires, she hopes to work in the business sector of the opera world.

Leah has received many awards, honors, and held offices - almost all related to Marching Band, Music, and Drama Club while in high school and continues in this field in college. She is on the Dean's List.

Reading books and performing music from her Czech heritage is of great interest to Leah. She even performed a Dvořák piece at her recital last fall.

One of her professors noted that Leah is a very talented singer and a clear stand-out. She is a bright young woman with a very mature, vibrant soprano voice, and has an excellent sense of pitch, rhythm, and musical interpretation that ranks her beyond her peers.



## Czech & Slovak Flags added to Airport

The Czech Republic and Slovak flags are now hanging in the Eastern Iowa Airport on the concourse level.

“We get requests to display flags from various countries but we limit it to countries that do business in Iowa,” said Pam Hinman, Director of Marketing and Communication at the Eastern Iowa Airport. “We added the Czech Republic and Slovak flags because we have many Czech dignitaries visiting the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and Cedar Rapids has a strong Czech heritage. It just made sense.”



Slovak and Czech Republic flags (front left and front right) now hang in the Eastern Iowa Airport.

## Wilber, NE Czech Days Aug. 5-7

The 50th Annual Czech Days in Wilber, NE, will be held Aug. 5-7, 2011. Events include the Miss Czech-Slovak U.S. Pageant Aug. 7, 7:00 pm. CHF is sponsoring Samantha Hubler as the Iowa contestant.

## CHF Picnic Aug. 9

The Czech Heritage Foundation invites you to their next meeting which will be a picnic Tuesday, Aug. 9, 6:00 pm, Park View Pavilion at Jones Park. Bring a dish to pass. Hope to see you there!

## Protovin Czech Days Aug. 19-21

The 33rd Annual Czech Days in Protovin, Iowa will be held Aug. 19-21, 2011. Events include food and beer tents, kolaches, music, polka mass, bingo, cake walk, crafts, softball, basketball, volleyball, dances, and lots of fun! For more information go to [www.protovin.org](http://www.protovin.org).

## Ely Polka Fest Aug. 21

St. John's Lutheran Church in Ely will host Polka Fest on Sunday, Aug. 21. Fellowship is at 9:15 a.m., Polka Fest is from 10:30-3:00. The church is located at 1420 Walker St., Ely. For more information call 848-4510.

## New Bo Arts Fest Sept. 3 & 4

New Bo Arts Fest will be Sept. 3 & 4 in the New Bo District located at 3rd St. & 12th Ave SE in Cedar Rapids. The festival showcases local artists and musicians. For more information go to [www.newbofest.com](http://www.newbofest.com).

## Czech Village Fall Festival Sept. 24 & 25

The Fall Festival in the Czech Village will be Sept. 24 & 25. Events include a pancake breakfast, arts and crafts vendors, hay rack rides, jugglers, face-painting, games and crafts, 9 hole Czech mini golf course, pumpkin carving contest, fall crafts workshop, guided tours on a trolley, polka street dance, and much more.



## Babi's Kitchen Class Oct. 8

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library presents Cooking in Babi's Kitchen with a program that teaches home cooks how to incorporate sauerkraut into some soon-to-be family favorites.

Bring a friend and join us in the lower level of St. Ludmila's Catholic Church from 10 – noon. There is no cost.

## UI Homecoming Parade Oct. 21

“Czech” out the CHF Royalty during the 2011 University of Iowa Homecoming Parade Friday, Oct. 21, 2011. Parade begins at 3:45 pm in downtown Iowa City.



Czech Heritage Foundation, Inc.  
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2011 CHF Royalty: Hannah Van Deusen, Elijah Wolter, Megan Lehmann.

## “How can I become the 2012 Czech Prince, Princess, or in the Royal Court?”

To apply, please send the following:

1. Application (below)
2. One page essay about yourself
3. Photo to:

or

Karen Lehmann,

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Applicants must be 14-16 years old and of Czech or Slovak descent. Applications must be received by Nov. 1, 2011.