

OUR CZECH HERITAGE
Náše České Dědictví

Šťastný

Nový

Rok!

Happy New Year!

Winter 2013

Editor

Karen Lehmann

Memberships

Subscriptions for *Our Czech Heritage* are not sold. Members of the Czech Heritage Foundation receive the newsletter free of charge. Contributions may be sent anytime. Annual dues are \$10.00 and renewable on January 1 of each year and expire on December 31.

Website

www.czechheritagefoundation.com

Got news?

Contact Karen Lehmann at:

CHF 2013 Officers

President - Frank Edmunds
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Šbřinky Costume Ball Feb. 9

Sokol Cedar Rapids invites the public to join in the spirit of an old Czech tradition, Šbřinky, Saturday, February 9 from 7-10 pm at St. Wenceslaus Church Glovik Parish Center, 1224 5th St. SE, Cedar Rapids.

A \$5 donation is requested at the door. All proceeds go towards the remodeling of Sokol Cedar Rapids which relocated to 5200 18th Ave SW, Cedar Rapids, after the 2008 flood.

See back cover for details.

Holiday Wreath Raffle A Success - Again!



32 beautiful Christmas wreaths and swags were donated and raffled off at the Old Prague Christmas Market held at NCSML November 30 - December 1, 2012. Money raised benefited CHF Youth Programs.

Photo by Barbara Edmunds

The Czech Heritage Foundation worked with the National Czech Museum & Library to be a part of their third annual "Old Prague Christmas Market" in CzechVillage on November 30 and December 1, 2012.

Czech Heritage Foundation sponsored a Holiday Wreath Raffle again this year as a fundraiser for the Foundation's Youth Programs.

We received 32 beautiful wreaths and 11 swags. There were artificial ones, live evergreen, small, large ones each with a great theme. Each wreath had a different story to tell, making it hard to choose a favorite. The swags were a new and welcome addition to our project this year. They were made by children that are in the group called KIDIZENS sponsored by John and Sandra Hanson from Iowa City.

Several people remembered last

year's event in the tent and all the rain we had. Many thanks to the NCSML for having us be a part of your Old Prague Market and allowing us to be in a great location.

We are so proud to announce that we made \$610.00 during these 2 days. Many thanks to all who made the wonderful wreaths and swags, worked the event and supported us in any way.

We have talked to many people including the winners of these beautiful wreaths and everyone hopes that this event will take place next Christmas season. Some are even planning their wreath design for their next wreath.

The wreaths that received the most tickets were: Czech Heritage Foundation made by Suzanne Charper, Wreath donated by Betsy McCalley, CSA Lodge Jr. American Czechs, and WFLA Lodge #400 Swisher.

BARBARA & FRANK EDMUNDS

Czech Heritage Foundation Presents

St. Joseph's Day Dance 2013

March 10

2-6 pm

ADMISSION \$8

Pondorosa Ballroom

195 1st Street South
in the heart of Walford, IA.

Featuring

Barefoot Becky & the Ivanhoe Dutchmen



Door Prizes, Raffle, & Bake Sale!

Czech Math Professor

Love of mathematics and volleyball leads Prague native to C.R.

At 20, Jitka Stehnova knew her life was about to change in a big way.

The child of professional volleyball athletes Anna Stehnova and Stanislav Stehno of Prague, Czech Republic, she started playing volleyball when she was six, and years later moved on to playing for club teams in Europe. Stehnova was first recruited by the University of Massachusetts on a volleyball scholarship in 2001.

The following year, at age 21, Stehnova was recruited to play volleyball at the University of Iowa. The full athletic scholarship was a dream come true in the sense of being able to play a high level of volleyball while pursuing an academic degree. This combination is not an option in Europe where universities are purely academic and high level sports are domains of professional sports clubs.

"I knew Big Ten was second best, if not the best, conference for volleyball in the U.S. Also, the former Iowa volleyball coach, Rita Buck-Crockett, was a world known volleyball player," recalled Stehnova.

UI was the springboard opportunity for Stehnova to pursue her two lifelong dreams: be a professional volleyball player and earn a doctorate in mathematics. Throughout her career as a student athlete at UI, she pursued an undergraduate mathematics degree and maintained an "A" average. A injury in 2003 put her volleyball career on hold, but Stehnova went on to earn her PhD in mathematics from UI in 2008.

"People say I get my work ethic from my parents," says Stehnova. Her mother, a retired Assistant Professor at Charles University holds an MS degree in Education.

Her father, who is chair of the Department of Physical Education for Faculty of Mathematics and Physics at Charles University and head coach of the men's volleyball team in Prague, holds a PhD in Education.

Her older brother, Martin, has studied at the University of Economics in Prague and is currently working as a very successful IT specialist.

"It has been very difficult at times to combine completely opposite aspects of my life into a successful academic and athletic career however both mathematics and volleyball have brought many incredible opportunities into my life. I have been deeply honored to meet some of the most amazing people in both worlds," said Stehnova.

In 2008 Stehnova accepted a post doctorate position with Oklahoma State University where she says she enjoyed pursuing both mathematic and volleyball aspirations.

"I was honored to be offered an opportunity to work with some outstanding mathematicians at the OSU. On the side,



Dr. Jitka Stehnova, Assistant Professor of Mathematics at Mount Mercy University.

I continued to train and to improve as a beach volleyball player taking advantage of year long pleasant weather conditions in Oklahoma."

In the fall of 2009 Stehnova accepted a tenure track position at Mount Mercy University in Cedar Rapids where she currently works as an Assistant Professor of mathematics.

With her career established in Cedar Rapids, Stehnova jokes that she's usually too busy to get homesick. Nonetheless, she tries to get back to the Czech Republic once or twice a year,

"I am the only one from my family who lives on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. Like any other person, there are times I get homesick and those times usually come around major holidays, birthdays, or anniversaries. However, with technology, it is much easier to connect with people back home and I do not feel like I am missing out on much of their lives."

KAREN LEHMANN

Wedding Story

First wedding in new museum

The desire for a unique wedding venue led a Cedar Rapids couple to be the first married in the newly renovated and expanded National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library on October 13, 2012.

Travis Merta and Amanda Boeding along with their parents Darrell and Norma Merta, Kristi Maiers and Eric Flatjord, and Stephen and Sherry Boeding and 175 guests enjoyed celebrating a Czech-themed wedding day at the museum.

Travis and Amanda said they chose NCSML because of its uniqueness and because they both come from Czech backgrounds.

Amanda's grandma, JoAnn Kosnar Shannon (Caslavka), had come to the museum for years before it was flooded to get Christmas ornaments.

"She has given many Czech ornaments to our family as gifts over the years. We even do the pickle on the tree tradition!" said Amanda.

Amanda added that growing up Travis always referred to his grandparents, Betty Merta and the late Marvin Merta, as *babi* and *deda*.

Since they began dating, Amanda and Travis also enjoyed the nightlife and restaurants in Czech Village so it was fitting to get married in that area.

Three months after the July 2012 museum grand re-opening Travis and Amanda exchanged vows under the iconic crystal chandelier in Rozek Grand Hall. Unharmed by the 2008 flood, the sparkling 400 pound Czech crystal chandelier has

more than 1,000 crystals and 48 bulbs.

They were able to have two great atmospheres at their wedding. They utilized the Rozek Grand Hall for the ceremony and cocktail hour. The WFLA Hall was used for the reception, dinner, and dance. Travis and Amanda had a slideshow throughout the night and their guests could tour the museum during cocktail hour.

"We'll always have a lot of memories of getting married there and may even go back on our anniversaries and kiss under the chandelier," both said.

Records of how many couples were married or had a wedding reception at NCSML were lost in the flood according to Amy Lyness, NCSML Facility Rental and Group Sales Manager. However, she did



Travis and Amanda Merta were the first couple married in the National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library since the flood of 2008.

say that at this time eight wedding receptions and one wedding ceremony are on the books for 2013, with additional tentative bookings.

Travis works at Rockwell Collins and Amanda is a pediatric nurse at the Children's Hospital of Iowa. The couple reside in northeast Cedar Rapids.

KAREN LEHMANN

New Bo Books

Come discover something incredible!



Celebrating opening day of New Bo Books, 1105 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, are from left: Jeremiah Peterson, Mary Ann Peters, Julie Hanson, Jan Weissmiller and Andy Caton.

New Bo Books, 1105 Third Street SE, Cedar Rapids, is one of three new tenants in the historic CSPS Building in the New Bohemia district.

Opened in July 2012, the 800 square foot locally owned independent New Bo Books is leased and operated by Mary Ann Peters of Cedar Rapids.

The other two businesses in the CSPS building are Studio U Photography and Brewed Café. The second level of the building is occupied by Legion Arts -- a cutting edge art, music, and film venue.

Peters, a former Fairfax library director and current board member of the Czech Village/New Bo Main-

street District, saw a need for an independent bookstore in Cedar Rapids.

"What I think has been missing glaringly in Cedar Rapids for the past 20 years is a small independent bookstore. I live in the New Bo neighborhood and am very invested in it. That's what I'd like to have here," said Peters.

Her vision for New Bo Books was to become a welcoming place for people to browse, get advice from knowledgeable staff, and be a meeting place for individuals and book clubs.

Legion Arts, which has owned the 121-year-old former CSPS building since 1999, received 7 million dollars

to renovate it after the 2008 flood where the first floor sustained 12 feet of water.

"The window was a huge attraction to me because it has such a presence on the street," said Peters.

She transformed the interior, which she described as a "beige box" when she first saw it, into a comfortable upscale-looking bookstore with beautiful bookshelves, comfy chairs, and a delightful children's area.

Through partnership with the iconic Prairie Lights Bookstore, 15 South Dubuque St., Iowa City, New Bo Books is now a division of Prairie Lights. Through this business alliance, New Bo Books receives a lot of business support and has access to Prairie Lights' 80,000-100,000-book inventory.

Shopping in an independent bookstore is a very different experience than the big box store according to Peters.

"We are local, with a universal scope. We have cozy chairs and expansive ideas. We're smart but not stuffy. We're classic with a funky New Bohemia kick."

Peters says she, and her staff of six

New Bo Books

Continued from page 6

part-time employees, are knowledgeable bibliophiles and if they don't have a book on their shelves, they can get it from Prairie Lights Bookstore within a couple of days.

"We're built on the rich heritage of Cedar Rapids, the bookselling expertise of Prairie Lights, and the knowledge of our own bibliophiles. Come discover something incredible!"

Winter business hours are: M-F 10-6, Sat 9-6, Sun 11-5. Regular business hours are Monday-Friday 10-8, Saturday 9-8, Sunday 11-5.

Phone: 319-247-2665(BOOK),
Facebook: newbobooks, and website: www.newbobooks.com.

KAREN LEHMANN

Česká Škola

Czech School



Saturday Evening

4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

March 9, 2013

St. Ludmila Church Social Hall

(lower level of Church building)

211 21st Ave. S.W.
Cedar Rapids

\$5 Donation

Bake Sale too!

Chili, rye bread, cake, beverage



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Sokol Cedar Rapids Presents

ŠIBŘINKY COSTUME BALL

All Ages Welcome \$5 Donation

*“Help us in bringing back
a part of Sokol’s past!”*

Games, Prizes, Music, Snack Bar, Costumes Encouraged!

February 9
7-10 pm

**St. Wenceslas Church
Glovik Parish Center**

1224 5th St. SE
Cedar Rapids

Featuring

**Světlušky
Czech Youth Ensemble**