

Glass Exhibit Reveals the Undaunted Spirit of Czechoslovak Artists

Imagine you were an artist and your government suddenly told you exactly how to think, how to draw or paint, or what to sculpt. Your choices were few: continue your work and risk prosecution and imprisonment, conform to the restrictions, or cease your livelihood. For artists living under the communist regime, those were the obvious choices.

Czechoslovak artists discovered another option — glass. After all, how could something as utilitarian and everyday as glass make a political statement? How could a vase, tumbler, or platter be deemed inappropriate? For this reason, glass was not as censored as other art forms and many Czechoslovak artists began to work in this medium. Painters who might ordinarily paint on canvas painted on glass; engravers learned to engrave glass, and sculptors recognized the unique properties in glass



Jiří Hrcuba

that make it an ideal medium for their art as well. *Glass Behind the Iron Curtain: Czech Design 1948-1978*, now open in the NCSML's Petrik Gallery, features exquisite glass works produced by Czechoslovak artists during the first 30 years of the communist regime. Titles like "Single Bloom Vase" or simply "Plate" are deceiving, as each object is not merely a utilitarian piece, but a work of art created by a master artisan. Colorful art from some of the most respected glass artists in the world, including the husband and wife team of Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava

that make it an ideal medium for their art as well.

Glass Behind the Iron Curtain: Czech Design 1948-1978, now open in the NCSML's Petrik Gallery, features exquisite glass works produced

Brychtová, Jiří Hrcuba, Pavel Hlava, Bohumil Čabla, František Vízner, and Vladimír Kopecký, is represented in the exhibition.

Glass Behind the Iron Curtain: Czech Design 1948-1978, is on loan from the Corning Museum of Glass. Originally prepared for Corning's own gallery, the exhibit is presented at the NCSML in its only venue outside New York State. The exhibit may be viewed at the NCSML through September 28, 2003. Watch your NCMSL Kalendář for related programs.

(top) Internationally known Czech glass engraver Jiří Hrcuba was on hand for the opening of the exhibit on February 23 and shared his expertise during two glass engraving demonstrations.

(left) The exhibition *Glass Behind the Iron Curtain* features 72 works created during the communist era by leading Czech glass artists.

(below) "Vase with abstract decoration" (1959) is a mold-blown and enameled work by Vladimír Kopecký, one of many glass artists who developed their work at the Academy of Applied Arts in Prague during the communist era.



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At the Annual Meeting of the NCSML in January, I gave an end-of-the-year report for 2002. Since many of you were unable to attend, I would like to share a few highlights

from that report. There are some exciting statistics that tell quite a story of our continued growth and outreach. An outstanding 30,643 persons walked through the doors last year – up 70 percent over the previous year – representing 34 states and five foreign countries. From our visitor surveys, we know that a third were traveling, a third were visiting family in the area – and a third came to Cedar Rapids solely for the purpose of visiting the museum!

A review of 2002 wouldn't be complete without mentioning our exciting exhibit *Kroje – Dress for the Dance of Life!* So successful that it was extended for three months, *Kroje!* helped generate our outstanding numbers. In addition, two signature events premiered in 2002: The St. Joseph's Day National Koláč Bake-Off and the Bohemian, Moravian & Slovak Dance Festival in July. More than 200 attended each of these very successful events. Another 158 people from 19 states participated in the Kroje Symposium in September. These key events were three of 89 programs held or sponsored by the NCSML, an integral part of meeting our educational mission.

This outstanding program schedule is supported by our remarkable membership base – almost 1,800 individuals and businesses from 44 states, the District of Columbia and the Czech Republic. Another sign of extraordinary support can be seen in the 170 persons who volunteered

13,717 hours last year. Our volunteers are the backbone of our daily operations, serving as exhibit docents, selling things in the museum store, answering the phone, baking and serving at receptions and performing numerous other jobs that are critical to maintaining a quality service-oriented organization.

Other interesting statistics include:

- 134 new accessions to the artifact collection
- 90 accessions of large groups of items to the library
- 294,369 hits on the Web site, and
- 98 percent of our visitors rated their experience very good or excellent!

So after that stellar year, did we take a breather? No! The year 2003 has started out with a bang, as you will see in the pages of this newsletter when you read about the fantastic exhibit *Glass Behind the Iron Curtain*, the upcoming dance festival, the 'new' Laska Gallery, and more. To keep you informed of all our programs and events, we send you five *Kalendářs* each year, and several program invitations/announcements. Accordingly, we've decided to transform the *Most* newsletter into a biannual publication, to appear Spring and Fall, opposite your *Slovo*, which will arrive in January and July. Together with the improved Web site at www.NCSML.org, this new publication schedule should provide you with up-to-date information that is timely and cost-effective. Please let us know what you think – about the NCSML publications, about programs and exhibits, or about anything else that's on your mind! I always enjoy hearing from our members. Best wishes!

Gail Naughton, President/CEO
gnaughton@NCSML.org

'Excellent' Reviews for Czech and Slovak History and Culture Conference



(left to right) Drs. Gary Cohen, James Felak, and Pavel Černoch, all speakers at the conference, enjoyed exchanging ideas at a conference luncheon.

On March 7 and 8, 2003, the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library hosted its third biennial conference, *The 20th Century in Retrospect: The Decade of Turmoil 1938 – 1948*. Participants, planners, and an official observer hailed the conference – the museum's third such effort – as a splendid success.

Noted scholars from the United States and the Czech Republic presented papers addressing such issues as the Sudeten Germans, Jewish experiences, Tiso's Slovak regime, Czech government in exile, RAF freedom fighters, and the transition to communism. First-hand accounts from U.S. airmen downed in Slovakia and U.S. soldiers involved with Plzen's liberation brought a dramatic personal perspective to the program.

Friday evening, participants enjoyed dinner and an authors' forum followed by a book signing. Featured authors were Jim Downs, author of *World War II: OSS Tragedy in Slovakia*; Milan Hauner, author of *The Czechoslovak Resistance Abroad 1938-39*; Radomir Luža, who wrote *The Hitler Kiss: Memoir of the Czech Resistance*; and Richard Moulton, who penned *Tail End Charlie – In Ole #605*. Saturday's evening banquet was capped by a keynote address from Alan Levy, the

founding editor-in-chief of the *Prague Post*. The conference was sponsored in part by Humanities Iowa.

More than 200 participants from 22 states and the Czech Republic traveled to Cedar Rapids for the two-day event. Including area residents, more than 400 people participated in the weekend's events and programs, which included a pre-conference screening of the film *Dark Blue World* and a post-conference presentation by Jerri Zbiral on "Survival Stories from World War II in Czechoslovakia."

The NCSML was applauded by the Humanities Iowa observer for its efforts to "raise many important historical issues." According to Dr. James Grove, Humanities Iowa evaluator, "There was a valuable mix of secondary historical analysis...with some very interesting memoirs." Dr. Grove also found the audience to be "a rich mixture of extremely aware and interested people, who participated fully in the lively post-presentation discussions and connected very effectively during the conference's less formal activities."

Plans are already underway for the museum's next conference, *The 20th Century in Retrospect: Czechoslovakia Behind the Iron Curtain*, scheduled for March 2005.

Travel Notes

Czech Trip Postponed

Due to the uncertainty of the political situation, the NCSML has postponed tentative plans for a 2003 group tour to the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Fall Trip to Yukon, Oklahoma

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library is considering a motorcoach trip to Yukon, Oklahoma, for the Czech Festival and other attractions October 3-6, 2003. For more information, call Lavanda Woosley at Woosley Tours, (319) 393-1742.

Visit the NCSML Web site

Did you know that you can visit the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Web site to:

- preview the newest exhibit?
- read the latest press release?
- renew your membership?
- check the program schedule?

Visit NCSML online at
www.NCSML.org

Dance Around in a Circle with Us

Plan now to attend "Do kolečka, dokola: The 2nd National Bohemian, Moravian, and Slovak Folk Dance Festival" at the NCSML on Sunday, July 20. See brightly colored kroje and watch as festive, energetic folk dancers from around the country perform and teach you some of their wonderful dances. The celebration starts at 1 p.m. in the NCSML Garden. For more information, call Jan at (319) 362-8500 or consult the NCSML Web site.



The Domáci Czech Folk Dancers (here shown at last year's festival) have been invited to return to entertain participants at this year's National Bohemian, Moravian, and Slovak Folk Dance Festival in July.



Masaryk Memorial Materials on Display

In September 2002, American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR) unveiled a bronze statue of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, in Washington, D.C. AFoCR subsequently donated archival materials related to the project to the NCSML. A special exhibition of these materials is on view at the NCSML through June 29, 2003.

Koláč Bake-Off Results

Twelve participants from six Iowa communities competed in four categories at the Second Annual Koláč Bake-off, held at the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library on Saturday, March 22.

More than 200 spectators enjoyed sampling 60-dozen kolaches provided by the competitors and casting their votes for the Peoples' Choice Award, which went to Leona Bulicek of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Three celebrity judges tasted and evaluated all the entries, and selected the following winners in each class:

- Open class: Marge Jansa, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Closed: Mildred Richle, Spillville, Iowa
- Specialty: Marge Sedlacek, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

All competitors received a certificate of appreciation. Winners were awarded a \$25 gift certificate to the NCSML museum store, a gift certificate to Sykora's Bakery, and a copy of the Museum Guild Cookbook.

Many thanks to the contest co-sponsors, the Museum Guild of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and Sykora's Bakery; and to contest judges John Rocarek, owner of Sykora's Bakery in Czech Village; Lumir Dostal, former Linn County Supervisor; and Wade Wagner, Cedar Rapids Parks Commissioner.

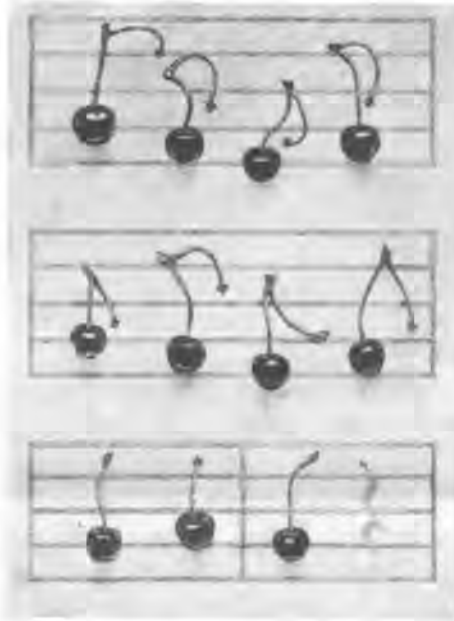
Laska Gallery and Grand Hall Feature Art from Exiled Artists

Czechoslovak Artists in Exile, the first exhibition in the newly named Laska Gallery, opens May 1, 2003. The exhibition will feature original paintings and sculpture by world-famous Czech artists including Jiri Kolar, Roman Kames, George Mathissen, Jan Koblasa, Vladimir Skoda, and others from the private collection of Drs. Jaroslav and Mila Kyncl.

One of the most prominent artists featured in the exhibition is Jiri Kolar. Kolar was a poet who authored several books of poetry, drama, essays, and children's stories. In the 1950s he expanded his work to include fine art and became especially known for his collages. In 1979, after years of oppression and imprisonment under the communist regime, Kolar left Czechoslovakia and settled in Paris. Typical of other Czech artists working in exile, Kolar received more recognition abroad than in his home country. Today his art is found in galleries and museums around the world.

Also opening May 1, and accompanying *Czechoslovak Artists in Exile*, is an exhibition of limited edition prints featured in

Revue K, a French-language art journal founded by Jiri Kolar in 1981 to promote Czech artists in exile. Both exhibitions will run through August 31, 2003.



"Ceresnický" by Eva Janosková is one of the *Revue K* prints that will be exhibited at the NCSML this summer.

SVU to Hold North American Conference in Cedar Rapids

The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (Czech and Slovak acronym SVU) will hold its 2003 North American conference in Cedar Rapids June 26-27, 2003, at Coe College. The conference theme is "Czech and Slovak Presence in North America: Retrospective Look and Future Perspectives." More information about the conference can be found on the SVU Web site at <http://www.svu2000.org/headlines/b47.htm>

The SVU is a nonprofit, nonpolitical, cultural organization, dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge, the free dissemination of ideas, and the fostering of contacts among people. It brings together scholars, scientists, artists, writers, students, lawyers, businessmen, and others throughout the world who have a professional, family, or other interest in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, their history, peoples, or their cultural and intellectual contributions.

Collections/Library Committee Starts Visioning Process

The Collections/Library Committee will focus its attention this year on creating a mission and vision for the library. Composed of NCSML staff, board members, and ex-officio members from the Cedar Rapids area, the committee plans to develop a vision that will position the library to be the preeminent U.S. research institution devoted to the study of Czech and Slovak history and culture. The plan will be based on research and ideas devel-

oped by members of the committee, as well as input from donors to the library, NCSML members, scholars, librarians, and representatives of other Czech and Slovak organizations.

Following the visioning process, the collections/library committee will develop a library mission statement that includes specific objectives to be achieved. The valuable information gathered from this process will provide the foundation and

the vision for the NCSML as it plans for the future construction of an expanded library and an endowment to support it.

We encourage you to offer your suggestions on what materials and services the library should provide. Direct your comments to: National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, Library Strategic Plan, 30 16th Avenue SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404 or via e-mail to dmuhlena@NCSML.org.

Volunteer Opportunities Abound at NCSML

Although our volunteer pool is the envy of many other cultural institutions in the greater Cedar Rapids area, we always have room for more interested and interesting volunteer candidates. Expanded hours and expanded services offer more opportunities for volunteers to participate as gallery attendants, museum store clerks, information desk attendants, office receptionists, and immigrant home docents.

Weekly morning and afternoon shifts, weekend shifts, and occasional evening events offer a wide variety of times to fit almost any volunteer's already busy schedule. Workshops and on-the-job training are available for all positions. Members of our volunteer group have the opportunity to meet socially at potlucks and other activities, in addition to our annual volunteer appreciation event held each November. For more information, to receive a Volunteer Interest Form, or to schedule a visit and personal interview, please contact Patricia A. Hikiji, Volunteer Coordinator, at (319) 362-8500 or phikiji@NCSML.org.



Anne and Cloyd "Doc" Manley

Gallery Named to Honor Businessman Andrew Laska and Dr. Vera Laska

Thanks to a generous memorial gift from Dr. Vera Laska of Weston, Massachusetts, the South Hall Gallery will be renamed the Laska Gallery in honor of Dr. Laska and her late husband, Andrew. The gallery features three to four smaller historical and cultural exhibits each year, usually artworks or photographic essays. Thanks to Dr. Laska's gift, the gallery will now be outfitted with additional lighting and with self-healing wall covering to facilitate its frequent changes.

Andrew Laska was born in Cleveland, Ohio, the son of the pre-Communist Czechoslovak ambassador to Mexico, Dr. Vaclav Laska. He received an international education, including a master's degree in international economics from the University of Chicago, where he met and married Vera, a native of Czechoslovakia. Mr. Laska



Andrew Laska

was a long-time employee of the Kendall Company and represented the firm abroad until his retirement in 1988. From 1992 to 1994, he was director of the Washington, D.C.-based Citizen's

Democracy Corps in Prague, facilitating the transformation of Czech and Slovak businesses to the free market system. He passed away in 2001, leaving his son, Paul Andrew Laska, and his wife of 52 years, Vera, author of seven books, and a professor of history at Regis College in Boston.

Plan for the Future of the Museum in Your Will

Anne Uherka Manley passed away in Perry, Iowa, at age 94 in 2001, leaving a \$100,000 bequest to the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in memory of her parents, Frank and Kristine Bartak Uherka. Anne and her husband, Cloyd "Doc" Manley, had been long-time residents of Cedar Rapids, where Anne was a telephone switchboard operator and Doc was a printer for the *Gazette*.

Anne's bequest was our first inkling that Anne thought highly of the museum and cared deeply about her heritage. Sadly, we never had the opportunity to get acquainted with her. We would have liked to have heard her ideas for the museum's future and to recognize her generosity while she was still living.

Planned gifts like Anne's assure that the future of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library will be as bright as its past. As the NCSML approaches its 30th anniversary of founding in 2004, please consider making or re-making your own

will. You might like to consider leaving a gift that will help support the NCSML after you are no longer here. There are several ways to do this: A *specific bequest* designates a dollar amount or percentage of your estate for the NCSML. A *residual bequest* ensures that the NCSML receives what's left after all other bequests and taxes are paid. A *contingency bequest* provides a gift to the NCSML only under certain circumstances, as, for example, when another bequest cannot be paid because of the prior death of the intended recipient.

If you have questions, please call the museum office at (319) 362-8500. We would be happy to assist you or your attorney or financial planner by providing legal designations, arranging specific uses for your gift, and discussing appropriate recognition.

Laurie Robinson, Director of Development & Communications

Exhibit Fund Will Support Glass, Music, Immigration Exhibits

The NCSML Exhibit Fund will provide working capital to plan, research, build, and promote exhibits in 2003, 2004, and 2005. The exhibit schedule for 2003 – 2005 includes attractions for people of all tastes and interests, from fine arts to a lively music exhibit to a long-awaited look at Czech and Slovak immigration to America. The exhibit schedule includes:

- *Glass Behind the Iron Curtain: Czech Design, 1948-1978*
- *Liberation! World War I and the Formation of Czechoslovakia*
- *The Music Makers*
- *The Art of Ondrej Zimka*
- *Coming to America*

Thank you to the State of Iowa:

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

With each major exhibit costing \$50,000 or more, the exhibit fund will require an influx of \$300,000 for this three-year period. Fortunately, fund raising for this very special campaign has nearly reached the halfway mark, with gifts totaling \$146,500 in the last few months. If you'd like to give a gift that will directly benefit 60,000 to 90,000 museum visitors over the next three years, you can participate in the exhibit fund by returning the pledge card below. Your cash or stock gift can be given in one payment, or you may spread your gift over a three-year period.

All exhibit fund gifts are tax deductible; and all will be recognized on the NCSML Web site. (Go to www.NCSML.org to see the list.) Your pledge or outright gift of \$1,000 or more will also be recognized on a sponsor board prominently placed in every temporary exhibit during 2003-2005. Questions? Contact Laurie Robinson, Director of Development & Communications at (319) 362-8500 or Lrobinson@NCSML.org. Clip and return the pledge card below and be an exhibit sponsor!

Exhibit Fund Donors

Garnet \$25,000 - \$100,000

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In memory of Andrew Laska
by Dr. Vera Laska
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Gold \$10,000 - \$24,999

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The Museum Guild of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library
Ed & Joan Hemphill
CSA Lodge Prokop Velky #137

Bronze \$1,000 - \$4,999

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by Thomas A. Dvorak & Alicia Dee Dvorak Jackson
David & Chris Kubicek
In memory of Wilma Novak
by Janelle & George McClain
Zula M. Cacek Oujiri & Family
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CLIP AND RETURN

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library Exhibit Fund Pledge Card

I/We pledge \$_____ in support of the NCSML's 2003- 2005 exhibit fund.

Name/names you wish to appear on sponsor board and in publications [Recognition can be a memorial or tribute.]

Contributions will be made on the following schedule:_____

Name(s) _____

All gifts to the NCSML Exhibit Fund are tax deductible as permitted by IRS guidelines.
Return this pledge card to: NCSML 30 16th Avenue SW Cedar Rapids, IA 52404-5904

Children's Books

Peter Sís is an internationally acclaimed illustrator, author, and filmmaker, born in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in 1949. The Museum Store features a selection of books by this five-time winner of the *New York Times* Best Illustrated Book of the Year Award, including *Rainbow Rhino*, *Beach Ball*, *Follow the Dream*, *Komodo!*, and *The Three Golden Keys*. Children and adults enjoy his wonderful illustrations and unique stories. Many other children's books are available as well.

History and Culture Conference Books

The museum store is offering a wide assortment of books relating to the NCSML's third biennial Czech & Slovak History and Culture Conference, held in March on the theme of *The Decade of Turmoil 1938-1948*. Titles include *Nazi Hunter* by Alan Levy; *World War II: OSS Tragedy in Slovakia* by Jim Downs; *Tail End Charlie-In Ole #605* by Richard

Moulton; *The Hitler Kiss* by Radomir Luža; *Chronology of 20th-Century Eastern European History* by Gregory C. Ference, Editor; *Rebirth of Freedom* by Michael Sumichrast; and *Art, Music And Education As Strategies For Survival: Theresiestadt 1941-45* by Anne Dutlinger.

Books on Glass and Pottery

The Museum's summer exhibit, *Glass Behind The Iron Curtain: Czech Design 1948-1978*, features objects by the most acclaimed glass artists in the world. The museum store has several glass and pottery books for collectors and those who enjoy researching a family heirloom. A sampling includes *A Guide To Czech & Slovak Glass* by Diane E. Foulds ("an invaluable directory" which includes several artists from the *Glass Behind The Iron Curtain: Czech Design 1948-1978* exhibit); and *Collectible Bohemian Glass 1880-1940* and *Collectible Bohemian Glass Vol. II 1915-1945* by Robert & Deborah Truitt.

Czechoslovak Puppetry



A marionette in the museum store is an example of Czech puppetry folk art.

The tradition of Czech puppeteers reaches as far back as the 17th century. Puppeteers imitated the English, Italian, and Dutch puppet traditions and many companies performed both in Czech and German.

Eventually, a deep-rooted Czech folk art evolved. By law, the puppet troupes were excluded from performing in large cities, and sometimes puppetry was the only exposure to theater among peasant audiences. The museum store has items including marionettes, cone puppets, hand puppets, and a Marionette Theatre.



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