

Providing fitness and community for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural, and social programs.

SOKOL WEST in Central Texas Needs Our Help



Czechs all over the country are reaching out to help the town of West, Texas, 80

miles south of Dallas, which was devastated when a fertilizer plant on the eastern edge of town exploded on April 17, leveling buildings in a five-block radius, including the Sokol West Gym and Lone Star Hall (*seen here*). Most of the 2,800 residents in West claim Czech heritage. Hundreds were hurt and fifteen lost their lives, mostly first responders, including Sokol West member and past president, Jimmy Matus.

As a show of support, the Southern District of the American Sokol, of which Sokol West is an integral part, has established an account for donations. Send donations to: AS Southern District Sokol West Fund, Attn: Libbie Vrla, 4416 Westdale Court, Ft. Worth, TX 76109-4928.

National American Sokol is also collecting funds: Checks should be made payable to American Sokol, with "Sokol West Restoration Fund" on the memo line; send to the American Sokol Office, Attn: Sokol West Restoration Fund, 9126 Ogden Avenue, Brookfield, IL 60513. To make credit card donations, call the American Sokol office at 708-255-5397.

Immediately after the disaster, Czech Republic Ambassador Petr Gandalovič visited West with Texas Governor Rick Perry to assess the damage. The Czech government has pledged money to help rebuild the Sokol buildings. The Nebraska Czechs, Inc., will host a benefit for Sokol West with music from several bands and food on June 30 at the Sokol Hall in Wilber. Willie Nelson, who grew up in a nearby town, donated the proceeds of his April 28 concert in Austin, Texas, to the West Volunteer Fire Department.

Slovo has corresponded with Mary Beth Dulock, secretary of the Sokol West unit. She sent us many pictures along with this message: *The West Sokol family is mending through this hard time. We are just a little frustrated with trying to find a place to practice our gymnastics in. But we will manage and get through this. Our Sokol families along with the residents of West are a very strong Czech community; we will pull together and rebuild. It will take some time but we will get our little town back to normal.*

Our Sokol gym was built in 1989. It has hosted many gymnastic competitions, birthday parties, Friday fun nights, Slets, and many others. Just last year we hosted the National Instructor School. Our gymnasts, instructors, and parents miss not having some place to meet and do gymnastics. The gym's office and bathroom area have severe damage. The gym's main beams and purlins are bent; there is a hole in the roof, walls damaged, and several other issues. It needs many repairs or even may need to be rebuilt. (Seen here is the gym's front entrance.)



The Lone Star Hall has celebrated many wedding, anniversaries, birthday parties, showers, dances, etc. Many good times and memories were made at the hall. The hall is severely damaged and will have to be torn down and rebuilt. We are proud that our town is known as the Czech Heritage Capital of Texas. Thank you to all in the Sokol family for caring and thinking about us. We all greatly appreciate it. Nazdar! Thank you for writing this article. Mary Beth Dulock, Sokol West.

UPCOMING June/July EVENTS

Dinner for H.C.
Robert Vanasek
Wednesday, June 5
6 p.m. (see p. 8)

Culture Camp
June 10-14

August *Slovo*
Deadline July 1

Board of Trustees
June 12, 7 p.m.
July 10, 7 p.m.

Board of Directors
June 20, 7 p.m.
July 18, 7 p.m.

**Czech and Slovak
Sokol Minnesota
2013**

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Past issues of *Slovo* and Sokol Minnesota's calendar of events are available online at www.sokolmn.org

Prezidentův komentář/President's Notes By Denis Novak

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings Brothers and Sisters

My wife Mary and I have driven to Texas several times on Elderhostel and bird watching trips. I enjoy Texas. I only wish it was closer to Minnesota. It's a long way to drive and finally when Interstate 35 enters Texas it splits. I-35W leads the tourist into the traffic nightmare of Fort Worth and I-35E takes an equally exciting path through Dallas. The two routes reunite about 25 miles north of West, Texas that is. I knew we had to stop there when I noticed that gas station billboards advertised *Gas and Koláče*. I expected to visit Czech, or rather Moravian, towns farther south around Shiner and Hallettsville but had not heard of West. The signs were accurate. *Koláčky* were on sale, not only at the gas station, but also at bakeries nearby.

We learned that West is proud of its Czech Heritage. This town of about 2,800 people is the home of Sokol West. This group was organized in 1980 and has a gym and activities much like ours in Saint Paul. Or I should say, had them prior to the disastrous fire and explosion in a fertilizer plant on April 17, which resulted in the death of 15 people and devastated an entire community, as well as our brothers and sisters in Sokol West.

My thoughts and prayers go out to all those injured and to their families. I saw a photo of a care facility for the aged that sticks in my mind. One side of the building is gone, and all of the rooms on that side are exposed to the elements. I can't imagine the trauma those elderly people suffered.

The Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg has announced that his country will donate four million crowns (about \$200,000) to West, Texas. Most of this money will go to rebuild the Sokol buildings. This is a fine gift from the country of our ancestors, but I encourage anyone who can to also make a contribution. In the face of disaster there are always some scam artists. The address I am providing is safe. As a show of support, the Southern District of the American Sokol, of which Sokol West is an integral part, has established an account for donations. Please consider donating to:

AS Southern District Sokol West Fund
Attn.: Libbie Vria
4416 Westdale Court
Fort Worth, TX 76109-4928

Checks should be made to: AS Southern District Sokol West Fund. Sokol West is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible. *Nazdar!*

Honorary Consuls, plus Sokol Committee Chairs (not seated on the BOD)

Honorary Slovak Consul: Donald Pafko

Honorary Czech Consul: open

Past Honorary Czech Consuls: Josef Mestenhauer and Robert Vanasek

Sunshine Committee: Marlene Hinshaw

Gift Shop: Doreen McKenney

Housekeeping: Robert J. (Jake) Jacobson

Kitchen Coordinator: Jean Hall

Website: Craig Johnson

Volunteer Coordinator: open

Taneční Mládež and Teen Folk Dancers: Louise Wessinger

Hall Contacts: Chuck Draheim, Ed Hamernik, Joe Landsberger

Slovo: Marit Lee Kucera, Christy Banks

Addresses: President: president@sokolmn.org | Directors: board@sokolmn.org | Education and Language programs: education@sokolmn.org | Events: events@sokolmn.org | Finance and Fund Raising: finance@sokolmn.org | Fitness Programming: fitness@sokolmn.org | Folk Dancing: folkdancing@sokolmn.org | Membership: membership@sokolmn.org | Newsletter: slovo@sokolmn.org | Planning: planning@sokolmn.org | Publications: publications@sokolmn.org | Trustees: trustees@sokolmn.org | Webmaster: webmaster@sokolmn.org

**16th Annual Czech and Slovak
CHILDREN'S CULTURAL DAY CAMP
Monday to Friday, June 10 to 14, 2013**

8:50 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Fun-filled activities for ages 7-14

crafts, language, gymnastics, singing, team games, dancing

Registration information: <www.sokolmn.org>.

Questions, call Louise Wessinger: 651-452-6240.

Membership Updates

By Norm Petrik, Membership Director

At the April 26 Membership Meeting, two people were accepted to membership in Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota: John and Joe Gindele, twins from Crystal. They expressed interest in cooking classes, music, dinners, and festivals. They are the authors of *The Yorkville Twins* (see page 6). They were not present at the meeting. Welcome to Sokol Minnesota! Fourteen-month-old Cesky Terrier Galanka, owned by Katherine and Ted Eckstrom, charmed everyone at the April meeting. Our next membership meeting is August 23.

Gaming Update By Steve Shimer

The past two months have been very busy ones for me in my new role as Gaming Manager. Much of my time has been taken up with paperwork and learning how to do the monthly reports required by various governmental entities. But with lots of help from Ken Wyberg, I am getting the hang of it.

We can still use some help from fellow Sokols so that the Gaming program can grow and continue to help generate financial support for our unit. We also need a couple of Sokols to join the Gaming Committee. We are currently meeting the second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. The Committee is responsible for overseeing the gaming operation and for finding new ways to help increase the income and efficiency of gaming.

We also need someone who is willing to commit a few hours (4-5) a week to gaming on a paid basis. This person would help with the deposits of gaming funds and keep up an inventory of our games. The hours can be flexible and you will be paid for hours worked plus mileage. Gaming also needs one or two people who would be available to help out at Friday night Bingo a few times this summer or fall. This is more of a volunteer position, but mileage compensation and/or a small fee is possible.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions you may have at highgrove@comcast.net or 651-224-3034. Thanks.

You Are Invited to be a Sokol Volunteer

Volunteering is fun! Our organization is loaded with talent and expertise. We'd like to know what you can share by volunteering. Your reward is getting to know other Sokol members and making new friends. Now is a great time to get involved with Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota. We are waiting to hear from you.

Volunteer coordinator for our Sokol unit.

Contact: Events @sokolmn.org

Gaming (Steve: highgrove@comcast.net) or 651-224-3034)

Gaming Committee needs two more members.

Help with **Friday Night Bingo** this summer and fall.

Czech and Slovak Festival, September 15, needs lots of volunteers: food, children's activities, beverage sales, vendors, set-up/take-down, entertainment, banners and signs, to name a few. Contact: Events @sokolmn.org

Summary of the April Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting By Ed and Arlene Hamernik

April BOD meeting was cancelled due to a snowstorm.

Correction: May *Slovo*, page 5, carried the summary of the March 2013 BOD, not February, meeting.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE: The *Slovo* is published ten times per year by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, a non-profit organization, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102. Sokol Minnesota members receive the *Slovo* with their membership.

The *Slovo* Advisory Committee welcomes submissions. Send suggestions, articles, and pictures digitally to slovo@sokolmn.org.

The deadline for the August 2013 issue is July 1. Volunteer *Slovo* staff: Christy Banks, copy editor; M. L. Kucera, managing editor/layout editor; Pamela Kotval, labels; Joyce Tesarek, photographer; Doreen McKenney, ad designer; Mary Cahill, Jean Draheim, Arlene Hamernik, Jeanette Pafko, Norm Petrik, Jitka Sebek, and Joan Sedlacek, advisors. Photographs: Jim Chlebecek, Jean Draheim, Martina Gurgel, M. L. Kucera, Don Pafko, Jitka Sebek, D. Stepan, Joyce Tesarek, and Chad Wuori. This issue of *Slovo* will be archived on the Sokol Minnesota website after June 30.

Slovo accepts business card-size ads (3.5"x2"), paid in advance: one-time insertion \$25; three consecutive issues: \$65; ten consecutive issues: \$175. Ad reservation deadline is six weeks before publication (June 15 for August issue), with ad and payment due by copy deadline (July 1 for August issue).

For a change of address or for problems with *Slovo* subscriptions, please contact us if you missed an issue or received notice of payment due when a payment has already been made.

Email us: slovo@sokolmn.org, phone us: 651-290-0542, or write us: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102. *Thank you!*

If you are temporarily out of town for an extended stay, the post office will not forward your *Slovo* because we use bulk mail. If you wish to have this newsletter suspended during this time or if you wish to have it sent to your out-of-town residence, please let us know. After one returned issue, we will hold all future issues until you notify us. We pay 46¢ to 66¢ for each returned issue.

***Slovo* gift subscriptions and non-member renewals** are \$15/year (10 issues). (Rate is good through July 2014.) Please include name, address, phone number, and email address with your new or renewing non-member subscription. Make your check to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota; send to: Subscriptions/Renewals, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *Slovo* 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102

2012-2013 Season Gymnastics Recap By Sokol Minnesota Board of Instructors

This was another great year for Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's gymnastics program. Returning head instructor Lisa Hollibush was



joined by third-year instructors Madeline Moser, Ellen Sutton, and Shelby LaBonne and second-year instructor Jayne Pobanz. All five of those instructors are graduates of National Sokol Instructor Courses, and all five have been active Sokol gym class participants for years and currently or previously competed with their high school gymnastics teams. Rounding out the Sokol instructors was returning Hamline University junior Courtney Benson, an elite gymnast who competes for Hamline University's gymnastics team and a several-year winner of All-American Honors in All-Around Division 3 National competitions. Instructors and coaches Ellen and Shelby are graduating high school seniors and will be leaving our program. Both will pursue nursing majors at Mankato State University. We will miss them a great deal. They have been at the gym for years and are an important part of our Sokol family.

New to our program this year is instructor Jason Brozovich. Jason is a Sokol member, dances with the St. Paul Czech and Slovak Dancers, and is a former Division 1 gymnast. Jason, along with former Turner Gymnastics Men's Director, Russ Goodman, started a young boys gym class. Sokol MN has been without a boys gymnastics program for many years, and we are appreciative of their efforts to get this program going again. We had an enrollment between 5-8 boys, and the class was a great success.

In addition to the fun and skill development that occurred during the regular gymnastics classes, 12 girls put extra time into

Sokol Minnesota gymnasts and instructors:
L-R, bottom row: *Jena M, Lucy O, Avery F, Helena L, Olivia R.* Middle row: *Erica M, Katie M, Amy F, Siri S, Alice O, Piper G.* Back row: *instructors Madeline M, Ellen S, Shelby L, Lisa H.* Not pictured: *Kyenne M.*

practices and training for the annual Western District Competition, which was held April 27 at Sokol Omaha. This year, 12 competitors

from Sokol Minnesota attended the competition, where they competed against competitors from Sokols Crete, Cedar Rapids, Omaha, and South Omaha.

The results were fabulous! Minnesota competitors earned first place team trophies in Junior Girls Levels 5 and 6, a 3rd and 4th place in Small Girls Level 2 (both first year competitors in a field of 27 competitors), a 3rd place in Level 3 Small Girls (out of 24 competitors), all very respectable scores and placements with the remaining competitors. Once again, second-year competitor Helena Lume, the 3rd place overall winner in Level 3 Small Girls, was a first place winner on the uneven bars (she accomplished this same feat last year in Level 2). In addition, there were a substantial number of ribbons earned by our gymnasts in the younger competitor groups. These ribbons are awarded in each apparatus for places 1-10. Minnesota and Cedar Rapids gyms each performed a special number that were well received.

All of our competitors and instructor staff were wonderful ambassadors from our Sokol unit. The competitions are a great way to promote friendships within the "Sokol family" both here in Minnesota and among the various Sokol units in the Western District. Destination is Sokol Crete for the 2014 Western District Competition.

We thank Sokol Minnesota for its support of the gym program and look forward to strengthening and expanding programs in the 2013-2014 class year (*AND HOPEFULLY, NEW UNEVEN BARS!*).

Sokol Minnesota's ONLINE CALENDAR is for You!

By Pamela Kotval

Did you know that we have an online calendar on our website? Between issues of the *Slovo* newsletter, the online calendar is a perfect way for you to keep track of all the activities and meetings that occupy the rooms and spaces in our hall on a daily basis. And believe me, on some days, every space is occupied with Sokol and other community events! A Calendar Committee meets periodically and schedules key activities 6-12 months forward.

The online calendar is very easy to use. Either go to the home page at <www.sokolmn.org> and click the **Hall Calendar** link in the left navigation menu. Or go directly to the calendar at <www.sokolmn.org/calendar1.htm>. The **Month** view displays by default. Click the **Week** button at the top-right of the calendar to change to a by-week view. Click the **Agenda** button in the same location for a daily list of

scheduled activities. Or click the **printer** icon for options to print a paper copy of the current view. Scroll through the Week or Month views by clicking the forward and backward arrows found at the top left of the calendar. Or click the **Today** button to jump to the current date.

Want more information about a specific event on the calendar? Click the title of any event and a pop-up box displays that gives the full title of the event, when it's scheduled (date and time), and where it's scheduled (what room or space in the hall, or other location). Many entries will also include a Description with more details about the event, the contact person, etc. There's even a link to add the information to your own electronic calendar!

Need to schedule something on the calendar? FIRST, go to the calendar yourself to see what's available. THEN, contact Pamela Kotval, who is the primary contact for adding events to the calendar. She will need to know key information: **Title** of the event, **When** (date and start/end times), **Where** (room[s] or space[s] needed), and **Description** (any other information that you want posted). All scheduling requests should be in writing. Send an email to <pakotval@msn.com>. Updates generally are made within 24 hours.

Sokol Minnesota is compiling an email list to send information about last-minute events that do not make our *Slovo* deadlines. If you would like to know about Czech and/or Slovak related lectures, films, or performances, please send your name and email address to slovo@sokolmn.org.
All emails will be sent from sokolmn.org; we will not give your address to other groups.

Sokol Minnesota's National Claim to Fame By Mary Cahill, Women's Physical Director

A hallmark of Sokol is a *Slet*, (a gathering of Sokols). As a group of members from Sokol Minnesota prepares for our participation in the upcoming American Sokol 2013 Sports Festival at Milwaukee, June 25 –30, we thought it fitting to recall and recognize Jim Chlebecek's accomplishment as an all-around men's champion in the American Sokol 1953 *Slet*, which was held in Chicago. Jim shared some of his thoughts and experiences as a lifetime Sokol member and an accomplished gymnast.

Jim Chlebecek basically was born into Sokol. His father was Men's Physical Director of Sokol Minneapolis. Jim's earliest memories are attending functions at the various Sokol Halls with his parents and his many extended family members, all Sokol members. Jim started out as a tot in the gymnastics program, where he recalls learning dances, songs, *prostnas* (calisthenics), and performing the *prostna* numbers at the Festival of Nations for several years. "Everything was in Czech at the time," recalls Jim. He participated in gymnastics training at the Minneapolis Sokol Hall until that building was closed, and eventually the classes were moved to Sokol Saint Paul. Jim received training from traveling Sokol instructors who had escaped from communist Czechoslovakia,

as well as long-time Sokol Saint Paul instructors Hank Jansen and Frank Verner.

In addition to gymnastics training with Sokol, Jim participated in high school gymnastics, in which he became a distinguished competitor almost immediately (seen here in a photo taken at Roosevelt High School). He was first all-around high school state champion in 1949, when his high school team won the state championship. At the 1950 all-city annual Minneapolis meet, he was again first all-around, and placed first in numerous events in a subsequent six-state northern Midwest meet.

The first national *Slet* Jim recalls attending was at Chicago in 1946, where he was a spectator. By 1953, he actively competed in the national *Slet*. This was the year he



was a National Sokol Champion. Three judges awarded him a perfect score of 10 on the pommel horse.

When pressed for his favorite event, he acknowledged it was the high bar. 1953 was the last year he competed in a *Slet* as he entered military service and then moved to Faribault for his job as a high school music instructor. Jim is an accomplished violinist; the demands between practicing the violin and training for gymnastics kept him quite busy. Eventually, the violin and his career took precedence.

However, Jim has remained active with Sokol Minnesota and when schedules permit, he and his wife, Mary Jo, participate in and learn the Senior Cal 2 in years when Sokol Minnesota has participants in the national *Slet*.

Asked what advice he would give to young boys training in gymnastics today, Jim's response was immediate. "Form and continuity are most important. Solid execution over difficulty is important. Gymnastics is a great sport. You can challenge yourself as an individual, be a part of a team, and also contribute to the team overall. It is a sport that provides overall conditioning and strength training."

Sokol Minnesota is proud of you, Jim!

Congratulations, Graduating Senior Dancers By Louise Wessinger

Two long-time members of the *Taneční Mládež* and Teen folkdance groups are graduating from high school in June. Brittany Stepan, daughter of Dave and Darnell Stepan, graduates from Saint Anthony Village High School on June 7. During her high school years, Brittany played flute with her high school band. She is also a talented soccer player with both varsity and community league teams. As a Spanish student, Brittany went to Spain last year where she spent time living with a family to improve her language skills. Next fall, she will attend the University of Minnesota-Duluth, where she is planning to major in exercise science.



Brittany honored her Bohemian heritage by joining the *Taneční Mládež* at the age of four. She has been an active member ever since, becoming a group leader. Over the years she has performed for many events, including ones in Washington D.C., Chicago, and Cedar Rapids. One of her favorite memories is becoming great friends with everyone, especially Blanche Danecek. She suggests that younger dancers learn to polka because "we polka a lot." They should also have fun and pay attention to Louise.

Stefan Heyn was born in Slovakia. His parents, Peg Andersen and Gary Heyn, brought him to the United States when he was six years old. Stefan became a dancer after seeing

the *Taneční Mládež* perform at a Slovak Reunion party for adopting families.

Stefan attended Hopkins High School, graduating on June 6. In high school, he played trombone in regular and jazz band and traveled to Branson, Missouri, and Chicago, Illinois. Stefan was also on the Hopkins swim team, one year as a swimmer and four years as a diver. "Swimming was too repetitive and boring," he said. This year he was a team captain. He will attend UW River Falls next year. "I want to be a coach and work with kids."

Stefan's favorite Sokol memories are the Chicago *Slet* in 2005 and eating good Slovak food at events. Stefan says, "I can even make *halušky* myself, but it's hard to find sheep cheese in Minnesota." Another favorite memory is choreographing the still dance with Jimmy Metcalf. He advises younger dancers to listen to Louise and they will have a blast!

Best wishes to you both! We will miss you!

Yorkville Twins: Hilarious Adventures Growing Up In New York City, 1944–1962

By Joseph G. Gindele and John F. Gindele

Enjoy this excerpt from the memoir of twin brothers (and new Sokol Minnesota members) Joseph and John Gindele, who grew up on the rough streets of Yorkville on Manhattan's ethnic Upper East Side over 60 years ago. This is their story: what the city was like then, how it changed, and how two kids from immigrant parents became Robbinsdale, Minnesota, schoolteachers. Take a unique trip down memory lane with a humorous and endearing collection of stories involving

immigrants, survival, growing up, coming of age, and learning what it is to be an American. Even though this is not a Minnesota story, it is similar to that of many local immigrants.

Yorkville Twins is a Finalist winner in the prestigious 2012 Midwest Book Awards, coming in second in the Social Science category. Kudos to Joe and John for this award. Editor's Note: The authors requested that their mother's maiden name not be published.

Mumma: "Jak Se Mate?"

Mom (Marie), whom everyone called Mary, was born on a farm in 1906 in the small village of Pole, near Blatná. There were nine children in her family. When she was young, her mother tried to drown her and her siblings. No one knew why, but Mom thought it was because of very bad economic times. Her family was very poor. Some of her siblings died young or in the Great War, WWI, among them her brother Willy, a teenage soldier. Her brothers were stonecutters, later building stone monuments in Paris where there was more opportunity for work. Mom completed a sixth-grade education, which was standard for girls living in the country at that time.

Mom came to America on September 22, 1922, with her friend Frances Vibiry, sailing from Holland on the *Rotterdam*. She was almost 16 years old. She had an Aunt Josephine here who sponsored her and who owned a clothes factory in Brooklyn. Her Aunt Chadda had sent her \$300 for the second-class passage ocean voyage. What must have gone through her mind crossing the ocean at such a young age? What were living conditions aboard ship? How long was the journey?

She landed on Ellis Island (from 1892 to 1954 Ellis Island was the usual but not exclusive entry point for European immigrants coming into the U.S.) a place where she would unexpectedly stay for three weeks because Aunt Josephine died at age 33 before Mom arrived. With no one to claim her, they wouldn't let her enter the country, so the waiting began. She had other relatives in New York who intervened, which allowed her entry. A friend or relative, someone who was known to us as "Fat Mary," got Mom a second sponsor—Dr. Goldberg—thereby allowing her to remain in America.

As a house maker, working for \$25 a month, Mom cooked, cleaned, and cared for children of the Goldberg family and learned to eat and prepare corn on the cob,

matzo ball soup, and gefilte fish. In Europe, corn was for animals and definitely not for human consumption. She didn't understand why the corn stalk didn't get soft when cooked. She also shoveled coal, took away the ashes, made a fire to boil the laundry, sewed socks and did embroidery, shined a brass bed every week, and washed 15 windows every two weeks. She worked there for two to three years. Then she got a job with a Russian family who was nicer to her. The Finkels had a business making dill pickles and ketchup. They had two children and a big German shepherd dog. Mom's wages were now \$60 a month.

Speaking no words of English, she was told that if any boys tried to bother her, she should keep repeating to them in English, "Shut up! Shut up!" She worked most of her life as domestic, cleaning apartments, doing laundry, and ironing clothes for the same few people in Manhattan.

After Mom worked off her passage to America, she went up to the Catskill Mountains and worked as a chambermaid in one of the resorts. While there, she met a baker, Peter. Her friends urged her to say "yes" when he asked her to marry him. Mom did marry Peter. After all, he was older and somewhat established. In 1930, they left the Catskills and opened a bakery/lunch room in Stewart Manor, a village in Nassau County on Long Island.

The Manor Bakery specialized in French-American pastry *par excellence*. That's where Mom and Dad met in 1932. Dad was a hired hand who soon became their partner.

When Peter's daughter, who was about the same age as Mom, came to visit her father, Mom discovered that he had a wife back in Europe; Mom got an annulment. Soon after, Mom and Dad married in a civil ceremony in a court of law. The marriage fee was \$2. She was 27, he was 25. The year was 1933, and Peter bought out their part of the business.

Owning and working in a combination bakery/lunchroom cafe made Mom nervous, especially when the high school kids came in for cookies. They were mischievous and mixed the salt with sugar or loosened the caps of the salt and peppershakers so the contents spilled out when shaken. The local police came by and hung their guns and holsters on the coat rack. Mom never did like guns. Some of them actually expected free meals, taking advantage of these new immigrant "greenhorns" in America.

Contact the Yorkville Twins at Golden Valley Publishing, LLC
8014 Olson Memorial Highway #243
Golden Valley, MN 55427
Website: <www.YorkvilleTwinsBook.com>
Email: <info@YorkvilleTwinsBook.com>
ISBN: Softcover, 978-0-9839337-5-5

Minnesota Sokol Camp

83rd Annual BOOYA PICNIC on Sunday, August 11

from noon until 5 p.m.

northeast corner of Cross Lake at 19201 Woodland Acres, Pine City, Minnesota

Plan to attend this fun-filled, festive day.

Featured events include old time music, the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak

Folk Dancers, bingo/raffle prizes, and a silent auction to name a few.

Enjoy a bowl of booya, *koláče*, or a cabbage roll as you visit with fellow Sokol members and friends. Share your memories, photos, or mementos of when your children, parents, grandparents, or other relatives attended the Camp for a Booya, vacation, or Kids' Week.

We would love to see you there!

Scott and Kari Muyres are Booya Picnic 2013 co-chairs

SOKOL MINNESOTA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Renewals: Individual **\$45**; Couple **\$80**. Senior **\$35** (*over age 65 and member of Sokol for 5 years*); Senior couple **\$70**.
New memberships: Individual **\$50**; Couple **\$85**. This includes a one-time \$5 registration fee with our national organization, American Sokol Organization. Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's annual membership runs from January 1 to December 31. Year 2013 dues for members joining after June 30 are reduced. Sokol Minnesota members receive the *Slovo* with their membership.

Membership applications: <www.sokolmn.org> or by request from Norm Petrik (612-822-6147). Please send your completed membership application and check to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, Attn: Membership, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota

Generous Donations

By Joyce Tesarek, Finance Chair

Donating to Sokol is a way of life for all of us Sokols and friends. We want events and classes to happen and we want our historic hall to continue. We make all this happen with our time and our money. (And have fun, learn things, and make great friends at the same time!)

Recently, one of our Sokol Minnesota historians, Joan Sedlacek, was looking through some past *Slovo* issues. In the October 1980 issue, she found the lead article by Norman Sladek with the title "A Record Gift." At that time, our Sokol unit had the opportunity to purchase the neighboring property lot. At a membership meeting, Sokols were discussing how to pay for it. At first John and Georgiana Dolejsi said nothing; then John stood up, walked to the front of the room, handed a check to Board of Trustees Chairman Norm Sladek, and said, "This opportunity cannot be allowed to escape us. Please accept this gift to get the ball rolling." The check was for \$5,000. This kicked off the fund drive that got us a parking lot.

Generosity and determination have allowed us to replace antiquated steam heating and sewer pipes and install fire sprinklers in just the last few years. We are well on our way to completing Phase I of the installation of central air conditioning. Just a little more money and we can complete the a.c. project also.

Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors By Arlene Hamernik, Corresponding Secretary

Sokol Minnesota greatly appreciates your donations supporting Sokol programs and the refurbishing of our historic C.S.P.S. Hall. Donations are listed under the following categories: under \$100; \$100-\$499; \$500-\$999; \$1000-\$4999; \$5000+, and undisclosed.

General Fund: \$5000+: **Georgiana Dolejsi**.

Legacy Fund: Under \$100: **Donovan R. Johnson**.

\$100 - \$499: **Darlene Sitko**.

In-Kind Donation: Under \$100: **Joan Sedlacek**, food items for Šibřinky.



At our April membership meeting, our 78-year member, Georgiana Dolejsi, now age 95, was at it again. She made a formal presentation of another \$5,000 check to Sokol Minnesota President Denis Novak, to help ensure the Hall's future.

We are so grateful to Georgiana and to all our supporters for the contributions made to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota over the years. Many thanks!



Steve and Susie Fritzie stand with their generous donation of a commercial dough cutting machine, given in honor of her mother, Georgiana Dolejsi and all the koláče she has made at C.S.P.S. Hall.

Support C.S.P.S. Legacy Fund

Grants have funded several of the renovations of our C.S.P.S. Hall, but many of these grants also must be matched. We ask for your support to insure that upcoming projects can be completed as C.S.P.S. Hall celebrates its 126th year in 2013. Please consider a tax-deductible donation. *Thank you!*



Contact Joyce Tesarek at 612-822-6147 or <Joyce@sokolmn.org> to discuss volunteer or donation opportunities.

LEGACY FUND DONATION FORM
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State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

To help Restore, Renovate, and Refurbish the C.S.P.S. Hall, I make a tax deductible

single donation of \$ _____

5-year pledge of \$ _____

per year for total of \$ _____

Please send me information about ways to include the Legacy Fund in my/our will/estate plans.

I would like my gift designated:

in memory or in honor of:

List my name in the *Slovo* newsletter

List amount Don't list amount

Don't list name or amount

Make checks payable to **Sokol MN**.

Write **Legacy Fund** in the memo line.

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Mail to:

C.S.P.S. Hall Legacy Fund
383 Michigan Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Office Closing Temporarily During Search for New Consul By Robert Vanasek, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic

Last month I announced that my five-year term as Honorary Consul for the Czech Republic would expire at the end of April, and that I would not be seeking re-appointment to this position because my wife and I are retiring and plan to spend several months each year traveling outside of the state. I indicated my willingness to the Czech government to continue to perform the duties of Honorary Consul for the next several months while the Foreign Minister's office goes through the process of selecting a new Honorary Consul.

Unfortunately, the Foreign Minister's office has decided that its protocol does not allow this. Thus, the Honorary Consul's office at the C.S.P.S. Hall will need to be temporarily closed until a new Honorary Consul is appointed. I will be working with the Czech Consul General's office in Chicago as well as the Czech Embassy in Washington, D.C., to make sure that this process is expedited as quickly as possible. In the meantime, if you have any issues relating to the Czech Republic, please contact the Czech Consul General's office in Chicago directly: 312-861-1037.

Again, I want to express my appreciation to everyone who helped me promote and strengthen the political, economic, and cultural relationships between Minnesota and our neighboring states and the Czech Republic.



Šibřinky 2013: C.S.P.S. Hall on Saturday night, April 6, was filled with music, folk dancing, and good ethnic food. *Taneční Mládež* Dancers (children), led by Louise Wessinger, performed folk dances before the Cathy Erickson Band played old tyme music for polkas, waltzes, and swing dancing. During intermission, St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folkdancers (adult), also lead by Louise, entertained the audience. We had 89 paid attendance, plus many parents and family members of the children who folk danced. Total profit for the evening was \$717.62.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Czech and Slovak Culture Center of Minnesota Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International

cordially invite you to join us in recognizing
Robert E. Vanasek for his five years of service as
Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic
to Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota

June 5, 2013, at C.S.P.S. Hall

383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Social time: 6:00 p.m. Dinner: 6:45 p.m. Program to follow

Reservations required. \$5.00 per person (*no tickets sold at the door*)

R.S.P.V. by June 3

events@sokolmn.org or call Arlene: 763-571-6091

Minnesota Consular Corps Annual Meeting

By Don Pafko

As it does annually, the Canadian Consulate Office in Minneapolis hosted the annual meeting of the Minnesota Consular Corps in March. In attendance were many of the Honorary Consuls from Minnesota representing 24 different countries. In addition to a business meeting and dinner, the Consular



Corps elected new officers. Slovak Consul Don Pafko has served as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Minnesota Consular Corps for the past two years. Don is a 2012 graduate of the Consular Corps College in Washington, D.C.

Above: Canadian Consul General Jamshed Merchant and Honorary Slovak Consul Don Pafko.

NEWS & NOTES of INTEREST for Slovo Readers

The **Czech and Slovak Genealogical Society's** quarterly program is "Live from New York with Lisa Alzo." You may be familiar with Alzo as the author of *Baba's Kitchen: Slovak & Rusyn Family Recipes and Traditions*, but she is also a specialist in genealogy and Eastern European research. She is speaking via webinar on "Online Genealogy Resources" on Saturday, June 22, at 1 p.m. at the Minnesota Genealogical Society, 1185 Concord, Saint Paul. Go to <www.cgsi.org> for more information

Celebrate **Koláčky Days** on July 26–28 in Montgomery, Minnesota. Since 1929, this summer festival has given die-hard koláčky fans an opportunity to enjoy their favorite treat, as well as enjoy the Grand Day Parade, concerts, dances, food, and any number of fun events. www.montgomerymn.org/kdayindex.html
Note: Koláčky means "little koláče."

8 June/July 2013 Slovo

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Czech and Slovak Dancers at the Festival of Nations, May 2013, Saint Paul RiverCenter



Taneční Mládež, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota's children's folk dance group with leader Louise Wessinger (back row, left).



Czech and Slovak Moms and Dads posed with their folk dancing children. Back row (L-R): Martina Gurgel, Michael Sebek, Alena Youngberg, Jitka Sebek, Romana Pulkrabek, Lenka Bragg, Kyle Bragg, and dance program leader Louise Wessinger. This picture is significant because this is the first time these Czech and Slovak-born Moms have worn *kroje*.



Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Teen Dancers, with leader Louise Wessinger (back row, left).



Lipa Slovak Folk Dancers. Back L-R: Paul Knuth, Don Pafko, Sylvia Magana. Middle: Karen Varian, Vladia Gregorski, Katka Grajcarova, Lynn Barnes. Front: Zuzka Wilson, Amanda Chmiel, Lara Ciganko-Balach.

2013 Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers.

Back (L-R): Richard Sargent, John Topic, Jason Brozovich, Joe Stodola, Tom Aubrecht, Dave Martin, James Metcalf, Don Haselbauer, Dave Stepan, Scott Hinshaw, Chuck Draheim, Robert "Jake" Jacobson.

Middle: Pam Langworthy, Teresa Pojar, Louise Wessinger, Jan Knutson, Judy Aubrecht, Sue Martin, Don Andrle, Dawn Bulera, Jyni Koschak, Katie Haselbauer, Judy Metcalf.

Front: Megan Cahill, Diane Bell, Pat Andrle, Bobbi Jo Chandler.



Czechoslovakia: Guinea Pig of the Cold War?

By Dr. Josef A. Mestenhauer,
Distinguished International
Professor Emeritus, University of
Minnesota, Department of
Educational Policy and
Administration, Comparative and
International Development
Education
Honorary Consul of the Czech
Republic (1999-2009)



Editor's note: This article originally appeared on the Czech and Slovak Culture Center website <cs-center.org>

My focus in recent articles was on the year 1948 from a Czech perspective. I was an active participant in events at that time and have found it hard to explain our inept leadership and apathetic public, both of which allowed the communists to take over the country so quickly and easily.

What about the U.S.'s perspectives? The short answer is that the U.S. was also asleep. Its representatives were often absent from Czechoslovakia, attending ski races or vacationing in Italy. Policymakers were ignorant of history and culture, did not understand communism, and were poorly informed about the impact of Nazi occupation on the people's psyche. This is the view of one of the most respected historians at Boston College, Dr. Igor Lukes, who recently published the well-researched book *On the Edge of the Cold War*. Read it. It examines major problems in U.S. international relations and considers their implications for current attitudes of Czechs and Slovaks regarding the United States.

After Stalin took control, one after the other, of the Baltic States, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and East Germany, Western governments finally began to question Stalin's sincerity in promising to respect the independence and sovereignty of neighboring states, including Czechoslovakia. Our country was the last between East and West, still independent and reasonably free. Charles Bohlen, distinguished diplomat and scholar of the Soviet Union, coined a policy that figuratively placed Czechoslovakia as one of the chess pieces on the "chessboard of history" that must be watched to see if Stalin would keep his promise of non-interference. Stated differently, Czechoslovaks were guinea pigs in the world scheme of politics. Bohlen's policy assumed that the U.S. would do everything in its power to preserve Czechoslovakia's independence and remain free of influence from the U.S.S.R. The primary person who was supposed to do the watching was U.S. Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt, who was, unfortunately, asleep on the job. He did not arrive in Prague until the end of July 1945, and spent most of his time on his personal comforts and micromanaging the renovation of the U.S. Embassy building. Lukes argues that Steinhardt spent a disproportionate amount of time with his mistress and on personal business affairs with his law firm in New York. During the period between his arrival in 1945 and February 1948, he was absent 200 days, especially during the critical period of late 1947 and beginning of 1948. Lukes is also critical of the U.S. intelligence gathered at that time as inept and unprofessional, conducted so openly that communist intelligence agencies knew exactly what the U.S. was doing and who was doing it. Although the ambassador was expected to prevent infiltration from the Soviet and Czechoslovak intelligence agencies, he failed to do so. The communists had infiltrated the American embassy so completely that they had a detailed plan of the 100 rooms of the

Schönborn Palace and knew who occupied what room. While the intelligence agencies in Czechoslovakia were equally inept and unprofessional, they succeeded in infiltrating U.S. intelligence through intimidation, break-ins, arrests, and wiretaps. Some of the most confidential dispatches reached communist Prime Minister Klement Gottwald before the person to whom they were addressed.

The U.S. underestimated the subservience of the Czech and Slovak communists to the U.S.S.R. General Heliodor Pika, who was the Czechoslovak Military Attaché in Moscow during the war, already reported in 1941 that Soviet military contacts told him the war would not end with the defeat of Germany, but would continue as the capitalist war transformed into a socialist war. Czechoslovakia would then be part of the Soviet Union. The concept of socialist wars was articulated by the last Communist Party Congress, but western powers chose to ignore it just as they had ignored Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. The western powers also underestimated the role of the farmers, whom the communists bought with lands that formerly belonged to Sudeten Germans, because they believed that farmers would vote for the conservative parties as they had before the war. Although there were people and agencies that strongly doubted the intentions of the U.S.S.R. (e.g., State Department's Intelligence Research Department, John Foster Dulles, and some journalists) others, including President Roosevelt, Secretaries of State, Generals, the U.S. Ambassador, and some in the media, believed that it was possible to have a cooperative relationship with Stalin, and that the situation in Czechoslovakia was hopeful after the 1948 May elections took place.

Such optimism was not shared in the United Kingdom and France. The French informed the Czechoslovak Minister Prokop Drtina as late as January 20 that the communists planned to stage a coup, probably in the middle of February.

The biggest mistake was that U.S. intelligence failed to infiltrate the Czechoslovak secret services, while depending on personal contacts with important officials and the daily press. Thus nobody knew that the communists had detailed plans for a coup that included neutralizing any opposition from non-communist establishments, including Sokol, students, and the parliament.

What can we learn from these findings? I believe that our American culture has prevented us from seeing things as the communists saw them. Culture is a screen that programs what we know about others. One of our culture-bound mindsets is a tendency to wait for things to happen before reacting. Our legal system and our experimental mentality reinforce this trait; Ambassador Bohlen's policy about Czechoslovakia being a test case of Stalin's behavior is based on this mindset. Another cultural explanatory factor is our individualism. U.S. intelligence depended primarily on information from important leaders. There is a third explanation of what caused us to ignore communist ideology and view things in terms of national interests. Many in the intelligence establishments simply projected our theories that like people, states act so as to maximize their interests. This explanation views the Soviet adventures in Central Europe as serving their national interest to secure their borders. The "pursuance of interests" is also based on another U.S. cultural value, namely pragmatism. Related to this is the assumption that relationships between countries are based on a quid pro quo. This became an issue when Czechoslovakia requested a loan from the U.S. that it needed urgently to advance economic development, but the loan was refused until wartime monetary claims were paid. We failed to recognize that our refusal delighted the communists, who wanted Czechoslovakia cut off from the West. There was still another culturally-determined variable in the U.S. policies that I call "time orientation, which assumes that the future is an

extension of the present and the present an extension of the past. An example is a dispatch from a U.S. intelligence officer that started with Čech, Charles IV, Jan Hus, Comenius, and of course, Masaryk, to explain that strong democratic traditions would not allow the communists to gain power. Additionally, the traditional U.S. "idea of progress" can be seen in most of Steinhardt's dispatches, which optimistically declared that Czechoslovakia was making progress toward democracy, that opinion polls indicating support for communists was declining, that President Beneš was a guardian of democracy, and that the people would not tolerate a communist dictatorship. Ironically, after the communists took over, Steinhardt himself claimed that the coup was inevitable because Czechs felt betrayed in 1943 when Beneš signed a treaty with Moscow, while Washington and London were non-committal to signing a similar treaty, that the Yalta agreement consigned the country to the Soviet sphere of influence, and that Eisenhower refused to liberate Prague from the

Nazis. Steinhardt concluded, "Hindsight now indicates that further attention by us to the political aspect of the war might have given us control of Central Europe at nominal cost."

Communist propaganda took full advantage of intelligence gathered during from 1945 – 1948. It manipulated Czech public opinion to the viewpoint that the West was indifferent to their fate, that their country was sold out twice (in Munich and Yalta), and that they could not trust the Western powers. Many of these views even played a part during the recent presidential elections.

The moral of this story is that we American Czechs and Slovaks have more responsibilities than we might assume. We need to help establish and maintain relationships with people in our homelands, and we need to educate the American public at large that small countries matter, and we need to be aware of how our cultural assumptions influence our understanding.

Why We Go to the Czech and Slovak Sokol Hall By the Czech and Slovak Moms

Managing Editor's Note: *To many native-born Americans, joining an organization and volunteering seem natural. It is what we do! As I have come to know a few of the Czech and Slovak Moms, I have learned joining an organization is not second nature to those who were born in a Communist state. There was great suspicion and distrust of many organized entities. We laud the profound insights that the Moms are discovering at C.S.P.S. Hall in each other and about their new land, our United States. These comments tie in directly with Dr. Mestenhauser's article on the responsibilities that Czech and Slovak born, as well as U.S. born, must assume.*

Romana: When you live 6,000 miles away from the place of your birth, you love to connect with people who share or are interested in your culture; and this is exactly what the Sokol Hall does for my family and me. Many different events and activities, such as the Czech and Slovak Festival, Saint Nicholas and Easter celebrations, Šibřinky, Sunday Family Nights, language classes and children's theatre teach my children about the rich culture of their ancestors and relatives on the other side of the ocean. All immigrants sometimes experience a certain degree of homesickness, but the connections I have made through the beautiful Sokol Hall make the distance between my home in Minnesota and my parents' home in the northern part of the Czech Republic much shorter. Thank you, Sokol Hall!

Eva: I come to Sokol Hall to socialize with other Czech moms, to expose my children to Czech culture, and to embrace it. I feel I found friendship with other moms that will last a long time ... for the rest of my life.

Alena: I love to come to Sokol to get the feeling of being surrounded by my own. It is also great to be able to laugh out loud. Being part of a different culture is great learning, but many times you are not able to fill the space that is hungry for what you left behind. That is why I come to Sokol.

Markéta: I love coming to Sokol as it has become the "cultural house" where many of us Czech moms, socialize, laugh, cook, dance, learn traditions. Especially I believe it is important to uphold our Czech traditions for our children!

Michaela: Let me start out by saying how very fortunate I feel to be able to live in this great country. Having lived under communism really makes me appreciate the good lives that we have here. Immigrant experience, however, is not without challenges. Being so removed from the old country, from the people that you love and most of all no longer being surrounded by people with the same mentality ... all of this can be very challenging and quite sad at times. The Sokol organization has changed all that for me and for my family. I have felt incredibly blessed having met so many wonderful Czech and Slovak people. Sokol is also providing an environment for my daughter where she can learn and carry on the traditions of the country of my

origin. This includes the dance lessons, language school, and the culinary arts. Thank you, Sokol, for all you do.

Jitka: Are language and culture strongly embedded in our genes? Is it how we label specific ethnicities? Is it why the term "mother tongue" exists? Is it why women are the language carriers? For any or all of these reasons, my intuition led me to the Moms' Club, Saturday dance lessons, and speaking more often in my native language. Perhaps impossible to achieve as a solitary entity, but as another equally determined person suggested: find something you are willing to sacrifice a lot to achieve, surround yourself with those who have specific skill sets beyond your own, don't underestimate the time commitment needed, and don't ignore luck when it comes calling. Having the C.S.P.S. Hall and the Czech and Slovak community, I definitely feel lucky. Thank you, all!

Lenka: Sokol in My Life. For the first part of my 20 years of living in the United States, I did not feel a need to belong to an organization. This may have stemmed from an aversion toward organizations created in me while growing up in communist Czechoslovakia. Belonging to any organization was highly political and associated with the Communist Party. After my children were born here in Minnesota, I became involved in the Czech and Slovak Mom's group with the goal of keeping the culture alive for our children. It was then that I realized the importance of belonging to an organization and became a Sokol member. Sokol has since provided the same experiences for my children that I cherished when growing up in Czechoslovakia. I am glad I was able to overcome my reservations about being a part of an organization. Sokol has a wonderful history here in Minnesota, as well as in the Czech Republic. My grandfather wrote in his war memoir that while living in exile in Vienna, his family belonged to a number of Czech organizations, but the first and most important was Sokol. When he attended Sokol *Slet* in Prague in 1938, he vowed to defend the Republic against Hitler and was encouraged to openly protest, risking his freedom. My grandfather was not able to take part in Sokol after he returned to post-war Czechoslovakia, but I am proud to continue in his footsteps and have Sokol an important part of my family life.

**ATTEND AND VOLUNTEER!
SOKOL Minnesota FUNDRAISERS
for our historic 126-year-old C.S.P.S. Hall**

Children's Culture Camp, June 10 – 14

Children ages 7 – 14. (see page 3)

Registration form is online.

Information: Louise: 651-452-9240

Minnesota Sokol Camp Booya, August 11

Noon – 5 p.m., Cross Lake, Pine City

Fun-filled day for the entire family

Czech and Slovak Festival, September 15

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Information: Joyce: 612-822-6147

Check for event updates: www.sokolmn.org

Sokol Minnesota on Facebook: www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota



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Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* June/July 2013



Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota: Brittany Smisek

By Don Pafko, Honorary Slovak Consul

The Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Pageant was held April 6, 2013, in Montgomery, Minnesota. The winner and new Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota is Brittany Smisek of Montgomery, Minnesota. Brittany will represent Minnesota in the 27th annual Miss Czech-Slovak USA pageant in Wilber, Nebraska, on August 3 and 4.

Honorary Slovak Consul Don Pafko, shown here with the 2013 queen, was one of the three judges for this year's pageant.

Brittany Smisek is the daughter of Michelle and Jeffrey Smisek of Lonsdale. She is a student at Minnesota State University in Mankato. For her talent, Smisek performed a vocal solo in Czech. Her ambition in life is to obtain a degree in elementary education and teach in the community in which she grew up. Also part of the royal Czech-Slovak Minnesota court are Princess Corbin Jerde and Miss Congeniality Krissy Kocina.