

20th American Sokol Convention, St. Louis, April 24-27

Attending from our Sokol Minnesota Unit: Marit Lee Kucera, Norm Petrik, Joyce Tesarek, and Joan Sedlacek (who represented Sokol Crete, Nebraska, and Western District Education)

Norm Petrik: It was a pleasure to attend the four-day-American Sokol Convention in Saint Louis on April 24-27. We met with members from units around the country in large and small groups to discuss national and local issues important to Sokol. Sokol focuses on physical, educational, cultural, and social programs, but individual units vary greatly in how much they focus on each of these four areas. There was emphasis on listening to one another. I believe Sokol Minnesota focuses quite well on all four aspects. I especially enjoyed getting to know the several Czech-speaking delegates.

Our new American Sokol President is Jean Hruby from the Chicago area. She has worked in the national Sokol office before, she seems to be a detail person, plus she has studied at a university in Czech Republic; she has much experience with the educational and cultural aspects of Sokol.

The next American Sokol Slet/Sports Festival/ Event (full name not yet decided) will be in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in summer 2017. The next American Sokol convention will be in Cleveland in 2018.

Joyce Tesarek: Sokol is a local, a district, a national, and an international organization. When we join Sokol Minnesota, we also become a member of our Western District, American Sokol, and the World Sokol Federation, as well. I never gave this much thought as a benefit of membership, but this convention made it clear how important and valuable that can be.

There were 32 Sokol units represented at the convention, from New York and Baltimore to Texas, California and everywhere in between. What warm, enthusiastic, welcoming people they all are! As a Sokol member when I travel, I can contact a Sokol unit in that area and tour their Hall, be invited to activities, and even enjoy hospitality from members in that city. A Sokol Minnesota member included Sokol in his European travels and was hosted by Sokols in Paris as well as in Prague.

Our youth gymnasts compete and make friends with gymnasts from other units at district and national competitions (*slety*). Plans are underway for our Sokol youth to have a Facebook page where kids heading to college or moving to another city can find a Sokol Hall or other Sokol members to connect with in their new town. I made a contact who is willing to introduce my niece, who is studying in New York City, to some of their youth and gatherings.

Over our 135 years, Minnesota Sokols have hosted Czech and Slovak dignitaries and ambassadors, from composer Antonín Dvořák to President Václav Havel. Participating in the international *slety* (held every six years in Prague) with Sokols from around the world is an amazing experience. Sokol units are a lot more than just your local fitness club! Membership has worldwide benefits! (*to page 3*)

UPCOMING EVENTS SUMMER 2014

Kids' Culture Camp
June 9 – 13

Board of Trustees
June 11, 7 p.m.

BOT Cleanup Day
June 14, starting at 8 a.m.

Board of Directors
June 19, 7 p.m.

August Slovo Deadline
July 1

Board of Trustees
July 9, 7 p.m.

Board of Directors
July 17, 7 p.m.

September Slovo Deadline
August 1

Sokol Minnesota Singers
August 5 and 19, 10 a.m.

Board of Trustees
August 13, 7 p.m.

Board of Directors
August 21, 7 p.m.

Next Membership Meeting
August 22, 7 p.m.



Western District Delegates: **Joan Sedlacek** (Minnesota), **Norm Petrik** (Minnesota), **Joyce Tesarek** (Minnesota), **Marit Lee Kucera** (Minnesota), Bradley Hess (Cedar Rapids), Allison Gerber (Cedar Rapids, Western District President and National Board Member), Mickey Dalton (South Omaha), Jolene Dalton (South Omaha and National Bylaws Chair), and Dan Rannells (Omaha).

**Czech and Slovak
Sokol Minnesota
2014 Board of Directors**

President

Judy Aubrecht

First Vice President

Megan Cahill

Second Vice President

Doreen McKenney

Recording Secretary

Cindy Coulter

Corresponding Secretary

Arlene Hamernik

Treasurer

Don Haselbauer

Financial Secretary

Tom Aubrecht

Sergeant at Arms

Ed Hamernik

Members at Large

Jason Brozovich

Marketa Palkova Resong

Membership Director

Norm Petrik

Board of Budget and Finance

Joyce Tesarek, Chair

Educational Director

Jean Draheim

Board of Instructors

Mary Cahill,

Women's Physical Director

Megan Cahill,

Men's Physical Director

Publicity Director

Jyni Koschak

Board of Trustees

Chuck Draheim, Chair

Interim Gambling Manager

Ken Wyberg

Telephone: 651-290-0542

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

www.sokolmn.org

Prezidentův komentář/President's Notes By Judy Aubrecht

Pozdrav bratři a sestry/Greetings Brothers and Sisters

In mid-June, the much-anticipated light rail train begins to run between Minneapolis and Saint Paul. **John Topic**, a Sokol Minnesota member and a Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancer, has been working for most of the past two years on four Quebec granite sculptures commissioned for the light rail stations. Last June, **Jyni Koschak**, my husband **Tom Aubrecht**, and I (all Sokol Minnesota members and folk dancers) drove the Great River Road to Stockholm, Wisconsin, to the Myklebust and Sears Studios. Two artists, Macalester College art professor Stanton Sears and his wife, Andrea Myklebust, own the farm, which includes both the large sculpture studio and the Black Cat Farmstead, which is Myklebust's weaving studio and store. During our tour, we saw work being done on the light rail sculptures, as well as an upcoming decorative sculpture for a freeway bridge in Saint Louis Park, Minnesota. We learned that Quebec granite is very hard and brittle. Machine tools, such as a grinder with a diamond head and a bumper hammer (like a small jackhammer), are used to make the sculptures. John and his partner work year-round outside under a light plastic shelter. Like many natural materials, soft spots or small cracking occur in the stone, which require redesigning to go deeper into the granite. Each sculpture has a Minnesota wheel theme: an ox cartwheel, train wheel, tractor tire, and a semi-truck rim. On a hot day last summer, the Westgate Station sculpture was installed with a crane near the KSTP tower on University Avenue in Minneapolis. A second sculpture is located at the Raymond Avenue Station also on University Avenue. The final two sculptures will be installed in this June at the Union Depot station in Saint Paul.



John grew up on a farm near New Prague, Minnesota. His family and relatives spoke Czech and enjoyed ethnic foods. He likes many kinds of art, including drawing. John started with sculpture about twenty years ago, when he volunteered on evenings and weekends for three years at the bronze foundry, headed by Professor Sears at Macalester College. When Sears needed more help with bronze sculptures, John was hired. One of John's favorite bronze sculptures is a large bronze flame on the plaza outside the Longfellow Grille on Lake Street in Minneapolis, near the Mississippi River Bridge. When the raw materials for bronze sculptures became too expensive, the studio moved into stone sculptures.

We saw many creative activities at the farm. Class projects by Macalester art students decorate a hillside. Sheep had recently been shorn and their wool was spun into yarn at the weaving studio. We were impressed with the exciting artwork being created on the farm. We could see that John had found a wonderful place to use his artistic talents. When you are traveling along University Avenue or Lake Street, stop to take a look at the sculptures that Sokol Minnesota member John Topic helped to create

After the tour, we stopped for pie at the Stockholm Pie Company before traveling to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the 2013 Sokol Sports Festival. *Nazdar!*

Honorary Consuls, plus Sokol Minnesota 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: open

Website: Craig Johnson

Volunteer Coordinator: open

Taneční Mládež and Teen Folk Dancers: Louise Wessinger

Hall Contacts: Chuck Draheim, Ed Hamernik, Joe Landsberger

Event Monitor: Ken Wyberg

Slovo newsletter: Marit Lee Kucera, Christy Banks, Deb Ziskovsky

E-Addresses: President: president@sokolmn.org | Board of Directors: board@sokolmn.org | Education/Language Programs: education@sokolmn.org | Events: events@sokolmn.org | Czech/Slovak Festival: Festival@sokolmn.org | Finance/Fund Raising/Legacy Fund: finance@sokolmn.org | Fitness Programming: fitness@sokolmn.org | Folk Dancing: folkdancing@sokolmn.org | Gift Shop: giftshop@sokolmn.org | Hall Rental: hallrental@sokolmn.org | Housekeeping: housekeeping@sokolmn.org | Membership: membership@sokolmn.org | Newsletter: slovo@sokolmn.org | Planning: planning@sokolmn.org | Publicity: publicity@sokolmn.org | Public Relations: publicrelations@sokolmn.org | Social Media: socialmedia@sokolmn.org | Treasurer: treasurer@sokolmn.org | Board of Trustees: trustees@sokolmn.org | Webmaster: webmaster@sokolmn.org

(from page 1) **Joan Sedlacek**: In an organization as widespread as Sokol, we don't see each other often. *Slety* and Conventions are, many times, our only chance. These are filled with meetings and activities. Our convention meetings began before 8 a.m. and ended in the evening, once after 10 p.m. The delegates worked hard for the good of Sokol. Thank you to the outgoing officers and support to the new ones. Members of Sokol St. Louis hosted a wonderful evening at their hall, with everyone getting a chance to visit.

We have challenges ahead, just as have defeats and victories behind. Together we can meet the challenges and together we can overcome them. Sokol Was. Sokol Is. Sokol Will Be.

Marit Lee Kucera: As one of 31 first-time convention delegates, most of whom have been active Sokols in their local units and districts for years, I actually found it exhilarating to spend 30+ hours in less than three days concentrating on the goals of our organization. It was a well-planned and well-run conference. Pre-convention committees ironed out the tedious details, which saved time and long late-night meetings. Delegates still had plenty of input and did not hesitate to express opinions. American Sokol decided not to raise dues, but to increase the registration fee to \$15, a one-time charge.

M. L. Kucera (left) and Joyce Tesarek wore the perníčky ornaments as necklaces and sold more than 60 ornaments.



Sokol Minnesota went the extra mile to promote our unit by giving every delegate a copy of our *Slovo* and our event postcard. During session breaks and at the banquet party at Sokol St. Louis on Saturday night, we sold Dr. Josef Mestenhauer's book of 52 essays, *Shifting Landscapes in Central Europe*, and the *perníčky* ornaments made by The Moms.



Joan Sedlacek (right) staffed Sokol Minnesota's sales table at Sokol St. Louis.

Here are a few thoughts that I brought back from Saint Louis:

- Sokols don't do things for personal profit or glory.
- Respect and honor our past; at the same time, be open to change in the future.

- Commit to excellence with a positive attitude, respect diverse opinions, build trust through integrity and by example, promote interdependent thinking, be proactive by working together for a common good, prioritize needs, and emphasize that we are individually unique but together complete.

These may sound like buzzwords, but they are much more than jargon. They are building blocks for a stronger organization. The national convention stressed the importance of working together as individuals and as units for a vibrant, strong organization, at all levels, that will last another 150 years.

We have a great opportunity right here in Western District to help produce the **2017 slet in Cedar Rapids**. Sokol members know all about *slety*, but the rest of the world doesn't have a clue about our events and great traditions. Allison Gerber, our Western District president, is urging all of us to create a descriptive, but inclusive name that says it all: sports, competition, festival, and family fun to celebrate and promote the XXV national Sokol festival. Cedar Rapids has a two-week Freedom Festival each summer, starting in mid-June and running through July 4. It would be great to tie into and add to that already-established event with a descriptive name that also captures attention and makes our *slet* a must-see event. Send your ideas to Allison Gerber <akgerb@aol.com>.

Sokol Minnesota Annual Memberships

Renewals: Individual \$50; Couple \$90. Senior \$40 (over age 65 and member of Sokol for 5 years); Senior couple \$80.

New memberships: Individual \$55; Couple \$95. 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. Dues are reduced for members joining after June 30.

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 55102

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 news, articles, and pictures digitally to <slovo@sokolmn.org>. **The deadline for the August 2014 issue is July 1, 2014.**

Member Volunteer *Slovo* staff: Christy Banks, copy editor; M. L. Kucera, managing editor and production editor; Deb Ziskovsky, labels; Joyce Tesarek, photographer; Doreen McKenney, ad designer; Mary Cahill, mailing production; Joan Sedlacek, mailing; with Jean Draheim, Arlene Hamernik, Norm Petrik, and Jitka Sebek, advisors. Photographs for this issue provided by Judy Aubrecht, Art Burkart, Blanche Danacek (Sinjun Strom Photography), Chuck Draheim, M. L. Kucera, Judy Metcalf, Don Pafko, Joyce Tesarek.

New policy: names of members appear in bold face type in articles and cutlines.

This June/July 2014 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; 3 consecutive issues: \$65; 10 consecutive issues: \$175. Ad reservation deadline is 6 weeks before publication (June 15 for August issue), with ad and payment due by copy deadline (July 1 for August issue).

***Slovo* gift subscriptions and non-member renewals** are \$15/year (10 issues). (Rate is good through May 2015.) Please include name, address, phone number, and email address with your new/renewing non-member subscription. Make your check to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota; send to: Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *Slovo* Subscriptions/Renewals, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102.

Extra copies of *Slovo* are \$2 each, plus postage, while supply lasts.

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

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 hold all future issues until you notify us. We pay 49¢ for each returned issue.

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!*

Corbin Jerde: Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Queen 2014-2015 By Kathy Jerde

Sokol Minnesota member **Corbin Jerde**, Golden Valley, Minnesota, was crowned Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Queen for 2014-2015, on April 12 in Montgomery. Miss Czech-Slovak U.S. Ann Hand (Kansas), many past Czech-Slovak Minnesota queens, the Czech Heritage Junior Royalty, and other royalty from nearby towns attended the pageant. Corbin also won the Talent Award and the Kroj Award. Queen Corbin will represent Minnesota at the national pageant in August in Wilbur, Nebraska.

Corbin just completed her freshman year in the Honors Program at Iowa State University, Ames, where she is pursuing a double major in journalism and advertising, with the intention of earning her master's degree in film and digital media. Corbin is an active member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, *Trend Magazine* (a student-run publication that focuses on fashion, beauty, body and lifestyle in the Iowa State University community), and Cantamus women's choir.

Corbin has performed in vocal competitions and festivals around the world. Her achievements include performing as a descant soprano in a masterworks performance at the Sydney Opera House in

Australia, solo competition winner at Twin Cities Jewish Chorale, chorus member for a masterworks performance at Carnegie Hall in New York City, and the bronze medal at the Golden Gate International Choral Festival Solo Competition in the youth division.

Corbin is honored to be the 25th Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Queen. She looks forward to sharing Czech-Slovak traditions across the Midwest, as well as spending time with Princess Heather Vikla, and Miss Congeniality Melissa Bastyr. Corbin wants to thank the Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota organization and Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota for their support and encouragement.



Special honored guest at this year's Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota pageant was Rosemary Macko Wisnosky, Honorary Slovak Consul for the state of Illinois, pictured here (left) with our Queen Corbin, who is of Slovak heritage, and Honorary Slovak Donald Pafko (Minnesota).



Wisconsin Czech-Slovak Festival: June 20-22 in Phillips By Bill Moravek, Wisconsin Festival Chairman

Over 3,000 people attended last year's Czech-Slovak Festival in Phillips, Wisconsin; visitors came from 17 states, from as far away as Florida, Texas, California, Washington, and Alaska, plus from 91 different cities in Wisconsin, 20 cities from Minnesota, and 18 cities from Illinois.

Sokol Minnesota members Slovak Honorary Consul **Don Pafko** and Czech Honorary Consul Candidate **Marit Lee Kucera** are two of the judges for the 2014-2015 Miss Czech-Slovak Wisconsin pageant, one of many highlights during the weekend. Other events include a Lidice Memorial Service, koláčky baking contest, polka mass, pork n' sauerkraut dinner, antique farm equipment, vendors, music, and dancing. The 2014-2015 Czech-Slovak Minnesota Queen **Corbin Jerde** will perform on Saturday afternoon June 21 with a vocal solo.

Wisconsin Czech-Slovak Festival details: <<http://www.czech-slovak-festival.com>>

Alanna Jade Burkart, 2013-2014 Miss Czech-Slovak Wisconsin, attended the coronation of Corbin Jerde, 2014 - 2015 Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota, on April 12 in Montgomery, Minnesota.

Membership Updates By Norm Petrik, Membership Director

At the April 10 Board of Directors meeting, **Olga Wiegel** from Yuma, Arizona, was accepted into membership in Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota; she has been receiving the *Slovo* as a subscriber, but chose to join Sokol Minnesota as well. Welcome to Sokol Minnesota!

Cinnamon Whaley, Minneapolis, a former member, was accepted again as a member at the May 16 membership

meeting. She has many interests include cooking, festivals, and films. Welcome back to Sokol Minnesota! Our membership stands at 286.

Cinnamon along with her partner Ryan Beck-Buysse presented the program on beer tasting at the May Featured Friday Meeting, and it was excellent!

Our next Featured Friday meeting is August 22. Karen Varian, president of the Rusyn Association of Minnesota, will speak about Rusyns, an eastern Slavic ethnic group; many Rusyns live in Slovakia

Save the Date: October 24 Dance and Dinner By Kathy Roushar Jorgenson, CGSI President

The Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) and Sokol Minnesota are co-sponsoring a dance on Friday evening October 24, at C.S.P.S. Hall. Join us for an evening of music and dancing to the music of *The Jerry Kadlec Trio*. There will be an optional dinner before the dance and refreshments will be available for sale.

Read more details in the August *Slovo* or <www.sokolmn.org>.

Calling: Event Chairs and Volunteer Coordinator

The **volunteer coordinator** position has been vacant for some time. It is a position that is really fun, especially if you like to organize; plus you can make phone calls from the comfort of your home. Maybe you would like to join the BOD team but have not been asked by someone from BOD. If you are interested, don't hesitate, please contact us.

Sokol Minnesota is also looking for **Event Chairs**:

- Co-chair: **joint Dinner/Dance** with CGSI, Friday, October 24.
- Chair or co-chairs: cook and prep the **Roast Pork Dinner**, Sunday, October 26.
- Chair or co-chairs: **Pancake Breakfast**, Sunday, November 23.
- Chair or co-chairs: the **Membership Holiday Party**, January 2015 (*date to be announced*).

If you are interested, please **contact Doreen 952-941-0426**. Sadly we had to cancel one event this year because we did not have a chair person step forward. We really need your help to continue having our wonderful events. *Thank you!*

Sokol Minnesota celebrates the 25th annual Czech and Slovak Festival at our own C.S.P.S. Hall on Sunday, September 14, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. <festival@sokolmn.org> or Joyce Tesarek at 612-822-6147. Become involved!

Help make this anniversary event extra special!

February, March, and April Board of Directors (BOD) Meetings By Cindy Coulter, Recording Secretary

February BOD Retreat: In place of the usual Thursday night BOD meeting, the BOD met on Saturday morning, February 15, for a retreat at the C.S.P.S. Hall to brainstorm goals for 2014. Top goals include Sokol branding and marketing, publicizing Sokol as the go-to place for everything Czech and Slovak, and formation of a rental team.

The BOD discussed a pledge initiative in which BOD members will commit to pledge a donation to the C.S.P.S. Legacy Fund to restore, renovate, and refurbish the C.S.P.S. Hall. Event planning is underway with the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center for a potential Fall 2014 Wine Tasting and Silent Auction Event that may include a lecture on wines and a food spread.

March BOD Meeting: The gaming booth at Hot Rods was closed on March 19, 2014, and the gaming employees were let go. The BOD thanks **Ken Wyberg** as Interim Gaming Manager for his time in closing the Hot Rods gaming booth per protocol with Minnesota regulations. Gaming will continue at Keenan's Bar, which has been a successful site for Sokol.

Sokol's insurance agent reviewed the insurance policy, and travel insurance has been incorporated into the policy. It is worth noting that the fire suppression sprinkling system installation reduced the insurance rates, but Sokol's premiums have actually increased because the building property value increased to \$1.78 million.

The Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) holds a convention every two years. And this year, we are fortunate that the CGSI Convention will be held in Saint Paul on October 24 and 25. CGSI's President, **Kathy Jorgenson**, is working with Sokol on a joint event at the C.S.P.S. Hall scheduled for Friday, October 24. Stay tuned for future news on this special event.

An assortment of events (e.g., guest speakers, dance performances, films, beer tasting) have been scheduled for membership meetings to bring all members together for fellowship, fun, and short updates on Sokol state of affairs. Programs are posted in the *Slovo* and on <www.sokolmn.org>. We look forward to seeing you at Featured Fridays!

April BOD Meeting: The Gaming committee has been busy preparing for a routine meeting with the Minnesota State Gambling Compliance Specialist, scheduled for April 17. Since charitable gaming for Sokol takes place at only one location now, there will be some grateful relief in the accounting responsibilities for the Gaming committee.

The Sokol gymnasts will be competing at the Western District competition in Crete, Nebraska, on April 11 - 13.

Sokol event chairs are hard at work preparing several upcoming spring events for which many volunteers will be needed: April 13 Pancake Breakfast (Chairs: **Megan Cahill, Jason Brozovich**), May 1 - 4 Festival of Nations (Chairs: **Jason Brozovich, Dawn Bulera, Doreen McKenney, Joyce Tesarek, Louise Wessinger**), and May 14 Garage Sale (Chairs: **Marit Lee Kucera, Doreen McKenney**). *Koláče* baking days will be held at the C.S.P.S. Hall on April 12 and 26, and the *koláče* team always appreciate helping hands.

Please consider helping the Publicity team get the word out to the public regarding Sokol's fun-filled, educational events/programs. And remember that in bringing people together and in making connections, we at Sokol may make all the difference in the world to a Czech-Slovak friend in need – so spread the word!

Sokol Minnesota's online calendar is an excellent communication tool to inform members of C.S.P.S. Hall availability, as well as upcoming events. If members would like to schedule a meeting or update an online calendar posting, please contact master calendar scheduler Pam Kotval at <pakotval@msn.com> or 952-944-0745 so she can continue to keep us up to date on C.S.P.S. Hall availability!



CZECH TOURS 2014

June 16 - 30: Heritage Tour...\$2,965

September 1 - 15: Bohemia Tour...\$2,985

Includes airfare from Minneapolis, welcome and farewell dinners with music, land transportation by motor coach, hotels, breakfasts, sightseeing (some entrance fees), fully escorted by Hana (20+ years experience).

For more information, contact:

Hana Matousek at CZECH TOURS

•952-440-4289 •CzechTours@aol.com

News from the Board of Trustees (BOT) By Chuck Draheim, BOT Chair

Important changes are coming to C.S.P.S. Hall concerning lighting and building access.

Lighting: Due to recent government actions phasing out the manufacture and sale of incandescent light bulbs greater than 60 watts, the BOT is examining lamp usage at the Hall and is establishing a new lamp policy. BOT member **Dan Bednar** is spearheading the effort to identify and purchase Light Emitting Diode (LED) lamps suitable for our use.

Currently, LED lamps are not readily available in all forms that the Hall uses, however, the lamps are constantly evolving and becoming more readily available and at prices that are more attractive. Current generation LED lamps reportedly have life spans up to 25 times longer than incandescent lamps and four-plus times that of Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL).

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Lighting Policy (adopted April 9, 2014)

Purpose: To standardize the use and purchase of lighting instruments used in the C.S.P.S. Hall.

Scope: This policy applies to all lighting instruments and to all members of Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota.

Policy: 1. All lamps used in the C.S.P.S. Hall will be LED lamps to the extent possible. 2. Incandescent and CFL lamps will be phased out as lamp replacement becomes necessary. 3. Lamps will be purchased only by a member of the Board of Trustees. 4. Only approved lamps, purchased by the BOT, will be eligible for reimbursement by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota. 5. A list of approved lamps will be posted on the exterior and interior of the janitorial cabinet in the second floor storage room. 6. All lamps will be stored in the janitorial cabinet. 7. The BOT shall be notified of any lamps needing replacement.

Thanks to everyone for complying with this new policy.

Building Access: Recently we have had numerous reports of “strangers” who have no legitimate reason for being in the Hall and have not been granted access by either the BOD or BOT.

In 2012 the BOT was granted permission to re-key the four perimeter doors leading into the Hall. Implementation was delayed to allow completion of several construction projects. New keys were distributed in late May to a total of 63 persons and/or functions who were identified by the BOT and BOD as needing periodic access to the Hall.

In general, keys were issued only to Sokol members. Exceptions are certain service providers and client organizations that the BOT and BOD feel can be granted unsupervised access. Each key is stamped “Do Not Duplicate”, sequentially numbered, and issued to a specific person. All authorized key holders received a copy of the key control policy and signed for their key. Keys will be accounted for on an annual basis.

Implementation of this policy enhances the security of our building, contents of the Hall, and security of those who carry out the functions needed to keep Sokol Minnesota a vibrant organization.

Custodial Services: On April 11, 2014, Marsden Building Maintenance, LLC, began providing custodial services at the Hall. Scheduled cleaning times are Friday and Monday mornings. To allow for flexibility, we have a month-to-month contract that can be cancelled without cause within 60 days. Any comments or concerns relating to building cleaning should be directed to Jake Jacobson: (651-699-7900) or **6 June/July 2014 Slovo**

<Housekeeping@sokolmn.org> (this email address is listed in each issue of the *Slovo* on page 2).

Next BOT cleanup workday is June 14, starting at 8 a.m. Let’s pitch in and help get the C.S.P.S. Hall organized and in spic-and-span shape now that summer has arrived.

...And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: At the BOT’s April 19 cleanup day, we were shocked to find that numerous shards of brick, some rather large, had fallen off the west façade of the Hall. This presents a serious safety and liability issue for Sokol Minnesota. The BOT will aggressively seek proposals from several contractors to address this issue and present details and a budget to the BOD.



Sokol is faced with numerous building maintenance and repair issues that have been neglected for many years and are now reaching a critical state, requiring immediate attention and action. Among these are: replacement of the fire escape, repair/replacement of the basement steps, repair/replacement of the lean-to on the north end of the building, repair and re-striping of the parking lot, repair of roof leaks and replacement of undersized roof drains, correction of several structural issues, redirection of our sump water to the storm sewer system, and the repair and repainting of the building exterior.

These projects require the expenditure of large sums of money, money that Sokol currently does not have available. Portions of the costs may be covered by grants; however, Sokol cannot continue to rely on grants to fund our projects. We must find alternate funding sources, chief among these are our own members. As Sokol moves forward with these projects, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the building fund. Any amount donated is greatly appreciated. *Thank you!*

MASHER

TAILORS & CLEANERS

“Keeping You in Stitches Since 1913”

916 MAIN STREET HOPKINS, MINNESOTA 55343 • 952-938-8052

Two Teen Dancers Graduate By Louise Wessinger, Director of Taneční Mládež Folk Dancers

Two members of the Taneční Mládež Children's Dance Group since age 4 are set to graduate from high school in June. We wish both of these young women success and happiness

Jessica Metcalf, whose parents are **Judy** and **Neil Metcalf**, graduates from Tartan



High School on June 5. Her brother James, a 14-year member of the Taneční Mládež Dancers, is now a member of the Saint Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers, as is their mom Judy. For her first performance with the adult group, Jessie danced with her brother at the 2014 Festival of Nations.

At Tartan, Jessie was a member of the math team, earned two letters in choir, and took part in several theater productions. She was also a Student of the Month. Her fondest memories of her years in the dance group include performances for the Svätý Mikuláš Party in December, dancing at Sokol Camp in Pine City in August, and the Festival of Nations in May.

Jessie says, "Spending 14 years with mostly the same people makes you a family. I have loved my time in the dance group. I will never forget it!" Next fall, she will attend Minnesota State University in Mankato, where she plans to study Manufacturing Engineering.

Blanche Danecek, daughter of Blanca and Andrew Danecek, graduates from Maple Grove High School on June 7. Blanche played basketball and competed in track and field events, as well as cross-country skiing. Blanche also lettered in Academics, making the A honor roll regularly. Special high school memories include a 10th-grade band trip to San Antonio and cross-country ski trips. She will attend the University of Wisconsin in

Madison, where she plans to major in biochemistry.

Blanche says "I have made many life-long friendships and memories in the Sokol community, including my inspiring dance instructor, Louise. Traveling to Chicago in 2005 for the Sokol Slet with folk dance groups from all over the United States was an eye-opening experience. I have learned so much about Czech and Slovak culture, including its food, music, and folk dress. Having been part of Sokol since age four, it has felt like family within the Czech and Slovak community since the very



beginning. Learning about a culture is not only fun, but a really important way to get involved in the world."

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: under \$100: **Olga Wiegel** in Memory of **Val Hanover**. \$100 - \$499: **Cheryl Nelson Theuninck** and **Mike Nelson** in Memory of **Jeanette Pafko**.

Legacy Fund: \$100 - \$499: **John Gindele** in Memory of **Mary, Otto, and Tom Gindele; Darlene Sitko**.

In-Kind Donation:
Perničky Ornaments: **Czech/Slovak Moms**.
Food donation for *Šibřinky*: **Hana Matousek**.

June/July 2014 Slovo 7

Culture Day Camp

June 9-13

at C.S.P.S Sokol Hall

Campers participate in language, cooking, crafts, folk dance, and gymnastics with activities based on the book

Happy Times in Czechoslovakia
by Libushka Bartusek.

The activities throughout the week will take children through a year of traditional Moravian celebrations.

Children
ages
7-14



8:50 a.m.
to
3:00 p.m.

Brochures and registration forms are available at www.sokolmn.org or call Louise at 651-452-6240

Co-directors Judy Aubrecht and Louise Wessinger

C.S.P.S. LEGACY FUND

We ask for your support of the renovations to C.S.P.S. Hall as we celebrate its 127th year in 2014.

Contact Joyce Tesarek at 612-822-6147 or finance@sokolmn.org to discuss your tax deductible donation. *Thank you!*



LEGACY FUND DONATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

To help Restore, Renovate, and Refurbish the C.S.P.S. Hall, I make a tax deductible donation of \$_____

I would like my gift designated:

in memory or in honor of:

Make checks payable to **Sokol MN**. Write **Legacy Fund** in the memo line
Mail to: **C.S.P.S. Hall Legacy Fund**
383 Michigan Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Or donate online: www.sokolmn.org

Film Series Commemorates 25th Anniversary of the Velvet Revolution

To celebrate the 25th anniversary in November of the Velvet Revolution and end of communism in Czechoslovakia in 1989, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, D.C., has made available a series of films in a program entitled *The Play's the Thing: Václav Havel, Art and Politics*, curated by Margaret Parsons, head of the film program at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

The program focuses on Václav Havel, the dissident and imprisoned dramatist who went on to become a world-renowned statesman as first president of the Czech Republic. This program is based on the places and people that Havel knew, from the influential Theatre on the Balustrade, where his theatrical career began, to his friendships with filmmakers of the Czech New Wave, and to his political ascendancy in Prague.

Many of the films have been translated into English for the first time as a part of this project. The films will be shown free

to the public, courtesy of the Czech Embassy, which has non-commercial rights to the films.

September 26, Featured Friday Sokol Members Meeting, C.S.P.S. Hall: Václav Havel, Prague - Castle (Václav Havel, Praha - Hrad), by Czech documentary director Petr Jančárek, 2009, 57 minutes, in Czech with English subtitles.

Nine films will be screened by **Trylon Microcinema**, 3258 Minnehaha Avenue South, Minneapolis. Details are being worked out, but the current plan is to have four screenings total (7 p.m. and 9 p.m., Mondays/Tuesdays) for each set of films, each week in November. <trylon.org> 612-424-5468

November 3-4: The Uninvited Guest (Nezvaný host) Vlastimil Venclík, 1969, Czech with subtitles, 22 minutes, and *Every Young Man (Každý mladý muž)*

Pavel Juráček, 1966, Czech with subtitles, 83 minutes. **November 10-11: The Mist (Mlha)** Radúz Činčera, 1966, Czech with subtitles, 28 minutes, and *A Report on Party and Guests (O slavnosti a hostech)* Jan Němec, 1968, Czech with subtitles, 71 minutes.

November 17-18: The Heart above the Castle (Srdce nad Hradem) Jan Němec, 2007, Czech with English subtitles, 48 minutes, and *Leaving (Odcházení)* Václav Havel, 2011, Czech with English subtitles, 94 minutes.

November 24-25: three films: *Joseph Kilian aka A Person to Be Supported (Postava k podpírání)* Pavel Juráček, 1963, Czech with English subtitles, 38 minutes, and *Who Is Václav Havel... (Kdo je Václav Havel...)* Helena Matiašová, 1977, Czech with English subtitles, 11 minutes, and *And the Beggar's Opera Again (A znovu Žebrácká opera)* Olga Sommerová, 1996, Czech with English subtitles, 60 minutes.

Czech Bagpipe Band Coming October 19

After nearly ten years the Domažlice Bagpipe Band will make its second appearance at the C.S.P.S. Hall on Sunday, October 19, 1:30 p.m. It's not too soon to mark your calendars and purchase tickets for a rare and unique entertaining afternoon performance.

Domažlice Bagpipe Band has been among the leading ensembles performing various styles of bagpipe (*dudy*) music of the Chod region of western Bohemia, Czech Republic, for more than fifteen years. Buy your tickets now!

Along with the bagpipe, clarinet, string violin and bass, as well as various, nearly forgotten Czech folk rhythmic musical instruments such as the *fanfrnoch* (clay or metal container with horsehair), *vozembouch* (staff topped with bow hung with rattles), and *hrábě* (rake) will be played. Be ready to be entertained as these instruments bring a comic element to the performance and expect some audience participation. Most of the band's members are professional musicians who have studied in conservatories and academies of music and currently work as teachers and performing artists.

Bagpipes are a very old musical instrument played in many nations. It was bagpipers from the Strakonice and Chodov Region that made this instrument famous in Bohemia. The first records of bagpipes in Bohemia come from the 13th century. The bagpipe tradition is commemorated every two years at the end of August at the International Bagpipe Festival in Strakonice.

Contact event chair **Doreen**: 952-941-0426 to order your ticket as seating is limited. Pre-sale cut off is October 1: ●\$20 adult ●\$15 student 16 and over with valid student ID ●\$10 youth 6-15 ● Child 5 and under free with a paid adult admission

At the door: ● \$25 adult ● \$20 student 16 and over with valid Student ID ● \$15 youth 6-15 ● Child 5 and under free with a paid adult admission

For more details: <www.sokolmn.org>

8 June/July Slovo

SPRING BREAKFAST with BAKE and CRAFT SALES on APRIL 13

Right: *Mary Jo Chlebecek and Sharon Liska wore rabbit ears and Easter hat to sell koláče, books, decorated eggs, and perníčky ornaments (created by The Moms).*



Left: *Breakfast Co-chair Jason Brozovich kept busy at the grill flipping French toast and pancakes.*



Left: *Marcela Kratochvílová Reese saw our event listed on Facebook. It was her first visit to C.S.P.S. Hall and she liked it. Her hometown is near the ancestral home of Ed Hamernik (right) who with Jim Chlebecek (middle) practiced their Czech.*

Sokol Camp 2014 and Booya Picnic: August 10

By Cele Yingling and Kari Muyres

On Sunday August 10, the Sokol Minnesota Camp hosts the 84th annual Booya Picnic. You are cordially invited to attend this fun-filled, festive day from noon until 5 p.m. Featured events include old time music, Czech and Slovak dancers, bingo/raffle prizes, and a silent auction. Enjoy a bowl of booya, *koláče*, or cabbage roll as you visit with fellow Sokol members and friends.

The Sokol Camp was built in 1926 for its members to "provide outdoor and indoor recreation." Since 1930, the Booya Picnic has been a tradition to unite Sokol members and friends in a spirit of brotherhood and service. The proceeds from this event support the maintenance, upkeep, and taxes for the Camp.

Located at 19201 Woodland Acres near Pine City on the northeast corner of Cross Lake, Sokol Camp is about 1½ hours north of the Twin Cities off Interstate 35. There will be signs to help you find the Camp once you exit off the freeway at the first Pine City exit #169.

Are you wondering how to be a part of the festivities? Consider donating new or gently used items to our Country Store. Also, we are in need of silent auction and bingo items: donated gift certificates or gift basket sets are most appreciated! Please contact **Pat Andrie** at 651-484-6360 for pick-up coordination or bring your item(s) to the picnic. If you are unable to donate, please consider offering your "elbow grease" as we often need members to remain at the Camp to help in the teardown and cleanup after the Picnic. In advance, thank-you for your contributions to making the 84th Picnic a success!

Volunteer to help with the food prep, picnic setup, workers, and cleanup after the event by calling 2014 Booya Chairmen are **Scott and Kari Muyres**: 763-226-0313. They also are in charge of room rentals for booya helpers and parade participants from July 30 to August 10.

Contact **Cele Vanyo-Yingling** for other rentals this year: 612-747-9573 or <cmvanyo@gmail.com>. There are 10 rooms available for rental, as well as a small cottage. Sokol Minnesota members receive a discount on rentals to

encourage our members to enjoy the Camp facilities. There are individual room rates, as well as rates for renting the entire campgrounds. The camp is available from mid May to early September.

Rates are as follows:

Room #	Member	Non Member
1-8	\$25	\$30
9	\$27	\$32
10	\$30	\$35

Daily use of campgrounds for families: Members \$10 Non Members \$15

Tents are \$10 per person over 10 years of age per night

Seasonal rates for people who stay for more than 14 total days in the season:
Individual member: 1 small room... \$350
2 people: 1 small room... \$400
2 small rooms... \$450
Family: 3 small rooms or
1 small and 1 large room... \$500

The camp rental without the small cabin is \$300 per day.

The camp rental with the small cabin is \$325 per day.

We look forward to seeing you at Sokol Camp this year! And remember: Booya Picnic is August 10. Rain or shine!

EVENTS/NEWS/NOTES of INTEREST

Dr. Joseph Mestenhauer has been appointed to a special three-member team by the Minister of Education, Culture and Sports in Prague to help them draft legislation that would internationalize higher education and implement the law.

June 5 - 7, St. Mark Lutheran Church-wide Rummage Sale, Thursday to Saturday, with \$4 bag sale on Saturday. Snack bar and bake sale. 550 West 7th Street. 651-224-0228. St. Mark accepts Sokol Minnesota's leftover items from our garage sale. This partnership is an example of valuable West End reciprocity. 651-224-0228. <<http://www.saintmark.info/>>

June 27-29, Ethnic Dance Theatre's 40th Anniversary Concert Series feature dances from the Liptov region of Slovakia, at The Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts, Minneapolis. Concerts will feature a retrospective format, highlighting choreographies from each of the four decades since the company's founding in 1974.

August 1 - 3, 53rd Annual National Wilber Czech Festival, Wilber, Nebraska, Czech Capital of the U.S.A and home of the Miss Czech-Slovak US Pageant. Honorary Slovak Consul **Don Pafko** will be a judge. *Vítáme vás!* (We welcome you!) 1-888-4WILBER or <www.nebraskaczehsofwilber.com>..

If someone were to ask you: What has three holes, is over five feet tall, and can produce sounds like a running brook or the gurgle of a spring well? Would you be able to say, "Why, of course, that is the *fujara*." **The *fujara* was once used only by Slovak shepherds**; its roots that go back to the Middle Ages. Shepherds played it for recreation for themselves and for the sheep to calm the flock on long journeys away from home. The instrument has gained popularity among folk festival musicians even beyond the borders of central Slovakia. The *fujara* was

proclaimed in the UNESCO list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2005. Sokol members **Ann and Ken Jandra**'s son-in-law David Milne, chair of the Music Department, University of Wisconsin, River Falls, played his *fujara* both days at the Zvolen Fujara Festival, Zvolen Castle in central Slovakia on May 24-25.

I'm hungry as a wolf. *Mám hlad jako vlk.* Now that old adage is true again! Recently a Czech wolf was spotted in woods in the Czech Republic, after a century away. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-26953484>>

History of the Havel Heart: (part of the Czech and Slovak Culture Booth at the 2014 Festival of Nations, *pictures on page 12*.) Lukáš Gavlovský and Roman Švejda, the two artists in Prague who created the melted candlewax 7' heart as a memorial to Vaclav Havel (October 5, 1936 - December 18, 2011), said that the remains of the candles represent **"the collected hopes of people for a better society, of their prayers that it is possible to act according to you best conscience and not lose that hope that everything that is political (in its widest sense) is not dirty and clogged by an opaque layer of strange, specific interests."** The artist wanted their giant heart to convey the message that if there is a will there is a way. The heart sculpture has an opening through which people can enter. This element is very important, said Gavlovský, "We can enter it, spend some time in it and leave it again. The open shape of the heart is supposed to reflect my own feelings after the death of Mr. Havel. I also felt that my heart was opening up, that I was again living through the feelings I had during the time of the Velvet Revolution."

Please, help **Marlene Hinshaw gather news about our members:** marle5421@aol.com or 541-340-8619.

Václav Havel: Living in Truth.
Václav Havel; Jan Vladislav, Ed. London,
England: Faber & Faber, 1986, 336 pp.
Available in libraries and bookstores.

Havel Offers a Philosophical Guide to Truth and Power By Gwen Willems, Ph.D.

For fans of Václav Havel, this smorgasbord of complex, thoughtful essays written by and about Havel before 1989 is a text to be dipped into, read and reread, rather than consumed in one sitting. It contributes to a better understanding of the man, his perspectives and capabilities, and the world he lived in as a dissident. Writing about the particular, he hoped it would speak universally.

The first section of six pieces by Havel includes the iconic "The Power of the Powerless," originally *samizdat* (clandestinely reproduced and distributed literature in former Soviet bloc countries). He saw the irony of those not seeking power gaining it: "those apparently powerless individuals who have the courage to speak the truth out loud and stand by what they say body and soul, and are prepared to pay dearly for doing so, have - astonishingly enough - greater power - however

formally disenfranchised they are - than thousands of anonymous electors in other circumstances."

At the time, this essay could be an uplifting manifesto for Czechoslovaks, explaining the why's and how's of totalitarianism in abstract terms that were a counterpoint to the relentless concrete activities of their lives under communism. Havel wrote optimistically in "The Power of the Powerless," "One of the essential aspects of this traditional or classical notion of dictatorship is the assumption that it is temporary, ephemeral, lacking roots.... The principal threat to its existence is felt to be the possibility that someone better equipped in this sense might appear and overthrow it." He notes that "any far-reaching political change is utterly unforeseeable," but twenty years later, Czechs marched in the streets and democracy returned.

He wrote in "Letter to Dr. Gustáv Husák," General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1975, "Despair leads to apathy, apathy to conformity, conformity to routine performance," which is then erroneously seen as "mass political involvement." Havel saw consumerism distracting people from important things. The role

of the consumer society then was to "not excite people with the truth, but to reassure them with lies" as they stood in lines to get meager rations.

Havel was not fond of the term "dissident," since it connoted working *against* something. Instead he argued that "dissidents" were acting *for* something, in the truthful way they wanted to live their individual lives. He saw them as the "less radical, more loyal, and more peaceful segment of the population."

His desire to remain a Czech living in communist Czechoslovakia, thinking and doing what he chose despite the threat of imprisonment and death, was so strong that he declined a post-prison offer from Josef Škvorecký to be writer in residence at the University of Toronto. Havel wanted to live at home in truth. As he writes, "living within the truth covers a vast territory whose outer limits are vague ... you simply straighten your backbone and live in greater dignity as an individual."

Gwen is coordinator of the Literary Ventures: Czech and Slovak book discussion group. For more information, go to www.cs-center.org or contact <gwen@cs-center.org>.

Walpurgis Night – The Burning of Witches

By Vanda Kašová, columnist from Prague

The night of April 30 is a very special one in Czech culture. If a visitor were to go almost anywhere on that night in Czech Republic, he would be surprised by the festive mood of the many people in the streets. Every now and then he would see a witch...and roaring fires. Even in Prague there are many places where you can go to watch a bonfire, to prepare a sausage in its flames (that is what Czechs eat when they sit around a fire, not marshmallows as I saw in Minnesota), and to celebrate the beginning of spring. Old traditions dictate to bring winter to its end by ceremonially burning rag and straw witches, or just broomsticks. As with many of our other festive days, today it is more a reason to take a drink with friends and have fun. Not that many dozens of years ago, many other traditions were followed. People believed that witches gathered together on that night at their sabbats, special meetings where their dark magic was practiced. People tried to protect themselves from witches and performed magical rituals to keep them out of their houses. One ritual was to set fires. The bonfires set in the country had magical power that helped fields to be more fertile and cows to be healthier. Also young people jumped over the bonfires believing that they would remain young. All about that night was considered magical. Hidden treasures revealed themselves from caves, and hidden doors opened. Many great works of literature told of people who on the last night of April found chests full of gold and diamonds. Unfortunately, many of them were guarded by dark powers.

But what I find most magical about that night is that when the darkness ends, the bonfires are gone, and the firemen who served all night are happily sleeping at home, it is the First of May. And it is the time of love in Czech tradition. As Karel Hynek Mácha, the most beloved of all Czech poets, wrote ...

*Late evening, on the first of May—
The twilit May—the time of love.*

*Meltingly called the turtle-dove,
Where rich and sweet pinewoods lay.*

10 June/July 2014 Slovo



Honorary Slovak Consul Donald Pafko (right) with Professor Ragui Assaad of the Humphrey School of Public Policy, University of Minnesota, who spoke on the topic of "Global Economy and Development: Opportunities for Growth" at the April 9 meeting of the Minnesota Consular Corps. In cooperation with the Humphrey School for Public Policy, Thomson Reuters hosted the event at its headquarters.

Volunteer!!!
25th annual Czech and Slovak Festival
September 14, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
C.S.P.S. Hall.
contact: festival@sokolmn.org

Life was Better under Communism

**By Dr. Josef A. Mestenhauser,
Distinguished International
Professor Emeritus,
University of Minnesota
Department of Educational
Policy and Administration,
Comparative and
International Development
Education
Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic (1999-2008)**



This article originally appeared on the CSCC website <cs-center.org>

If any of you ever doubted that the communist regime brainwashed its people, I hope this article will help revise your thinking. Despite the Czech Republic's progress since the Velvet Revolution 25 years ago, a recent opinion poll stated 28% of respondents reported that life under communism was better than life today. That is a much higher percentage than the support the communist party obtained in recent elections. In contrast, only 23% of respondents felt life was better today. About one fifth said life was about the same. When asked about the two regimes, 31% said communism was better, while 32% said the current regime.

These results defy logic, yet I will try to explain the unexplainable. First, let's examine the demography. The majority of negative responses came from people who were born and lived most of their lives under communism (and were thus schooled in its logic). That regime also restricted access to higher education; most people received vocational education, which did not develop good critical thinking skills. Socialism was the mantra for this group, and any views critical of the system were outlawed. In the poll, most of the negative responses came from outside of the greater Prague and Brno areas and, as could be expected, from less-educated people. About nine in ten respondents felt that after 1989, the new government led to more corruption. This view is incredible because the communist system was actually quite corrupt, with widely documented and notorious examples, but apparently people continue to be in denial about this. On the other hand, instances of corruption under the present regime are constantly magnified and exaggerated in the media. For the many people unskilled in critical analysis, their understanding about what happened is distorted. Two thirds of respondents believed that leading politicians were less corrupt under communism.

On the other hand, most Czechs value the benefits of capitalism. 92 % consider it a success that they can choose and obtain good jobs, 89% appreciate the opening of borders for international travel, and 81% believe that the present regime offers better opportunities for cultural life.

The most disturbing aspect of these polls is the findings about the nature of Czech democracy. Only 44% believe that democracy is working well, while 56% hold the opposite view in comparison with "advanced" Western countries. Related are findings about things people consider major failures. 75% expressed the view that the voucher privatization program was a failure; 63% complained about the quality of human relations. In addition, 72% were not satisfied with the work of the civil service. That is not the whole story. We can assume that members of the communist party would certainly view their system as superior, but what about the additional 10%? They have accepted an oppressive system that they supported then and now, all in exchange for a guarantee of a few basic necessities.

This analysis is also based on one by a leading Polish publication that further suggests that socialism and "collectivism" have long been at home in Czechoslovak culture. It posits that the acceptance of the collectivistic government in Kosice in 1945 is further evidence of the bias toward socialist programs that followed.

I disagree with the reasons why the socialist mentality and its collectivistic orientation prevail. I believe that people holding these views cling to both "old" collectivistic and "new" individualistic values because they have not reconciled the differences between them and are in a way cultural "schizophrenics." Many attribute this phenomenon to the loss of the entitlements, which had "purchased" the loyalty of people, who now pay out of pocket for what they previously received from the state. However, I believe that the main reason for this phenomenon is that the regime did not ask its subjects to accept any responsibility for their lives. All thinking was done for them.

When I was in prison in 1948 in Czechoslovakia, the police practiced what I call the "hot and cold" system of interrogations by shifting at intervals from a rough to a soft approach. I still recall one discussion during one of the "soft" interrogations when they encouraged me to speak freely. I argued that the communist regime could not last, just as the Nazi regime had not, because it oppressed individual rights. The interrogator countered that the communists had carefully studied and corrected such failures. Essentially, they tried to persuade me that my faith in humanity was misplaced, that people care less for freedom than they do full stomachs. (Indeed, after the Hungarian revolution in 1956, the quality of life under communism did improve substantially.) Democracy can be difficult because it requires citizen participation in important public decisions. Winston Churchill is reputed to have stated: "democracy is the worst system ever designed by men – except all the other ones." I may add that communism was the most cynical system, holding common people in great contempt while pretending to advance their rights.

What does all this mean? First, I hold that communists created a culture that they expected to last forever. People absorb a culture's values sub-consciously, so that they learn about themselves differently than they do about others. Second, if people gain a self-awareness of their culture, many have difficulties in accepting the implications of their roles. They do not wish to be remembered as having been both complicit and intellectually "handicapped." Third, the media are not mature enough to present an objective picture; most are partisan and do not encourage open discourse. Related to this is a fourth point: that political culture is also immature, as is evident from the fact that the most positive responses to the opinion polls came from the greater Prague area. Political parties on the right depend on mass media, while the communists work hard on interpersonal relationships that they exploit to the utmost. This leads to the fifth point, that "relationships" are one of several major cultural variables. It was the communist regime, not democracy, that destroyed the meaning of individual relationships by causing people to mistrust each other for fear that they would be reported to police. Furthermore, psychological research suggests that, at least in this country, people tend to suppress negative memories in favor of positive recollections of their past. Above all, the major issue is that even after 25 years of freedom, people have been asked not just to change but to transform from one culture to another. That takes more time than 25 years.

A great deal of change is occurring, and more is to come. That is indeed the most productive way of thinking about the communist past and its heritage. I believe that education is the only hope to create the civil society that President Václav Havel advocated.

ATTEND AND VOLUNTEER! SOKOL Minnesota 2014 EVENTS

Children's Culture Day Camp

June 9 - 13, ages 7 to 14

Ethnic cooking and crafts, Czech and Slovak language, gymnastics, and more. 651-452-6240
Registration form: <www.sokolmn.org>

August Featured Friday

August 22, Friday, 7 p.m.

Quest Speaker: Karen Varian
president of the Rusyn Association of Minnesota

25th Czech-Slovak Festival

September 14, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Music, Dancing, Singing, Silent Auction, Kids Games,
Vendors, good Czech/Slovak food and beer!

Check for event updates: www.sokolmn.org

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



NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES MN
PERMIT NO. 5744

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* June/July 2014

The Czech and Slovak Culture Booth at the 2014 Festival of Nations, May 1 - 4, in Saint Paul, won an award of excellence (right), which Jake Jacobson accepted on behalf of Sokol Minnesota at the awards ceremony. Holding the award are Melissa Bastyr (Miss Congeniality of the 2014 - 15 Miss Czech Slovak Minnesota Pageant) and Heather Vikla (Miss Czech and Slovak Minnesota Princess) with (far right) Anne Smisek Jans (1999 - 2000 Queen) and (far left) her daughter.



Sokol's general chair and exhibit chair for the festival, **Doreen McKenney**, designed and created the award-winning booth. (Left) Mary Kucera stands next to the 30" high Heart (representing the 7' wax memorial to Václav Havel). The 5' candle was signed by scores of visitors to the Festival. (See more FON pictures in the August *Slovo*.)