

CZECH AND SLOVAK



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

SLOVO

April 2025
vol. 48 no. 3

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 2025 *Slovo* articles due April 1

Sokol Singers

Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-noon

First and Third Tuesdays
April 1, 15
May 6, 20

Summer Language Study in the Czech Republic See page 3

Friendly Friday Evening Social

Friday, April 11, 7 p.m.

Children's Czech and Slovak Cultural Day Camp

June 16-20
sokolmn.org/all-events/

C.S.P.S. HALL LEGACY FUND

We ask for your support for maintenance and renovation to C.S.P.S. Hall as we celebrate the Hall's 138th year in 2025.

Contact Joyce Tesarek to discuss your tax-deductible donation: 612-232-2993 or email: finance@sokolmn.org

Thank you!

Write **Legacy Fund** in the check's memo line.

Mail to **C.S.P.S. Hall Legacy Fund.**

Attn: Treasurer

Or donate online: www.sokolmn.org

DJ IZZY 21+ EVENT DANCE PARTY
BLAST FROM THE PAST

BLAST FROM THE PAST

80s, 90s, and more!

APR

5

2025

LIVE DJ!
BEVERAGES AND SNACKS FOR SALE

7PM - MIDNIGHT
C.S.P.S. HALL
383 MICHIGAN
SAINT PAUL, MN

GET PRE-SALE TICKETS FOR \$10

at SOKOLMN.ORG

OR BUY AT THE DOOR FOR \$15

HOSTED BY CZECH AND SLOVAK SOKOL MINNESOTA



Spring Pancake Breakfast Craft and *Koláče* Bake Sale



Sunday, April 13 ²⁰/₂₅
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Pancakes (all-you-can-eat), sausage, fruit cup, juice, and coffee.
\$10 Adult
\$6 child under 9
\$30/family of 4
Public welcome.
No reservation needed.

Hosted by
Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota
383 Michigan St., Saint Paul, MN

Ordering koláče

Place your prepaid koláče order by Sunday, April 6

Apricot, cream cheese, poppy seed, prune, or raspberry koláč \$2 each

Prepay order online by credit/debit card, go to: www.sokolmn.org/cc/ or Voice/text: 651-210-0401 if paying by check.

Vendor information contact: activities@sokolmn.org



Spring Cleanup at the C.S.P.S. Hall

Saturday, April 19, 2025
10 - 11 a.m.

Sokol Minnesota Youth Link teens invite Sokol families of all ages to join them as they pick up litter around the C.S.P.S. Hall grounds. Interested in volunteering with the clean up contact: youths@sokolmn.org or teens sign up with your class instructor.



Prezidentův komentář / President's Notes by Bob Kotek



Spring is in the air! How refreshing to emerge from the cold and dark of winter with anticipation of the warmth to come.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota volunteers continue to embrace our community through various activities. The Sokol Minnesota Youth Link made Valentine's cards (see page 5). Then, on February 12, Glynis Grostephan, Doreen McKenney, Dave Grostephan, and I had the pleasure of visiting the Lexington Landing senior housing building to pass out the cards. It was such a positive experience to see the many smiles as the cards were received.

Sokol Minnesota was invited to host the February edition of Urban Expedition® at the Saint Paul Landmark Center (see page 4). This was a perfect opportunity to display Czech and Slovak cultures for the many people attending. Great food, wonderful entertainment by many participants, children's activities, and several tables of information and gifts to buy. Thanks to all our volunteers!



Recently, my family and I traveled to Omaha for our daughter's volleyball tournament. On Saturday, we had a break in the action and went to visit the Czech & Slovak Educational Center and Cultural Museum. We were graciously welcomed by the volunteer staff and were given a tour of the museum by Colleen A.

Kurmel. So many wonderful displays with designated themes for each of the many rooms. I will share a few pictures here to give you a better idea of what they have on display. If you travel to Omaha, this is a must-see for everyone.



Keep an eye out for the many upcoming events this spring, which are featured on Facebook, e-Blasts, and Instagram, as well as in the Slovo and at sokolmn.org *Nazdar!*

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota 2025 BOD (Board of Directors)

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Past issues of *Slovo* and
Hall Calendar of Events:
www.sokolmn.org

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota provides fitness and community for individuals and families through physical, educational, cultural, and social programs for children, teens, and adults.

Information on our programs, calendar of events, membership, C.S.P.S. Hall rentals, and gift shop, plus e-addresses for our board, program directors, volunteer staff, and the Czech Honorary Consul, as well as *Slovo* past issues, are available at www.sokolmn.org or www.facebook.com/sokolminnesota



Use this
QR code
to go to
sokolmn.org

44th Minneapolis St. Paul INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL April 2-13

MSPIFF44 has another exciting lineup of 200+ films from around the world, plus an exciting array of parties, panels, visiting filmmakers, and special guests. All-access passes are on sale now. <https://mspfilm.org/mspiff44/>

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota is again proud to support Czech and Slovak films at the 44th Minneapolis Saint Paul International Film Festival, April 2-13 at **The Main Cinema, 115 South East Main Street, Minneapolis.**

Also supporting MSPIFF44 are Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities, Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, the Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic/Minneapolis, plus several individual cinema fans, including Sokol Minnesota members Marshall and Gretchen Toman.

Waves, April 5, 1:40 p.m. and April 11, 4 p.m. 2024 Czech-Slovak historical thriller/drama film, written and directed by Jiří Mádln. Set during the Prague Spring and subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, it marks a timely portrait of the power of principled journalists. *Waves* entered theatres in August 2024. It became one of the highest-grossing Czech films of all times.

Tiny Lights/Světýlka, April 8, 2 p.m. and April 12, 3:10 p.m.

Czech and Slovak 2024, directed by Beata Parkanová. Six-year-old Amálka is shut out of a family argument. She spends an idyllic afternoon at the lake with her grandparents and later learns the fuss was about her mother's plan to break away and live as an artist in Prague.

DJ Ahmet, April 4, 7:30 p.m. and April 8, 4:20 p.m.

A 2025 drama film collaboration between North Macedonia, the Czech Republic, Serbia, and Croatia, directed and written by Georgi M. Unkovski. It follows the life of a 15-year-old boy in a rural village in North Macedonia. Ahmet falls in love for the first time, loves music, desires to be a DJ, but contends with the conservatism of his rural village in North Macedonia. The film debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition category on January 23, 2025.

Vladislav Bláha Guitar Concert

At Friendly Friday, April 11, 7 p.m., C.S.P.S. Hall

Renowned Czech guitarist Vlád'a Bláha, known as one of the finest Czech guitarists today, has won numerous international guitar competitions. He received his Doctor of Arts degree from the Academy of Music in Bratislava. He is a Professor of guitar at the Brno Conservatoire and a Docent of Janáček Academy of Music also in Brno. The concert is co-sponsored by the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, and the Minnesota Guitar Society. Free admission.

Paul Greeman: Slovakia's Political Climate Today on Sunday, April 27, 11 a.m.

Join us for a fascinating Czech and Slovak Cultural Center lecture and discussion on Slovakia's current political status:

Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/yckh5kpr>

Paul Greeman was a key participant and thought leader as Slovakia and the Czech Republic moved from socialism to a market economy in his role as an investment banker. The discussion will center on Slovakia's current political climate with Prime Minister Robert Fico back in office for a third time in Slovakia's short 32-year history as a democracy. The Slovak government continues to harken back to a romantic view of the past and a desire to move away from the European Union, but many Slovaks are protesting the country's direction. Adding to this dynamic, the United States has also changed leadership. The lecture will discuss this unique time in Slovak's history with an eye toward what it may mean in the future.

In Memory: Elsie Roepke

Elsie Roepke was a kind, caring, and thoughtful woman who loved her Slovak heritage and shared that passion with friends and family. She was a long-time member of Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota (Sokol Minnesota) where she was a loyal volunteer, participant in Unit activities and a friend to all. Elsie passed away on December 10, 2024, at the age of 102 years. Elsie always remembered birthdays and significant events, was the first to send a birthday or get-well card to many in our Sokol community, and always had a smile for you. Services were held on January 6, 2025, at Vista Lutheran Church, Saint Louis Park, Minnesota. Thank you to Elsie's friends and family for your generous donations in her memory.

<https://obituaries.startribune.com/obituary/elsie-roepke-1092498303>

Summer Program in the Czech Republic for Young Leaders

Application Deadline is April 30

Students, ages 16-22, can embark on a transformative journey through the Czech language, culture, history, and cross-cultural leadership with Czech high school and university students. Program (in English) includes Prague, Hradec Králové, Ostrava, and Brno.

Program is hosted by the Mestenhauser Institute for International Collaboration in Prague. Sokol Minnesota and Czech and Slovak Culture Center are each providing a full tuition scholarship (but not travel to Czechia).

To apply, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/e2bdz99k>

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota



Sokol Minnesota Youth Leadership is a way to encourage and recognize outstanding participation of youth members and to foster a future generation of members and leaders for our Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota organization. Up to three Sokol Minnesota youths will receive the YLA and a \$500 cash prize; \$400 each from Sokol Minnesota, plus \$100 each contributed by Honorary Czech Consul M. L. Kucera.

A separate award for the Best Essay comes with a \$100 prize given by Louise Wessinger.

2025 YLA application opens on April 1. More information at www.sokolmn.org

Urban Expedition®: A Huge Success by Louise Wessinger



On Sunday afternoon, February 23, Czechia and Slovakia were honored to be invited to be the “visited” countries as part of 21st annual Urban Expedition®, a program of Saint Paul’s Landmark Center. We were given support to put together a music and dance program, as well as food vendors, cultural demonstrators, activities for children, and information tables. It was a beautiful winter day and

we were happy to have a big turnout. We thank all who contributed to the success of this event.

Dave Stepan, as our Emcee, welcomed a sizable crowd before introducing Sarah Landridge, Miss Czech Slovak Minnesota, who sang both the Czech and the Slovak national anthems accompanied by Don Haselbauer on the Landmark’s grand piano. The Czech and Slovak flags were presented by Mary Cahill (Sokol Assistant Physical Education Director) and Jas Gillman (Sokol instructor and gymnast). Bob Kotek, Sokol Minnesota President, also greeted the crowd, as did Honorary Czech Consul



M. L. Kucera on behalf of Czechs, and Silvia Magana, a Sokol Minnesota Board Member, welcomed everyone on behalf of Slovaks.

Entertainment began with lively performances by the youngest members of the *Taneční Mládež*, Sokol’s children’s dance group, followed by the *Taneční Teens*. The St. Paul South Bohemian Bagpipe Ensemble played many familiar Czech melodies. Our guests were impressed to learn that Czechs play bagpipes (*dudy*). Director Frank Trnka and Jason Brozovich played their bagpipes with Dawn Bulera on violin, Maria Neuzil on clarinet, and John Topic on vocals and percussion.

Special guest performers were the Lipa Carpatho-Rusyn Slovak Dancers, with their very athletic dances, including one dancing around wine bottles. A special treat was a demonstration on the Slovak *fujara* by Marek Mino, a native Slovak, who is married to Amy Mino, Executive Director of the Landmark Center. It was a surprise to many who have never before heard the *fujara*. It is an extremely long flute with three finger holes that was traditionally played by Slovak shepherds in the Tatra Mountains. Closing the program, the St. Paul Czech and Slovak Folk Dancers filled the floor with energetic dances from Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia.

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota food booth offered the popular *chlebičky* (baguette open-faced sandwiches), *párky* (hot dogs with special warmed buns), *roláda* (rolled-cake dessert), and *Kofola* (a cola-like pop). The head chef was Miša Giancarlo Kotek, with Dawn Bulera, Jasmine Gerages,

Marius Elias Morse, and Peggy Endres. Heather Vikla Dobias with other Miss Czech Slovak Minnesota Pageant volunteers sold *halušky* (cabbage, bacon, and dumplings), a Slovak favorite. Markéta Pálková had freshly-baked goods that sold out well before the program closed.

Information tables were set up by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech Heritage Club of New Prague, Bechyn Czech Festival, Rusin Association of Minnesota, and Czech Honorary Consul M. L. Kucera, as well as an exhibit of Sokol Minnesota’s stage backdrops.



A variety of Czech and Slovak items were for sale by the Sokol Minnesota Gift Shop, Julianne Hertog (decorated Slovak Easter eggs and candle-wax items), Doreen McKenney (Czech cards), Jean and Chuck Draheim (handmade jewelry and their Mirwood Cottage imported items), and Beth Moeller (glass artist).

The Miss Czech Slovak Minnesota Pageant provided many wonderful make/take craft projects for children. Pageant Director Anne Jans supplied materials to make a mini-Czech national bouquet, a golden pig ornament, and Easter egg ornaments. Jitka Sebek from Czech & Slovak School Twin Cities offered a coloring station with *Krtek* and his friends.



Sandy Prochaska brought her huge 4’ tall, 29-pound *Krtek* stuffed toy for all ages to have a photo opportunity with the popular Little Mole, including here Igor Nestrasil and family and also Czech Slovak Minnesota Queen Sarah Langridge.

It was wonderful to work with the Landmark Center staff. The two hours flew by before we knew it. We hope to celebrate our Czech and Slovak cultures there again in the future.



advance of the event. (L-R) Percussionist John Topic, TV show hosts Chris Egert and Megan Newquist, Landmark Center Executive Director Amy Miro (holding *fujara*), plus Sokol Minnesota members and folk dancers Dave Stepan, Renáta Tichá, and Dawn Bulera in *kroje*.

KSTP’s *Minnesota Live* on January 27 promoted the Czech and Slovak edition of Urban Expedition a month in

Sokol Minnesota Youth Link and Sokol Singers Team Up to Make Valentines for Seniors by Glynis Grostephan



The C.S.P.S. Hall was a flurry of hearts, stickers, and art supplies on February 4 and again on February 8 as volunteers from Sokol Minnesota Youth Link (SMYL) and Sokol Minnesota Singers made “Valentines for Seniors.” These multigenerational service-learning events produced almost one hundred unique valentines.

On Wednesday, February 12, Sokol Minnesota President Bob Kotek, SMYL Co-Advisors Glynis Grostephan and Doreen McKenney, and David Grostephan delivered the valentines to our neighbors at Lexington Landing on West 7th in Saint Paul.

Thank you to all our additional volunteers: Tom Aubrecht, Mary Cahill, Jean Draheim, Marlene Hinshaw, Marit Kucera, Judy Metcalf, Joan Sedlacek, Louise Wessinger, and Sokol teen and children’s dancers Emre, Louisa, and Zoe.



February 2025 Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota Board Highlights by Lucy Brudnak Rose

The Board of Directors’ virtual meeting on February 20 was called to order at 7:01 p.m. BOD members: Bob Kotek Jean Draheim, Steve Ernest, Ed Hamernik, Sally Lieberman, Silvia Magana, Markéta Pálková, Lucy Rose, Dave Stepan, Denise Stibal, and Joyce Tesarek. Sokol Minnesota members also attending: Don Hasselbauer, Marit Kucera, and Renáta Tichá.

The board reviewed and approved the minutes of the January 2025 meeting. The board discussed improvements to C.S.P.S. Hall that Sokol Minnesota could propose when applying for an upcoming grant offered by American Sokol Foundation. Marit Kucera requested a \$500 donation from Sokol Minnesota to the

44th Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Film Festival; the board discussed and approved the donation. Sally Lieberman and Renáta Tichá informed the board about a new summer program in the Czech Republic for students (ages 16 to 22) from July 14–23, 2025. The board approved a motion to provide financial support (up to a total of \$1,450) for one Sokol Minnesota member to attend.

Jason Brozovich submitted a report that the gymnastics program is going well. Dave Stepan described the status of various projects around the C.S.P.S. Hall, with plans to install three additional radiator control valves in the main hall, upgrade the elevator, and additional upgrades to five windows and one door for rooftop access from the third floor. Silvia Magana reported on meetings of the Planning Committee to discuss ideas related to additional C.S.P.S. Hall improvements. Markéta Pálková shared that the Rental Committee is updating the language used in our rental contracts. Once the new contracts are complete, they will be submitted to the board for final approval.

Jean Draheim said a budget is being developed for the planned repair of the decorative backdrops on the stage. Denise Stibal sent sympathy cards to several Sokol Minnesota members who had lost family members over the past month. The Finance Committee report from Joyce Tesarek included a summary of cash accounts. The monthly budgets presented by Gaming Chair Ed Hamernik were approved. Ten new memberships presented to the board by Steve Ernest were approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

NEW MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Current Sokol members are invited to join the membership committee. We will review how members join and renew, how we communicate about and participate in Sokol activities and opportunities, and how we recognize contributions and achievements.

Frequency and format of meetings (in-person/online/hybrid) will be decided as the committee forms in the coming weeks. If you have questions or if you are interested in joining the committee, please contact steve.ernest@sokolmn.org

Sokol Minnesota Welcomes New Members

The Czech and Slovak Sokol Board of Directors approved ten new members in February!
Five of them were welcomed in the March *Slovo*.

We now welcome • **Elizabeth** and **Eric Peterson** of Saint Croix Falls, with interest in cooking classes, crafting classes, history and genealogy; • **David Baker** of Saint Paul, with interest in youth gymnastics; and • **Frank Konchal** of Lakeland.

We would also like to welcome back re-joining member • **Grace Welle**, Minneapolis, with interest in youth dance, youth singing, youth culture camp, the SMYL group, language, cooking and crafting classes, films and theater, music and dances, history and genealogy, staffing booths and serving meals at events.

Welcome to Sokol Minnesota!
<https://sokolmn.org/membership/>

Sokol Minnesota Thanks Donors

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota greatly appreciates your donations supporting Sokol programs and the maintenance of our historic C.S.P.S. Hall.

GENERAL FUND **TOTAL: \$2,440**
Under \$99: Geneva Adams, Kay and Eric Edquist, Joseph Gall, Judith Metcalf, Anthony Kaczor, Robert Kostichka, Claire Press, Frederick Simon, Michael Skluzacek, Richard Verner, Kate Weeks, Louise and Chuck Wessinger, Wayne Zbytovsky.
\$100-\$499: Janet Balej, Vince Jirik, Theresa Pojar.
\$500-\$999: Marlene Hinshaw, Joyce Tesarek, Tom and Penny Tesarek.

LEGACY FUND **TOTAL: \$765**
\$100-\$499: (In Memory of Elsie Roepke) Anonymous, Mary Cahill, Randall Roepke, Joyce Tesarek.

IN-KIND DONATIONS
 (Six Slovak t-shirts to Sokol Gift Shop) **Karen Varian.**

Mucha: The Triumph of Art Nouveau by Arthur Ellridge. Terrail: Paris, 223 pages, 1992. Available at libraries and used bookstores.

Reproductions of Mucha's abundant work in Art Nouveau style seem to be everywhere. I was first enchanted by his art when I was a young student learning graphic design. I have seen his art in museums, exhibits, books, and calendars, as well as the Municipal House in Prague.

Mucha: The Triumph of Art Nouveau is a big (12" x 9-1/2"), beautiful, and comprehensive book about Mucha's work and life. It contains 170 illustrations in color, including one of his early canvases, depicting Saints Cyril and Methodius in an expression of Czech nationalism, that still hangs in the church in small-town Pisek, North Dakota.

Mucha created a variety of pieces, including portraits, posters, theater announcements, billboards, newspaper typefaces, books, wrapping paper, fashion, furniture, interior decoration, jewelry, and more. The breadth indicates the extraordinary impact that Mucha had on daily life at the turn of the 20th century.

Mucha was born on July 24, 1860, in Ivančice, southern Moravia. His father was a court usher and his mother a miller's daughter. The oldest of six children, he showed an early aptitude for drawing and music.

After completing *Volksschule*, Mucha studied at the *Gymnasium* in Brno. He became devoutly religious and lived in an environment of intense Czech nationalism in music, literature, and painting. In 1880, at age 19, Mucha moved to Vienna and became a scenery painter for a company supplying several theaters. This changed his self-perception. As Ellridge wrote, "He discovered applied art, and in his humble birthplace, the decoration of walls of churches and other public places brought no more consideration than merely painting them; an artist was still only an artisan. In Vienna, on the contrary, a painter could become an accepted member of society and even one of its idols...."

After the major client of his firm, the Ringtheater, burned down, Mucha took to sketching landscapes and a more lucrative genre, painting portraits. Count Karl Khuen-Belasi commissioned him to paint murals at the Emmanhof Castle. The count became Mucha's sponsor, giving him an allowance for seven years to pay for his studies and to live.

Mucha's next big break was to do a rush poster of the famous actress Sarah Bernhardt, who was starring in *Gismonde* (www.theartpostblog.com/en/sarah-bernhardt-alphonse-mucha-timeless-link-between-theatre-art/). She signed a six-year contract with Mucha that gave her exclusivity over Mucha's work for the theater. He was free to take orders in other areas, which flooded in from manufacturers of liqueur, bicycles, champagne, and perfume.

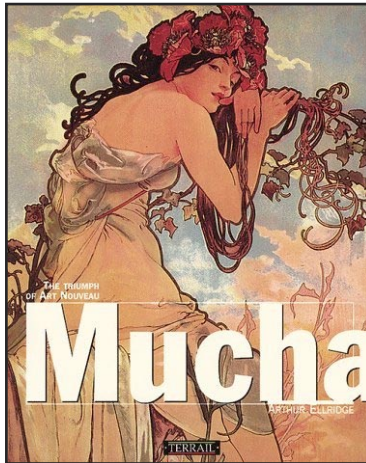
In Mucha's personal life, he lived for several years with Berthe de Lalande. In 1904, he met Maruška Chytilová, whom he

married two years later. Her family, who identified as profoundly Czech, were part of the local gentry and the patriotic bourgeois elite.

Although he was highly successful as a commercial artist, Mucha was frustrated. "He wanted to propagate," Ellridge wrote, "through his art, ideas that would contribute to spiritual awakening and express his patriotism and his spiritual faith." He took on work with the American aristocracy. "His only aim was to earn as much as possible so he could devote himself entirely to art." It didn't work out financially. He was unhappy when he returned to Bohemia in 1904, buried in contract work. He decided to move to America again.

Mucha faced another crisis. Art Nouveau declined in popularity. The Fauve Movement arose, paving the way for Cubism. Abstract art was taking over. Mucha created his last important Art Nouveau work in 1908.

Taking up his quest for Czech national art, Mucha dropped all his commissions. According to Ellridge, he believed, "Each nation has its own art, as it has its own language. Its tradition is not the property of one artist but of the entire community."



In a stroke of good fortune, Mucha met the American millionaire, Charles R. Crane, who encouraged Mucha's pan-Slavic dream. Mucha told Crane he was devoting the rest of his life to 20 monumental paintings on the history of the Slavs. Ten would focus on Bohemia and ten on other Slav nations. Mucha requested a donation from Crane, who responded positively. He received his first check from Crane in 1909.

The next year, he visited friends at Castle Zbiroh, where he was offered an entire wing. The space was ideal, accommodating several canvases measuring 18 by 24 feet. He and his family lived there for the next twenty years.

On March 15, 1939, German troops entered Czechoslovakia. Suffering from pneumonia, Mucha was interrogated by the Gestapo in Prague and released. He died at the age of 78 on July 14, 1939; Maruška, 20 years younger, died in 1959.

A new Mucha museum, Savarin, opened in January 2025 in Prague. It is hoped that the Slav Epic (prague-now.com/history/slav-epic-alfons-mucha-where-exhibited/) will be exhibited at Savarin in 2028 to mark the centenary of the cycle's completion.

Gwen is coordinator of the Czech and Slovak Literary Ventures book discussion group. *Literary Ventures* is cosponsored by the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota, Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota, and the Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic/Minneapolis. Find information and updates at cs-center.org or contact gwen@cs-center.org

Join Literary Ventures at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 26, in the Class Room, C.S.P.S/Sokol Hall to discuss *The Cello Still Sings: A Generational Story of the Holocaust and of the Transformative Power of Music* by Janet Horvath.

Czech Honorary Consul News

April 2025

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota received a 2025 grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for 265,00 CZK (approximately \$11,500). Other Minnesota groups receiving grants were the Czech and Slovak Cultural Center of Minnesota (40,000 CZK), Czech Heritage Club (80,000 CZK), and St. Mary's Preservation Association in Bechyn (25,000 CZK).

On March 6, the American Sokol Foundation Board, on which I represent the Western Sokol District, reviewed applications from Sokol units across the United States for three different categories of awards: Gateway to the Future, Unit Growth, and Unit Corporate Sustainability. Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota submitted requests for two projects in Gateway to the Future which had a budget of \$25,000. The request for 19 projects from 13 units totaled \$127,251 in this category alone. All projects received some money. Minnesota's two projects were Radiators (asked \$5,520, received \$1,461) and the Basement Shelving (asked \$620, received \$135). Minnesota did not apply in the Unit Growth and Unit Corporate Sustainability categories in 2025.



Czechs and Slovaks shared their cultures on February 23 as part of the 21st Urban Expedition® season at Landmark Center (see page 4). It has taken 14 years, since 2011, for our two countries to come up again in the rotation of nations to be featured at the Landmark. The plethora of cultures we celebrate here in Minnesota is amazing and wonderful. I shared an information table with (photo left) Karen Varian, president of the Rusin Association of Minnesota.

At the Urban Expedition, Mark Neužil, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Journalism Department of

an attorney in private practice. Maureen Kucera-Walsh served in public and private capacities for many years, including as an aide to Attorney General Hubert "Skip" Humphrey.

The fall 2024 semester Kucera Scholar was Agáta Harjková, a Prague native. Many of the Kucera Scholars are in teaching jobs in the Czech Republic, and a number of them serve in the public sector for the federal government.

From Pilsen, Žofie Blechová (right), studies social work at Charles University.



Emerging Media, University of St. Thomas, and a 2017 Fulbright scholar at Charles University, introduced me to Žofie Blechová, a Kucera Scholar this semester at the University of St. Thomas.

Each year, the University of St. Thomas hosts Czech students from Charles University for a semester or an entire school year. In operation since 1996, the program exists because of the generosity of the late Robert C. Kucera (1925- 2019) and his daughter Maureen Kucera-Walsh. More than 50 Czech students have attended St. Thomas on full-paid tuition plus room-and-board since the program began.

A native of Montgomery, Minnesota, Robert was a 1948 St. Thomas graduate, a 1952 graduate of the St. Paul College of Law, in the state legislature (1959-1966), and

Don't miss this exciting event on April 12
Miss Czech-Slovak Minnesota Pageant 2025
Dinner at 5 p.m. Pageant starts at 7 p.m.
American Legion Post 79, 102 Elm Avenue SW, Montgomery
missczechslovakminnesotapageant.com



Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic/
Minneapolis

Marit Lee Kucera, Honorary Consul
651-238-0447
minneapolis@honorary.mzv.gov.cz
OR mlkucera@outlook.com



SLOVO PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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Sokol Minnesota members receive the *Slovo* with their membership.

To receive your *Slovo* in color via email instead of the black-and-white mail version, contact slovo@sokolmn.org

Non-member *Slovo* subscription: \$20 annually. Please include name, address, phone number, and email address with a \$20 check payable to Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota; mail to *Slovo* at the above address.

The *Slovo* staff welcomes submissions.

Copy deadline for each issue is the first day of the prior month. Send news, articles, and pictures (uncropped) digitally to slovo@sokolmn.org

Advertising: For information on due dates and rates, please email slovo@sokolmn.org

Moving or temporarily away: Please notify us via email or USPS mail of your change of address to make sure you continue to receive the *Slovo*.

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More information at www.sokolmn.org



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XXV American Sokol Slet in Chicago June 25-29

americansokol.org/xxv-american-sokol-slet

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For status of events scheduled for the C.S.P.S. Hall, check our calendar at sokolmn.org/at-our-hall/hall-calendar/

Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota *SLOVO* April 2025

"The Accidental Hero"

Multi-media one-man performance
by Actor Patrick Dewane



Sunday, May 18, 2025

2 p.m. (doors open 1p.m.)

C.S.P.S. Hall, 383 Michigan Street, Saint Paul

Widely-acclaimed performance

"The Accidental Hero" is a jaw-dropping true story about Czech freedom at the end of World War II.

Patrick Dewane's grandfather, U.S. Army Colonel Matt Konop, as a unit commander, liberated the remote border villages his grandparents had left for America decades earlier.

Pre-order your tickets online

www.sokolmn.org/cc

Limited seating

Reserved: \$20 or General \$15

Prepay by May 10

At the door \$15



Hosted by Czech and Slovak Sokol Minnesota