

CZECH the News

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Czech Republic

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Embassy Honors Freedom Defenders

In collaboration with the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, the Embassy of the Czech Republic hosted the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom Awards on November 14, 2006. Approximately 200 guests were in attendance, among them U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld




Donald Rumsfeld congratulates Jana Kanska, daughter of award recipient, Milada Horakova

and Senator John Warner, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Ambassador Petr Kolar opened the celebration saying that it was dedicated to “freedom fighters, those who

sacrificed their lives for freedom and democracy, and those who support them.” He added that Czechs have learned from their own history that, “democracy is hard to win but is very easy to

lose,” and congratulated the evening’s recipients for supporting “our joint effort to build and preserve democracy around the world.”

The 2006 honorees were Edwin J. Feulner, President of the Heritage Foundation, and posthumously, Milada Horakova, Czech martyr and pro-democracy advocate who was found guilty on trumped-up charges of treason and executed by Czechoslovakia’s Communist regime in 1950. Horakova’s daughter, Jana Kanska, accepted the award on her mother’s behalf. 



Egon Hostovsky’s American Legacy See page 6.

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Havel Residency at Columbia University

Former Czech president Vaclav Havel spent nearly 2 months in residence at Columbia University in New York starting in October and ending December 15, 2006. Organized by the Arts Initiative at Columbia, Mr. Havel’s stay offered the Columbia community and the New York public at large the opportunity to learn more about Havel’s roles as political leader, artist, essayist, human rights activist, and citizen. Activities planned during his stay explored

the connection between art and citizenship and allowed Mr. Havel a forum to communicate with students through lectures, panel participation, and a public discussion with former U.S. president Bill Clinton. The Arts Initiative also organized a series of symposia *Continued on page 4*



Actor Shawn Wallace speaks with former President Vaclav Havel in New York


Czechs Send Holiday Cards to Political Prisoners

In response to an appeal by the Czech humanitarian organization People In Need, Czechs sent more than 2,500 greeting cards to political prisoners in Cuba, Burma, and Belarus during the 2006 holiday season. The card campaign, “Happy New Year in Freedom,” was designed to reassure unjustly prosecuted political prisoners that the international community is not indifferent to their fate.

People in Need Burma Project Coordinator, Marie Perinova said, “The largest number of Christmas cards so far has been sent to the young

Burmese student Zin Mar Aung who was arrested in 1998 and sentenced to 7 years in prison for her participation in a demonstration against the regime.” Zin Mar Aung is still incarcerated. Perinova went on to say that political prisoners are glad to receive personal Christmas cards and that the gesture has the added benefit of prompting prison guards to better treat prisoners who receive hundreds of letters from abroad.

In Belarus the story of 60-year-old Katsyaryna Sadouska provoked the greatest interest. Mrs. Sadouska was sentenced as

an opponent of the regime when a draft letter was found at her apartment in which she called Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko “a monster.” According to nongovernmental organizations, more than a dozen people have been imprisoned in Belarus for criticizing the Lukashenko regime, but this number increased to more than 100 during the anti-government demonstrations of the 2006 Belarus presidential election. The number of long-term political prisoners in Cuba exceeds 300 while more than 1,190 protesters have been imprisoned by the military junta in Burma. 



Message from the Ambassador



Photo courtesy of Chad Wyatt

Dear Friends,
Those of you who have been following Embassy activities know that visa reciprocity between the United States and the Czech Republic is one of the top priorities of my ambassadorship. When President George Bush recently visited Estonia he announced changes to the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and pledged to work with the new Congress to bring about the legislation needed to amend criteria for VWP participation. President Bush's new vision of the VWP shifts its focus from economic concerns to improved security standards that better reflect the current realities of post- 9/11 security needs. These new measures will have to be met by all countries—the United States, nations already participating in the VWP, as well as those that are working to gain VWP admittance.

The Czech Republic welcomes this news (you can read the details of VWP changes below). We see it as an opportunity to raise security standards, ensuring safer travel, commerce, and exchange for all countries. This shift in VWP policy represents the spirit of fairness and equality with which we have always perceived the United States and shows that our friends in the U.S. administration are working toward a win-win policy that benefits our countries on a bilateral basis while enhancing global security.

Meanwhile, the Czech government already has been raising travel security standards. In fall 2006, we became one of the first European Union (EU) countries to produce e-passports with biometric data.

Czech passports are equipped with an integrated chip that contains the holder's information. We also have been updating airport and travel security measures according to EU standards, putting the Czech Republic in step with the security changes proposed by the Bush Administration. With enhanced security as the main criterion for VWP participation, I feel we are finally achieving tangible progress in our efforts to remove the visa requirement for Czech citizens wishing to visit the United States.

One highlight from the several major Embassy events this fall was the reception we cohosted with the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation for the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom Awards. Two worthy proponents of democratic principles received the honors for their demonstrated commitment to freedom and opposition to communism—our good friend and President of the Heritage Foundation, Edwin J. Feulner; and posthumously, the Czech hero and anti-communist martyr, Milada Horakova. Donald Rumsfeld and Senator John Warner served as keynote speakers, with Jana Kanska, daughter of Milada Horakova, accepting the award on behalf of her mother.

In addition to these important political and consular activities, our cultural section has planned numerous winter events from film screenings and concerts to sculpture and art exhibitions. In January 2007, the Embassy launched a new film series, Lions of Czech Film, at the Avalon Theatre, for the Washington community. This series presents the best of modern Czech cinema and directly benefits Czech filmmakers and their projects. (For full details on all cultural activities, please read the cultural listings on page 8.)

I invite all of you, whether you live in Washington, or will travel here in the coming months, to partake in our many Embassy events. In the meantime, I wish you all great happiness and many successes in the New Year.

Warm regards,

Petr Kolar



Visa Waiver Program Changes



While visiting Estonia in late fall 2006, President George Bush announced changes to the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP) that would expand the number of countries whose citizens can travel visa-free to the United States. Mr. Bush's new initiative addresses a major point of contention among the new member states of the European Union (EU) that have not had visa parity with the United States since becoming democracies in the early 1990s.

On November 30, 2006, officials from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State gathered at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, DC, to meet with representatives from the 12 EU member states that are not currently included in the VWP. DHS Acting Assistant Secretary Mr. Paul Rosenzweig outlined the

proposed VWP changes saying that its focus will shift away from economic concerns and onto improved security standards that better reflect the current realities of post- 9/11 security needs. These new measures will have to be met by all allied countries, including the United States, nations already participating in the VWP, and those that are still working to gain VWP admittance.

Mr. Rosenzweig emphasized that the 3 percent refusal rate of visa applications, which has been a frustration for countries trying to attain VWP inclusion, will become secondary to the seven new security criteria. The U.S. Government will seek legislation that allows for a waiver of the 3 percent rate for qualified U.S. allies that fulfill the seven new security criteria. The Bush administration is expected to propose the new

VWP legislation in late January or early February 2007, and President Bush has pledged to work with the new Congress

to bring about legislation that will amend criteria for VWP participation.

The security criteria are:

1. Improvements in international reporting of lost and stolen passports.
2. Home country assistance with expeditious repatriation of foreign nationals who have been ordered to be removed from the U.S.
3. Passenger information exchange.
4. Electronic travel authorization system.
5. Cooperation between governments regarding U.S. Federal air marshals on direct flights to the United States.
6. Common standards for security and baggage screening at airports where flights to the U.S. originate.
7. Improved standards for travel documents and passport security features.

Timeline of Events



Ambassador Kolar and CCEC Director Wayne Jehlik

November 9, 2006 Seattle, WA

Ambassador Kolar spoke at the opening of the new Center for Czech Education and Culture (CCEC), a nonprofit corporation that promotes cultural and academic exchange between the Czech Republic and the Pacific Northwest region.



Ambassador Petr Kolar, Tatana Kucharova, Helena Houdova, and Henry Kalan

November 30, 2006 New York, NY

Along with former-President Vaclav Havel and Miss World 2006 Tatana Kucharova, Ambassador Kolar attended the Czech Benefashion fundraiser in New York to benefit Sunflower Children, a Czech-American nonprofit dedicated to helping disadvantaged children around the world.



From the left: Ambassador Petr Kolar; Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of State; and Jiri Barta, VIA Executive Director.

December 12, 2006 Pittsburgh, PA

Ambassador Kolar joined key note speaker and guest of honor Madeleine Albright at the VIA Foundation's 10th anniversary celebration and fundraiser. A Czech charitable organization that provides small grants and expertise to nonprofit community initiatives, the VIA Foundation supports civic, cultural, and environmental projects in the Czech Republic.

Cuba Transition to Democracy Summit

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Cyril Svoboda and Czech Ambassador Petr Kolar attended the Cuba Transition to Democracy Summit on October 13, 2006, in Miami, Florida. The Summit drew on experiences of Central and Eastern European countries that have transitioned from communism to democracy and strove to identify ways to assist the Cuban pro-democracy movement. The initiative, "Friends of a Democratic Cuba," recently formed by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania, and Slovenia in support of democratic transition in Cuba was highlighted.



Ambassador Kolar speaks at the Summit

Among the dignitaries and representatives of governments from Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the United States who gathered to express their support for democratic change in Cuba were Florida Governor Jeb Bush; Paula Dobriensky, U.S. Under Secretary, Democracy and Global Affairs; and members of the U.S. House and Senate. Various non-governmental organizations including the Czech foundation, People in Need, were represented and leaders from the Cuban-American community gathered to discuss ideas on ways to accelerate democratic change in Cuba.

In his presentation, "The Czech Experience – Lessons for Cuba/Strengthening Civil Society," Mr. Svoboda shared Czech experiences with the transition to democracy, followed by remarks from Ambassador Kolar during the session on "International Solidarity on the Ground." In a lunchtime talk, Under Secretary Dobriensky discussed the implications of the inevitable change in Cuban politics already underway with the transfer of power from Fidel Castro to his brother, and pledged that the U.S. Government is "actively supporting a genuine transition to democracy—not a succession from one dictator to another."

Representatives from all European organizations and governments reasserted their promise to continue supporting Cuban independent civil society and offered encouragement for Cuban political prisoners and activists who are working toward democratic change on the island. The Czech Republic, and its central and eastern European partners in the "Friends of a Democratic Cuba" alliance, pledged to continue assisting the democratic forces in Cuba mainly through sharing their experiences of transition from totalitarianism to democracy.

Czechs Call on Belarus to Free Opposition Leader

The Czech government has called on Belarusian authorities to release opposition leader Alexander Kozulin from prison and provide him with immediate health care. The request came after four major Central European newspapers in the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovakia published an open letter urging their respective governments to demand Mr. Kozulin's release. Kozulin received a 5-and-half-year sentence and was imprisoned for "hooliganism" and leading protests against the authoritarian Lukashenka government during the March 2006 reelection of President Alexander Lukashenka. In addition to his leadership of the Belarusian

Socialist Democratic Party, Mr. Kozulin is a former presidential candidate and former rector of Belarusian State University.

Under articles 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Belarus is a state party, Mr. Kozulin's imprisonment constitutes a violation of his rights to freedom of expression and assembly. Others arrested at the same protests and found guilty of "hooliganism" were sentenced to only 10–15 days of administrative detention. To protest his jail term and draw international attention to the authoritarian rule of President Alexander Lukashenka, Mr. Kozulin went on a hunger strike. He called on the U.N. Secu-

rity Council to consider the legality of the Lukashenka election and its human rights violations in Belarus. After losing 88 pounds and nearing death, Kozulin ended his 54-day hunger strike on December 12, 2006, which he has indicated he could resume if the European Union fails to attain a consolidated position on Belarus.

Reaction from international governments and organizations has been vocal in criticizing the anti-democratic actions of the Lukashenka government. Outgoing European Union President and Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen condemned the actions of the Lukashenka regime calling Belarus "a scar" on the face of European democracy. In a show of



Alexander Kozulin

solidarity with Belarusian political prisoners, Czechs held a public rally in Prague on December 16, 2006. The rally was organized by the Czech student civic organization Free Belarus (Svobodne Belorusko).

Czech Funds Help Rebuild Hurricane Sites



On December 13, 2006, the newly built and renamed Bayou La Batre Public Library held its grand opening in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. Deputy Ambassador Jaroslav Kurfurst and Czech Honorary Consul in Louisiana Mr. Kenneth Zezulka attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony and toured the new facility, whose 10,000-book collection was replaced using disaster relief funds from the Czech Republic. The opening of the new library successfully fulfilled the pledge made by the Czech government in October 2005 to help rebuilding efforts in U.S. Gulf Coast areas devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

With the help of Czech Honorary Consuls Kenneth Zezulka in Louisiana and Raymond Snokhous in Texas, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, DC, located recipients in Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, and Mississippi for the relief funds. An elementary school in Deweyville, Texas, received \$100,000.00 for reconstruction. In



Left: Deputy Chief of Mission Jaroslav Kurfurst speaks at the opening of the Bayou La Batre Public Library. Right: Bayou La Batre Mayor Stan Wright (center) cuts the ribbon to open the new library.

Louisiana, the University of New Orleans received \$120,000.00 to sponsor a new professorship in Comparative Urban Planning and Administration that will help reduce the impact of future natural disasters on urban areas. The Tapia Public Library in Bayou La Batre, Alabama, was chosen to receive \$111,000.00 to replace the library's entire book collection, and the St. Vincent De Paul Community Pharmacy in Biloxi, Mississippi, was given \$100,000.00 to restock medicine

and prescription supplies lost in the flooding. In spring 2006, Ambassador Petr Kolar visited these sites and personally delivered the Czech aid.

Before attending the December 2006 library grand opening in Alabama, Mr. Kurfurst and Mr. Zezulka stopped in East Biloxi, Mississippi. There they visited the temporary trailer that currently houses the St. Vincent De Paul Community Pharmacy while its new building is still under reconstruction. Before the storm,

the pharmacy was the Gulf Coast's only provider of free prescription pharmaceuticals to the needy. It operates solely with volunteer pharmacists and an all-volunteer staff who donate their time and skills.

After witnessing firsthand how funds from the Czech government are helping successfully rebuild essential community services, Mr. Kurfurst said, "It's clear that the money was put into the right hands for the right projects."

Photos courtesy of Daniel Hoyt

Havel Residency continued. . .

Continued from page 1

and campus events around Havel's visit where experts and professors independently addressed specific art forms including theater, music, architecture, art, film, and literature and their relation to citizenship. In one presentation, Orhan Pamuk, winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize for Literature, and also in residence at Columbia, spoke about important themes in Havel's life and work. While discussing the nature of political literature and dissent in a society where official and personal truths are separate, Pamuk said, "A good citizen is a person who obeys. It is not a prestigious concept." On Havel's role as a dissident and artist in communist Czechoslovakia, Pamuk remarked, "Good citizens do not make good artists. Bad citizens make good artists."

Havel's residency in New York was accompanied by a unique first-time staging of his complete plays. The Untitled Theater Company #61 of New York performed 16 fully staged productions of Mr. Havel's works in Manhattan and in Brooklyn




Left to right: Former President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel, President of Columbia University Lee C. Bollinger, and former President of the U.S. Bill Clinton

over the 2-month period, along with readings from Havel's body of writing.

Mr. Havel also found time to take part in celebrations of the 17th anniversary of the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia and to continue his human rights activities. During a visit to the United Nations (UN), he presented new UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with a report signed in public by Havel, human rights activist Elie Wiesel, and Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik designed to prompt the UN to address human rights abuses in North Korea. Mr. Havel also attended his first ever NHL


hockey game at Madison Square Garden. The match pitted the New York Rangers, captained by Czech hockey superstar Jaromir Jagr, against the New Jersey Devils, also captained by a Czech player, Patrik Elias.

Mr. Havel's visit to the United States continues into 2007 with a stay in Washington, DC, where he will research and write his next work at the Library of Congress. For more information, interviews, and highlights from Havel's residency at Columbia University, please visit: <http://havel.columbia.edu/index>.




Courtesy Photo

Vaclav Havel attends a theater performance with Madeleine Albright and Martin Palous



Courtesy Photo

Vaclav Havel at the Public Theater



Courtesy Photo


Vaclav Havel and playwright Israel Horovitz

Don Juan in Prague and New York

Marking the 2006 conclusion to the worldwide 250th anniversary celebration of Mozart's birth, the Brooklyn Academy of Music staged a performance of *Don Juan in Prague*, a Czech-American avant-garde multimedia adaptation of Mozart's opera, *Don Giovanni*. The show's international production team, led by director David Chambers of the Yale University School of Drama, included New Zealand electronic composer Matthew Suttor, and starred the renowned avant-garde Czech singer, actress, and violinist Iva Bittova as the passionate Donna Elvira. Ms. Bittova (whose sound has been compared to Bjork, Meredith Monk, and Laurie Anderson) was accompanied by the Agon Orchestra of Prague.

Mozart's original *Don Giovanni* was both commissioned in Prague and premiered there in 1787. So it is not accidental that in this reimagined version, the story takes place in Prague, graffiti-sprayed architecture included. Another modernization to the production is stage design by Darcy Scanlin incorporating

digital images of Czech photographer Jan Saudek's female nudes projected against an image of ruins by architectural photographer Robert Polidori. Although the original libretto by da Ponte and original score by Mozart are honored, the focus of the story has shifted to the jilted Donna Elvira, who, much like Glenn Close's character in the movie, *Fatal Attraction*, "will not be ignored." Ms. Bittova's mixture of Gypsy blood and classical training combine to produce a performance so powerful that Mark Swed, music critic of the Los Angeles Times wrote, "The brilliance of this production was the degree to which it allows Bittova to be herself, and the wilder she was, the better. ...The ending was unforgettable. ...It was a sound that needs to be heard again."

Don Juan in Prague was supported by New York-based CEC Artslink, dedicated to the exchange of arts and artists in the United States with their counterparts in Central Europe, Russia, and Eurasia; the Strings of Autumn Festival in Prague; and the Prague National Theater. 



Iva Bittova plays Donna Elvira in *Don Juan in Prague*

Photo courtesy of Petra Hajkova

Czech Republic Reduces Greenhouse Emissions



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Facko

The Czech Republic is among the leading European Union (EU) member states in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, according to European Commission statistics published in late 2006. Required by EU law to reduce emissions by 8 percent between 2008 and 2012, the Czech Republic will achieve a reduction of more than 25 percent by 2010. Due to its success in declining emissions, the Czech Republic will not have to make changes to its current policy of reducing greenhouse gases.



Photo courtesy of Jakub Cooper

From left to right: Petr Kavan, Ivona Hola, and Jiri Ellinger

New Staff

Jiri Ellinger is the new Head of the Political Section at the Embassy of the Czech Republic. Recently, he served as the Director of the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague. He studied history at The Queen's College, Oxford (The United Kingdom), and holds Masters and Ph.D. degrees in modern history from Charles University, Prague. Mr. Ellinger is accompanied in Washington by his wife Libuse, an art and ceramics teacher, and their 3-year-old son Matej.

Ivona Hola is the new Political Officer for Europe and Eurasia at the Embassy of the Czech Republic. Recently, she served as Head of the European Security and Defense Policy Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Prague.

Her international studies experience includes a year in Geneva at the Geneva Center for Security Policy and 6 months in Konstanz, Germany, studying political science. Before joining the MFA, Ms. Hola worked as a journalist for various media outlets including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. A graduate of Charles University, Ms. Hola holds a Masters in Political Science and a Masters in Information Science and Librarianship. She speaks German, English, and French and is conversant in Spanish.

Petr Kavan, First Secretary, is the new Economic Officer at the Embassy of the Czech Republic. Mr. Kavan joined the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 1997 and served as Assistant to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs until 1999. From 1999–2003, he was posted to the Czech Embassy in Havana, Cuba, serving as Political Secretary and Deputy Chief of Mission. From 2003 until 2006, he worked at the MFA in Prague as a U.S. Desk Officer. Mr. Kavan graduated from Charles University in Prague and holds a Masters in Economics. His wife, Martina, also an MFA employee—currently on maternity leave—is accompanying him in Washington with their 2-and-half-year-old son Jakub and 4-month-old daughter Katerina.



Paul Hostovsky: Eating the World One Bite at a Time

American journalist Hodding Carter said “There are two lasting bequests we can give our children. One is roots. The other is wings.” The life odyssey of the celebrated Czech novelist Egon Hostovsky (1908–1973) took him from his birthplace in the northeastern Bohemian town of Hronov, to Prague, Vienna, Brussels, Paris, Lisbon, New York, Oslo, and Denmark, before he eventually settled in the U.S. State of New Jersey. There he married and had a son, Paul. If New Jersey became the roots of the next Hostovsky generation, literature gave the boy wings.

Paul Hostovsky, an award-winning poet, was raised in the United States, except for 2 years in Denmark, where Egon Hostovsky had distant relatives (his immediate family were all killed in the Holocaust). Paul remembers his American childhood as, “full of baseball and bullies, television and Motown, pretty girls, doomed crushes, salami sandwiches, and Czech ghosts.”

Now in his 40s, Paul Hostovsky has published three books of poetry. His poems have appeared in numerous anthologies and magazines and his work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize for poetry, one of the Nation’s most prestigious literary honors. Hostovsky lives near Boston and works as an interpreter for the deaf. Recently he spoke with *Czech the News*.



Egon Hostovsky, son Paul, and wife Regina, circa 1960

Photo courtesy of Paul Hostovsky

CTN: What role did your father play in your upbringing and how did his being a writer affect you?

PH: He played the role of the foreign-distant-and-alloof-writer-of-psychological-novels-in-Czech who didn’t understand baseball or rock-n-roll and spoke English with a thick accent and was smooth-skinned like Jacob but older than Isaac and Jacob put together; more of a grandfather than a father, because he was already very old and sick when I was still very young and existential. But I do have a few fond memories of going on walks with him, holding his hand, kissing him on the mouth, and hearing him speak Czech into the telephone saying at intervals, “Ano, ano, ano...”

I knew from an early age that my father was a famous writer. I remember, when I was very young, sitting in Graham Greene’s lap in London—I don’t know how I got there, if I climbed up there myself or if he lifted me up. Greene had recently reviewed one of my father’s books (favorably). “A very famous writer,” my mother told me, “has invited us to his London apartment for tea.” I remember my father was nervous about his English, and hopeful about the possibility of help, perhaps with money or with work. And I remember three other things about that day: the first is not being able to read yet, though I knew

what books were and what a famous writer was; the second is sitting on Graham Greene’s lap and not being able to reach the floor with my toes; and the third is telling him matter-of-factly that I knew a famous writer too, and then pointing across the room at my father smiling nervously at me already at home in the big lap in London.

Even before I could read, books captured my attention and my imagination, probably because there were so many of them in our house. And since most of my father’s novels had been translated into many languages already, and since we had multiple copies of his books in multiple languages—there must have been hundreds altogether—there was this one room where all the Hostovsky books were kept (like a shrine) where I would go and gaze with pride and wonder at all of those spines with my name on them. I remember taking my friends into that room full of HOS-TOVSKY and it never failed to impress them, especially the books translated into Japanese and Chinese. But, sadly, I never had the opportunity to discuss writing with my father. When I was 12 he grew ill and spent most of the next 2 years in his bathrobe and slippers, in pain. He died when I was 14. I had only just begun to write. Though he wrote novels in Czech and I write poetry in English, I

would give anything to be able to sit down with him today and talk about our shared and unshared passion for writing.

CTN: If you could ask your father one question about his writing, what would it be?

PH: I guess I’d ask him, was it worth it? Is the sublime self-centeredness of the artist worth the wreckage it leaves in its path, the resentments and lost relationships and empty spaces and lonelinesses floating around in its wake? In other words, the book may be better than the movie but is the book better than the life, too?



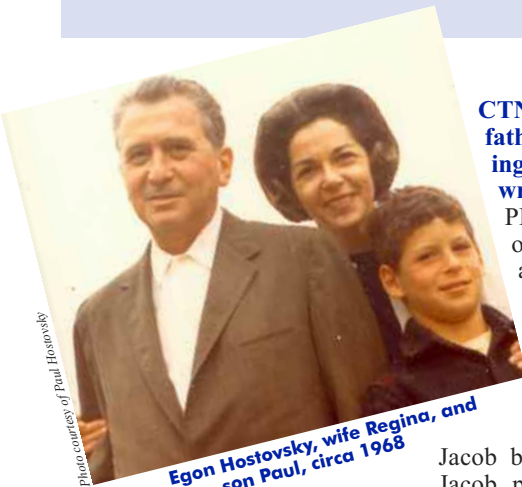
Egon Hostovsky in Prague, circa 1938

Photo courtesy of Paul Hostovsky

CTN: How strong was your identification with your father’s Czech nationality and how strong a connection do you have to the Czech Republic?

PH: As I said, there were “Czech ghosts”—overheard bits of phone conversation in Czech; paintings on the walls by Sima, Janacek, Fremund, Lada; children’s books by Jiri Trinka; on the phonograph

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Egon Hostovsky, wife Regina, and son Paul, circa 1968

CTN: What was your upbringing like?

PH: I was an only child, which I hated and loved. It was the first of many ambivalences. My father was married twice before. He had a daughter from each of those marriages, Jenny and Olga, my two half sisters. They were older and rather mythological to me because I rarely saw them and they lived in far-away places with strange names like Pennsylvania and Czechoslovakia. My father was in his late 40s (my age now) when he met my mother who was intellectual, gorgeous, and young—still in her 20s. They fell in love, married, and moved from New York to New Jersey. Then I came along. My mother did not know Czech. She was born in Leipzig. When she was 3 her family left Germany for Holland. When she was 11 they came to the U.S. So my parents spoke English to each other. Consequently I never learned Czech.

Cestmir Suska: Designs Inspired by Memories

In April 2007, Czech artist and sculptor Cestmir Suska will travel to Washington, DC, for a Meet the Artist reception



Photo courtesy of www.suska.cz

at the Embassy of the Czech Republic to discuss his Vermont collection of sculptures and prints that will be on display at the Embassy from March 15 through April 12, 2007.

During a 3-month residency at the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, Vermont, in 2005, Suska unleashed his ingenuity, learning to weld and use metal tanks as his canvas for creation. Previously he had worked with burned clay, wood, bronze, stone, and glass, but, attracted by the convex and concave shapes of the fuel tanks, he added welded iron to his list of mastered materials. Visiting Ver-

mont junkyards to find discarded tanks ranging in size from 3 to 10 feet, Suska hauled them to his studio to create his new vision.

The designs for this collection find their inspiration in Suska's childhood. The shapes represent motifs from his parents' tablecloths, curtains, embroideries, and wallpaper. Using a plasma cutter, Suska transformed the tanks into sculptures, welding together the remaining parts to create perfect spheres and columns. He used the smaller pieces that were removed during the cutting process to create flat designs laid on the floor and to generate large patterned prints on paper. Suska also uses lighting projected through his sculptures to reveal the dramatic play of light and shadow that emanates from within each sculpture.

In the past, Suska worked with filmmaker M. Maumbruck

and musician P. Richter, founding the Art Theatre Kolotoc (Merry-Go-Round Theater) where they staged a multimedia show in which objects and masks were on stage concurrently with a projected film, slide show, acting, and music. Suska also has worked as a screenwriter, stage designer, actor, and director.

Cestmir Suska studied sculpture at the Academy of Art (AVU) in Prague, Czech Republic, and has received scholarships from the Vermont Studio Center (2005), the Sculpture Space, Utica, New York (1998–1999), and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York (1995–1996).


Mr. Suska's sculptures are currently on display on the grounds of the Czech Embassy in Washington, DC. The exhibition of his prints will open at the Embassy on March 15, 2007. 



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fazlo

Cestmir Suska's sculpture exhibited on the premises of the Czech Embassy

Paul Hostovsky: Eating the World One Bite at a Time *continued. . .*

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Smetana and Dvorak; and that diminutive “ek” suffix floating around in my childhood (Paulicek, pupicek); and occasional visits from old men with funny names like Skvorecky, Voskovec, Liehm, Lustig, and others. But the gateway to culture is language, and I think because my mother never learned the Czech language and I didn't acquire it growing up, the attendant Czech culture was inaccessible to me. In fact, that's the word that best describes how I felt about my father: inaccessible. I do, nevertheless, feel a strong connection to my Czech ancestry, and a wistful, rueful, sort of yearning sensation comes over me whenever I hear Czech being spoken. I have a fantasy of learning Czech, moving to Prague, falling in love with a gorgeous, brilliant, Czech woman, and starting my life over...but it's just a fantasy.

CTN: Do you go often to the Czech Republic?

PH: I've been there twice. The first time was in 1979 with my mother. The Communists were in power so we were watched closely because my mother was in touch with dissident Czech writers living in the States and elsewhere through her sponsorship of the Egon Hostovsky Prize, given annually to a deserving Czech writer whose works were proscribed in Czechoslovakia. This is what I remember



Photo courtesy of Paul Hostovsky

Paul Hostovsky

about that trip: I was 21 and less interested in the Castle than in the doorknobs, which were mostly levers instead of knobs; and the toilets which were mostly not in the bathrooms but in little rooms beside the bathrooms; and the “pater noster” elevators which had no doors or buttons and never stopped so you had to leap in and leap out when they got to your floor; and the fact that things in general seemed more substantial—the bread for instance, and the soups, and the eyebrows of the grandmothers, and the beauty of the women. All those beautiful young substantial Czech women who were headed, I suspected, not to the Castle or the Old Jewish Cemetery, but somewhere else I

Denial


When I was small I had this fear of big dogs turning up round bends and corners, hounds that all along the long and convoluted zig-zag way I walked home from school to confound them found me—always. I had but one defense which I learned from Winnie the Pooh: simply hum a little tune. It throws them off the scent of your fear. Pretend to consider the weather: tum ti tum. Denial, that old sweet song in the face of death. It's always been the way to go, even in the mouth of death—the jowls and drool and halitosis. Denial, perfected, is a faith that works. Take St. Stephen full of arrows, take the Gnostics full of gnosis. We sang out sweetly who denied, though we breathed in dog breath.

~ by Paul Hostovsky

knew I would not see, especially with my mother in tow. My second trip to Prague, 27 years later, was just a few weeks ago, and my impressions are still too raw to put into words, except to say that the bread and the beauty of the women remain as substantial as ever.

CTN: What is poetry to you and why do you write it?

PH: Poetry is the kind of thing you see from the corner of your eye. Like a star. It isn't life itself, it's a by-product of life, and if you look at your life a certain way you will

see the poetry. If you look straight at it you can't see it, but if you look a little to one side it is there. A poem is a serious joke, a love affair with speech and its sounds, with words and their echoes. I write because I have to write. To tell you the truth, I would rather build houses or play the oboe. But I don't know how to build houses or play the oboe. So I write poetry. Because I'm happiest when I'm writing. Because I'm always thinking of something else, something a little off the point. I write poetry because I am eating the world one bite at a time. 



Lions of Czech Film Series Roars into Town at the Avalon Theatre

The Embassy of the Czech Republic has partnered with the Avalon Theatre to present Lions of Czech Film. This new film series gives the Washington, DC, community an opportunity to view Czech films that are popular hits in Europe and have received numerous honors and awards at film festivals, including the prestigious Czech Lion Award, the Czech equivalent of an Academy Award. All of the films have limited distribution in the United States. The Lions of Czech Film series offers an invaluable opportunity to see the best of Czech cinema in the Nation's capital. Special guest Irena Kovarova, Independent Film Programmer and Representative of the Czech Film Center in North America, will open the series.

Film screenings will take place once a month, with six films scheduled from January through June 2007. Based on the success of the series, the Embassy of the Czech Republic will continue to bring topnotch films to the DC community at the Avalon Theatre. All films in the series are directed by some of the most interesting directors of the new generation in Czech filmmaking—Sasa Gedeon, Petr Zelenka, Bohdan Slama, David Ondricek, and Zdenek Tyc. They include: *Return of the Idiot*, featuring a modern version of Dostoyevsky's hero; *Year of the Devil*, dubbed by some as the Czech version of *This is Spinal Tap*; *Wild Bees*, the directorial debut of a promising newcomer; the blockbuster, *Loners*, and the director's subsequent feature, *One Hand Can't Clap*; and *Brats*, the most socially conscious film in this group.

The Lions of Czech Film series kicked off with the screening of award-winning director David Ondricek's film *Loners (Samotari)* on Wednesday, January 10, 2007.

Presentation of the initial six films is part of the Rare Bohemians touring series produced by New York-based Irena Kovarova in cooperation with the Czech Film Center in Prague. Screening of these films is a virtually nonprofit endeavor designed to support the Czech Film Center's activities in North America, and by extension also Czech producers. By attending these screenings, viewers support Czech cinema and future filmmaking projects. Additional support was provided by Czech Centres. All films are in Czech with English subtitles.

Lions of Czech Film Series at the Avalon Theatre

www.mzv.cz/washington
Questions: (202) 274-9105

January 10, 2007, 8 pm
Loners
(*Samotari*)

February 13, 2007, 8 pm
Wild Bees
(*Divoke vcely*)

March 14, 2007, 8 pm
Year of the Devil
(*Rok dabla*)

April 11, 2007, 8 pm
Brats
(*Smradi*)

May 9, 2007, 8 pm
One Hand Can't Clap
(*Jedna ruka netleska*)

June 13, 2007, 8 pm
Return of the Idiot
(*Navrat idiota*)

The Avalon Theatre is located at 5612 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20015. Tickets may be purchased at the box office 30 minutes before the start of the show. Advance sales of tickets may be made at the box office only. For more information, call the box office at (202) 966-3464, or to hear general information about films playing at the Avalon, call (202) 966-6000.



Loners (Samotari)
2000, 104 min.
directed by David Ondricek
screenplay by Petr Zelenka

Set in present-day Prague, a group of pushing-30 adults remains trapped behind the confines of their own egos. Comic overlapping stories reveal a dysfunctional romance, misguided pursuits, and reckless obsession. The film was a hit in the Czech Republic with its contemporary music and catchy phrases.



Brats (Smradi)
2002, 96 min.
directed by Zdenek Tyc

This simple tale provides a look at questions of everyday intolerance, love, and family. Marek and Monika Sir leave Prague for the country. Their goal is to find a better environment for their two adopted sons, both Romany (Gypsy) by birth, and better air for their own boy, an asthma sufferer. Their dream of a quiet and peaceful existence soon vanishes when an elderly neighbor accuses one of their adopted sons of breaking the windshield of his car.



Wild Bees (Divoke vcely)
2001, 94 min.
direction and screenplay by
Bohdan Slama

A dark, satirical look inside a Moravian village yields a beehive of trouble. Shy 18-year-old Kaja lives with his grandmother and philosophizing father. Kaja's main occupation in life is secretly admiring the girl of his dreams: Bozka, a wild-child who runs a general store in the local village. When Kaja's prodigal brother arrives from Prague for a visit, long stagnant relationships begin to stir.



One Hand Can't Clap
(*Jedna ruka netleska*)
2003, 100 min.
directed by David Ondricek

Fate has been harsh to Standa who took the fall for his boss and served time in prison without much fuss—but now it is payback time. His former boss, Zdenek, owes him a considerable sum of money, and Standa hopes it will help fulfill his dreams. Unfortunately, he doubles his bad luck by meeting up with Ondrej, an even bigger loony.



Year of the Devil (Rok dabla)
2002, 88 min.
direction and screenplay by
Petr Zelenka

A Czech folk star, a band of funeral musicians, and a Dutch filmmaker stumble toward enlightenment on a remarkable musical tour. Writer/director Petr Zelenka fuses fact and fiction in a music-filled, magical adventure that has ghosts and guardian angels helping people hear the melodies within them—while Jaz Coleman of Killing Joke fame offers his own brand of enlightenment.



Return of the Idiot (Navrat idiota)
1999, 99 min.
direction and screenplay by
Sasa Gedeon

Drawing inspiration from the main character of Dostoyevsky's, "The Idiot," the film reveals a serio-comic, modern-day love story. Frantisek, recently released from a psychiatric hospital where he has spent most of his life, tries to assimilate into mainstream society. Through his innocence, he uncovers minor hypocrisies and lies contained in everyday dealings with his new friends and family.

Embassy to Participate in 15th Annual Environmental Film Festival

As part of the Environmental Film Festival, the Embassy of the Czech Republic will feature the film *Source (Zdroj)* on March 21, 2007, at 7 pm, with guest documentary film director Martin Marecek.

In the film, the director takes viewers to Baku in Azerbaijan, the site of the world's first oil well, which is once again becoming a focus for foreign investors eager to exploit the country's vast oil riches. *Source* traces the pipeline from the commuter highways back to this surreal and sinister landscape on which the Western way of life depends, where cows graze on polluted land and children play in toxic grunge. With three quarters of the population living under the poverty line, the country's post-Soviet government is promising oil will turn Azerbaijan into a 'real country,' a prosperous and flourishing 'New Kuwait.'

The film premiered at the One World Festival in Prague and has

received numerous awards including: the Kodak Vision Audience Award (2005), Grand Prix of Ekofilm, and the Audience Award and the Special Jury Award at the One World International Human Rights Festival.

The Environmental Film Festival in Washington, DC, takes place from March 15 through March 25, 2007. Approximately 100 documentary, feature, animated, archival, experimental and children's films were selected to provide fresh perspectives on environmental issues affecting the planet.

The Environmental Film Festival has become the leading showcase for environmental films in the United States. Presented in collaboration with over 50 local, national, and international organizations, the festival has become one of the largest cooperative



Photo Courtesy of www.automatfilm.cz

cultural events in the Nation's capital. Films are screened at nearly 40 venues throughout the city, including museums, embassies, libraries, universities, and local theaters. Most screenings are free to the public and include a discussion with filmmakers or scientists.

For a complete schedule, visit: www.denvironmentalfilmfest.org. For more information about the film being screened at the Embassy of the Czech Republic, visit: www.automatfilm.cz.

Classical Concert at the Embassy of the Czech Republic

Washington Musica Viva
February 27, 7:30 pm
Admission: \$20

Washington Musica Viva continues its popular Czech Music Series with trios by Bedrich Smetana and Johannes Brahms, Bohuslav Martinu's folk poetry Petrlick (Primrose) for two singers, violin, and piano, plus clarinet works by Leos Janacek and Vaclav Nelhybel. Performers include soprano Elizabeth Kluegel, mezzo soprano Karyn Friedman, clarinetist Ben Redwine, pianist Carl Banner, and National Symphony Orchestra members Natasha Bogachek (violin), and David Teie (cello).

Upcoming Exhibitions at the Embassy of the Czech Republic

Please note: Exhibitions can be seen by appointment from Monday through Thursday (10 am–5 pm), and Fridays (10 am–3 pm). Call (202) 274-9105 to schedule an exhibition viewing.

Opening: January 25, 7 pm

Neighbors Who Disappeared

Czech children and youth (ages 12–21) created mixed-media panels reflecting on the history of the Nazi Holocaust as it affected their own cities and towns. The resulting collages combine text, drawings, paintings, contemporary and historical photographs, and facsimiles of historical documents. Curator Marie Zahradnikova will present the exhibition, which runs until February 15, 2007.



Photo courtesy of www.zamiatifisouise.cz

Opening: February 22, 7 pm

It is Our Problem Too—The Women of the Prisoners of the Cuban Spring

Photographer Alexander Polo, in cooperation with People in Need (PIN) and the Center for a Free Cuba, has created a photo-documentary that examines the lives of the wives and mothers of the 75 Cuban dissidents, activists, writers, and librarians arrested and sentenced by the Castro regime in the spring of 2003. This photography exhibition combines photos and statements made by 23 women whose lives were affected when their husbands and sons were arrested in 2003. The exhibition runs until March 13.



Photo courtesy of People in Need

On Display Beginning: March 15

Cestmir Suska's Prints and Metal Sculpture

Cestmir Suska, a sculptor from the Czech Republic temporarily working in the United States, cuts designs inspired by patterns from his childhood in his latest work consisting of large discarded metal containers that he altered using a plasma cutter. The shapes represent motifs from his parents' tablecloths, curtains, embroideries, and wallpaper. Suska also fused together the small cut-out pieces from the finished works to represent the negative space of the original work. This negative space is represented using large white paper as his canvas and bronze-colored paint to reveal the details. The works range in size from 3 feet to almost 10 feet and are featured on the outdoor premises and in the main exhibition hall of the embassy. For more information about Cestmir Suska, visit: www.suska.cz. The Suska exhibition runs from March 15 through April 12.



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fetzko

Stapleton-Springer Winery in Moravia

Wine making, introduced into Moravia during Roman times, is celebrated annually at grape harvesting festivals across wine producing regions of the Czech Republic. During these festivals, local wineries and wine cellars throw open their doors to tasters, minstrels and musicians perform, townsfolk parade in native costume, theaters reenact scenes from history, and wine flows in abundance.

Now, Moravian wine making has yet another reason to celebrate. Nestled in the rolling hills of Boretice in central Moravia, the Stapleton-Springer Winery opened its doors in 2004 and launched its first vintage that same year. Occupying an old viticultural farmstead established 250 years ago during the reign of Marie Therese, the Stapleton-Springer Winery is a Czech-American hybrid co-founded by Moravian vintner Jaroslav Springer and American brothers Ben and Craig Stapleton.

Ambassador Craig Stapleton, current U.S. Ambassador to France, served as the U.S. representative to the Czech Republic from 2001–2004. A great fan of Pinot Noir, Ambassador Stapleton familiarized himself with the Czech variety during his ambassadorship.

Jaroslav Springer, then a vintner with a small winery, remembers how he first came to know Ambassador Stapleton.



Photo Courtesy of www.stapleton-springer.cz

“One December morning I got a call from the U.S. Embassy in Prague. Ambassador Craig Stapleton wanted to buy some 1999 Pinot Noir from the Springer winery. We told him that the Pinot Noir was only for members of the Springer Club.”

Ambassador Stapleton made a trip to the Springer winery in Boretice. Together he and Jaroslav Springer toured the vineyards, held long talks, and proposed a toast over the Pinot Noir. Springer recalls, “It became clear that our

meeting was not a chance one, and that some things just happen because they are somehow ordered from on high.” And so it started. Ambassador Stapleton’s brother

Ben, a member of the Pinot Noir Club of Greenwich, Connecticut, visited the Springer vineyard a few months later. From their first meeting, it was apparent that the Stapleton brothers and

Stapleton-Springer Winery in Moravia

Mr. Springer shared a great enthusiasm for wine. Ben Stapleton was so taken with Mr. Springer’s vintages that he invited Springer to bring some to New York where Springer impressed New York wine importers and dealers. Combining their expertise and resources with a mutual love of wine making was the next logical step for the three men.

Jaroslav Springer and his wife, Kveta, manage the day to day functioning of the Stapleton-Springer winery which includes 30 hectares of vineyards. Mr. Springer says, “A vintner’s work is work in the countryside.

We have been able to positively influence and beautify our vineyard, which is cultivated using ecological methods in harmony with the surrounding ecosystem.” While the winery’s oldest vines were

planted 35 years ago, Springer is looking forward to expanding, “In the near future, Stapleton-Springer will plant a new vineyard in the excellent locality called Terasy, with a variety of Pinot Noir formerly known in the Czech lands as Rouci.” In addition to its Pinot Noir, the winery also offers several other reds and whites including Saint Laurent, Andre, Frankovka, Modry Portugal, and Pinot Gris.

As for the philosophy of winemaking, the Stapleton-Springer Winery has one goal: to produce wine that will make people happy. Mr. Springer summarizes, “We have no wish to become part of any ‘cult of wine.’ Still, we love making wine, and we like the people who taste and appreciate our wine.”

For more information on the Stapleton-Springer Winery or to visit the winery, please go to www.stapleton-springer.cz/.



www.stapleton-springer.cz



www.stapleton-springer.cz

Czech Astronomers Discover Unknown Asteroid

Jana Ticha, director of the Klet Observatory in the Czech Republic, announced in December 2006 that Czech astronomers had discovered an unknown asteroid passing the Earth at a distance of 600,000 kilometers (372,600 miles), slightly greater than that between the Earth and the Moon.

“This is one of the asteroids bypassing us at a very close distance that has been discovered in Europe. A big majority of such discoveries are made by large U.S. observatories,” Ticha said.

The asteroid, designated internationally as 2006 XR4, was discovered moving at a very high

speed at its nearest point to the Earth. 2006 XR4 belongs to the rare Apollo type or near-Earth asteroids whose orbit crisscrosses the orbit of the Earth around the Sun. Due to their proximity to the Earth, some Apollo type asteroids can pose a threat to the planet. 2006 XR4 measures approximately 20 meters (65.6 feet) in length and probably would not inflict damage if it entered the Earth’s atmosphere as it would most likely disintegrate into small fragments before impact.

“Monitoring even such small

bodies enhances the knowledge of the structure of a whole population of asteroids, including the calcula-

tion of their coming near the Earth and the probability of their crashes into the Earth,” Ticha said.



Klet Observatory in the Czech Republic

Photo by Martin Ševák, Courtesy of Klet Observatory

The “California Masaryk”

Symbolic of the close ties between Czechs and Americans, in 1960 the U.S. Congress honored the first president of Czechoslovakia, Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, by placing his image on a Champion of Liberty postage stamp. Then as now, Masaryk represented the core democratic values at the heart of the American experience. Today, statues of Masaryk can be found across the United States in New York, San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park, and Washington, DC, among several notable venues. But few know the story of the “California Masaryk,” a life-sized bronze statue, whose travels would take it from the National Gallery in Prague to California and beyond.

The “California Masaryk,” cast in Prague in the 1930s, was bought by Czech businessman Vaclav Ilk at the outbreak of World War II. In 1939, desperate for raw metals and fighting against the values Masaryk represented, the Nazi’s ordered the statue destroyed. Instead, Mr. Ilk melted the equivalent amount of bronze and gave the material to the authorities. Meanwhile, he buried the 600-pound statue in the garden of his villa outside of Prague. To protect it, and him—the penalty for hiding such contraband was death—Ilk had the statue moved three times between gardens and cellars. When the war ended, Mr. Ilk dug up and cleaned the statue. He intended to donate it as a monument for the square in Uhrineves, a town 15 miles from Prague where Ilk owned a factory.

But in 1948, Mr. Ilk was jailed as an enemy of the Communist Party and the statue was confiscated.

Eventually, Vaclav Ilk was released from jail. During the relatively liberal regime of Alexandr Dubcek, he read in the newspaper that his Masaryk statue was residing in the courtyard of Prague’s National Gallery. After a lengthy legal exchange, the statue was returned to Ilk’s wife who eventually launched it on its slow sea journey to California. From 1978 until 2000, a garage in Monterey owned by Ilk’s daughter and son-in-law, Anna and Jiri Jilich, served as the home of the Masaryk statue where it lay mummy-like in a large wooden crate.



www.184usa.com

In 1999, Mr. Jilich, then in his late 80s, was relocating permanently to the Czech Republic and needed to find a home for the Masaryk bronze. At that time, the existence of the “California Masaryk” was reported to Alexandr Vondra, then Czech Ambassador to the United States, and it sparked the idea of placing a Masaryk statue in Washington, DC. Meanwhile the Hoover Institute at Stanford University was considering accepting the statue. But while the Institute’s management assessed the statue’s potential presence to be “quite political,” Mr. Jilich donated it to the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where it can be seen today.

American Friends of the Czech Republic quickly began the task of erecting a statue of the first



Masaryk Statue in the courtyard of the Prague National Gallery, circa 1950

Photo courtesy of Richard Pivnicka

president of Czechoslovakia—a man with deep democratic, humanitarian, and family ties to America—in Washington, DC. In September 2002, a 12-foot bronze of Masaryk was unveiled on Massachusetts Avenue in downtown Washington. Perhaps the “California Masaryk,” now in the U.S. heartland, sees his bronze brother in America’s capital as a wonderful end to a lengthy journey.

Guest Writer:

Richard Pivnicka
Honorary Consul General
of the Czech Republic
San Francisco/Silicon Valley
(JoAnn M. Cooper
contributed to this article) 🇨🇪

Czech Fun Facts

Months of the Year

Czech names for the calendar months are different from the month names in other Indo-European languages. Each of the month names indicates its weather characteristics. In January (leden) there is often ice (led); in May (kveten) flowers bloom (kvet); and August (srpen) is named after the sickle (srp) used for reaping grains.

Charles University

Charles University in Prague is the oldest university in Central Europe. Established April 7, 1348, today it is attended by 42,000 students.

First Theater Lighted Incandescently

The first theater in the world to be electrically lit was the Municipal Theater in Brno, today known as the Mahen Theater (Mahenovo Divadlo). The theater was wired in 1882 according to plans by Thomas Edison, who was onsite to help with the installation. For more fun facts, visit www.czech.cz.

AFoCR Prints First Book Title

In January 2007, American Friends of the Czech Republic (AFoCR) published its first title, *Nicholas Winton’s Lottery of Life*. Written by film director Matej Minac, the book already has been published in Czech and German. AFoCR’s publication is the first English-language edition of the story of the young Englishman, Nicholas Winton, who saved 669 Czechoslovak children from Nazi extermination before the outbreak of World War II.

Initial publication of the U.S. edition of *Nicholas Winton’s Lottery of Life* was made possible by a seed grant from the Czech

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by generous donors to AFoCR’s Friends of the Nicholas Winton Educational Project. Current funding allows for a first edition printing of 7,000 copies. AFoCR plans to distribute *Nicholas Winton’s Lottery of Life* free of charge to American school systems for use in history, political science, and Holocaust curricula. AFoCR estimates it will need a total of 35,000 to 50,000 copies for outreach to the U.S. educational system. The first copy will be delivered to 98-year-old Sir Nicholas Winton who lives in England.

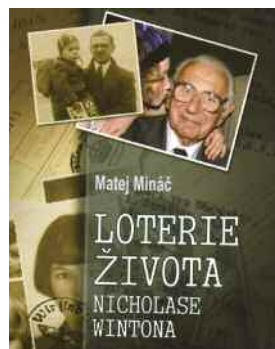


Photo courtesy of Peter Rafaeli

For information on how to contribute to the Winton Educational Project please contact AFoCR Vice President Mr. Peter Rafaeli at (215) 646-7777 or by e-mail at cz.consul.phl@juno.com. 🇨🇪



Upcoming 2007 Czech Events in the U.S.

Jan. 16–Feb. 25

Orlando, FL

Gargoyles and Grotesques by Walter Arnold opens at the Albin Polasek Museum's East Gallery. For more information, please call: (407) 647-6294.

Jan. 18–20

Seattle, WA

Cornish College of the Arts presents the Erwin Schulhoff Festival. For more information, write to: srathkopf@cornish.edu.

Jan. 25–Feb. 11

New York, NY

Czechoslovak-American Marionette Theatre performs "Once There Was a Village." For more information, please visit www.lamama.org.

Feb. 10

McLean, VA

Sokol Washington, DC, presents the Sibrinky-Fasiangy Ball. For more information, please visit: www.sokolwashington.org.

Feb. 17

New Bedford, PA

29th Baca Cup downhill ski race and party. For more info, contact: CWFletcher@mris.com

Feb. 17–18

Cedar Rapids, IA

The National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library, in their series exploring Czech and Slovak Cinema, features "Andy Warhol: A Documentary Film." For more information, please contact: Jan@NCSML.org

March 1, 15, 22, 29

Cedar Rapids, IA

Professor Dennis Barnett presents the seminar "Theatre, Revolution and the Dissolution of Two Countries," at Coe College. For more information, call Kate Rose at (319) 399-8561.

March 2007

Baltimore, MD

The Baltimore Opera Company will present *The Bartered Bride*. For more information, visit: www.baltimoreopera.com

March 16

New York, NY

Ivan Moravec makes a welcome return to the Metropolitan Museum with a program including Mozart and Chopin at 8 pm. For more information, visit: www.metmuseum.org

Contact Us

Czech the News is always looking for story and article ideas, cultural events listings, and other pertinent information relevant to enhancing Czech-U.S. relations and to informing the general public and the Czech American community about the Czech experience in the United States. For more information or to submit newsletter content or information, please use the following contacts:

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