

CZECH the NEWS

Newsletter of the Embassy of the Czech Republic

Vol. 2, 2008

Contents:

Message from the Ambassador.....	2
Ambassador's Timeline of Events..	2
Prime Minister in Washington, Czechs Closer to Visa-Free U.S. Travel.....	3
Cuba Solidarity Day, Call for the Release of Political Prisoners.....	3
Ambassador Kolar Receives CHLI Award.....	3
Forman Film Retrospective.....	4
Czech Studio at Filmmaking Forefront.....	5
Choral Arts to Perform Czech Christmas Music.....	6
Czech Girls Choir Jitro Tours the U.S.....	6
NAPEX to Display Most Beautiful Stamps Exhibition.....	6
Upcoming Czech Events.....	6
Albright Delivers Inaugural Masaryk Lecture.....	7
Czech-Slovak Museum Plans Expansion.....	7
SVU Updates.....	7
Czech Film Facts, Did You Know?..	8

President Klaus Visits Washington, DC, Launches New Book

President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus visited the United States on May 26–29, 2008. The President's visit coincided with the launching of his new book *Blue Planet in Green Shackles – What Is Endangered: Climate or Freedom?* which the President discussed at the Speakers Luncheon at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. In the book, Klaus writes: "The largest threat to freedom, democracy, the market economy, and prosperity at the end of the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st century is no longer socialism. It is, instead, the ambitious, arrogant, unscrupulous ideology of environmentalism." The President's talk was aired on C-SPAN. Audience members at the luncheon received a complimentary copy of the book and had the opportunity to interact with President Klaus at



President Vaclav Klaus and Ambassador Kolar at the National Press Club

a book signing that followed the program's question and answer session.

The Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), the publisher of the President's new book, honored President Klaus with the Julian L. Simon Memorial Award at their 2008 Annual Dinner, where the President delivered the keynote address on the topic: "Is Schumpeter's

Continued on page 8



President Klaus and U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney

Czech Caucus Inaugurated, Lantos Honored

During his February 2008 visit to Washington, Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek, along with Ambassador Petr Kolar and members of the U.S. Congress, inaugurated the Congressional Czech Caucus, a bicameral initiative dedicated to furthering Czech-U.S. relations. Caucus cochairs in attendance included Senator Ben Nelson, Senator George Voinovich, Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, and Congressman Joe Barton. Opening the inaugural reception, Prime Minister Topolánek expressed his appreciation of the bipartisan initiative that currently includes 31 members from the Senate and the House of Representatives. Ambassador Kolar, in his address to the more than 100 guests, members of Congress, and staffers in attendance, praised the Caucus for their support of strong Czech-

U.S. relations and for their enthusiasm in launching the Czech Caucus.

Librarian of Congress James Billington attended the Caucus reception where the Library of Congress displayed historical documents representative of the long-lasting Czech-U.S. friendship, including letters between the first Czechoslovak President Tomas Masaryk and U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. Among these documents was a congressional resolution introduced on October 24, 1918, in the House of Representatives by Congressman Adolph Sabath of Illinois requesting that



Mrs. Lantos accepting the award from Prime Minister Topolánek

November 8, 1918, be named "Czechoslovak Day" in honor of the newly founded democratic Czechoslovakia.

A special presentation at the Czech Caucus reception

underscored the strength and closeness of Czech-U.S. relations. Recognizing the late Congressman Tom Lantos—a staunch advocate of human rights and international relations throughout his lifetime—Prime Minister Topolánek and Ambassador Kolar presented Congressman Lantos' widow, Mrs. Annette Lantos, with the Prime Minister's Award. Conferred by the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, the award recognizes outstanding individuals whose work is dedicated to the enhancement of human rights. A former Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman Tom Lantos was actively involved in Central and Eastern European issues, and is the first non-Czech recipient of the Prime Minister's Award.





Photo courtesy of Chad Ryan

Message from the Ambassador

Dear Friends,

With so much attention paid these days to the importance of our ecological footprint (the amount of the Earth's resources needed to sustain our way of life) and our carbon footprint (the amount of greenhouse gases produced while sustaining our lifestyle, measured in units of carbon dioxide) it would make sense to extend that sense of responsibility to our civic, political, and sociological footprints. The assumption at the basis of the eco and carbon footprints is that the natural resources that sustain our way of life are renewable given the necessary conditions. However, democracy, civil rights, and the freedoms we have come to take for granted are renewable only with active participation of individuals, organizations, and governments.

The Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, DC, regularly conducts and engages in pro-democratic events. This spring we hosted a human rights film festival that focused on issues in Belarus, Burma, and Cuba. The Annual One World International Human Rights Film Festival took place in Prague in March 2008. Organized by the Czech NGO People in Need, the festival is traditionally held under the auspices of human rights activist and former president Vaclav Havel. To celebrate the 10th anniversary of this important festival, People In Need is organizing "Echoes" of One World in major cities around the world, including Washington. In addition to showing films from Belarus, Burma, China, and Cuba, the festival featured panel discussions with filmmakers and human rights experts.

In conjunction with George Washington University we also are organizing a fall 2008 conference that will provide a forum for discussion on the many critical Czech political events that took place in years ending with the number "8" and that greatly impacted the fate of Czech politics. This includes the 1918 founding of the democratic Czechoslovak Republic, the 1938 Munich Agreement which took democracy away from us, the communist coup of 1948, and the Warsaw Pact invasion of our country in 1968 which further pushed us behind the Iron Curtain.

I am frequently asked why the Czech Republic, a central European country enjoying its prosperity and democracy, is so interested in political and social issues. The answer is simple: we have been there. Czechs lived through an era of communist totalitarianism where democracy, freedom, and human rights were mere concepts you could only dream of while living a nightmare. Having rid ourselves of communism, we feel obliged not only to tell our story of a successful transition from totalitarianism to democracy and a civil society that respects and honors the rights and freedoms of every individual, but also to help maintain those freedoms.

Our political history is one of lessons learned and hope made manifest. As active supporters of freedom in the modern world, an important component of the Czech story is that we transitioned to democracy without any bloody coups, revolutions, or turmoil. Peaceful student protests gradually evolved into support from various segments of society. Everyone who wanted to take part in the democratic changes was able to. Naturally, not all steps in the transition and transformation were without problems. Difficulties did occur. However, judging from the open society we enjoy today, it was all worth it.

We Czechs woke up from our nightmare and started living our dreams. By our activities, we try to tell those around the globe in whose shoes we used to stand of our experience. We also send them the message that their situation, however hopeless it might seem, is not carved in stone. The faith and destiny of their country is in their hands only. On their way to democracy and freedom, we should be and are ready to help. Just as the Cuban people are not only the victims of their regime but also active players who can bring about change, all of us have the obligation to ensure that the political, social, and civic footprints we leave will be on the path to freedom not just for us but also for the generations who will follow.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming events.

Warmly,

Petr Kolar



Ambassador's Timeline of Events



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Ferzko

February, 27, 2008

Ambassador Kolar spoke with Prime Minister Topolánek and Mr. Jan Svejnar during a reception marking the visit of the Prime Minister at the Embassy of the Czech Republic.



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Ferzko

February 27, 2008

Ambassador Kolar and Prime Minister Topolánek greeted Mrs. Barbara Podoski and other members of the Czech American community during a wreath-laying ceremony at the Masaryk Memorial in Washington, DC.



Photo courtesy of Jana Kalimova

February 27, 2008

Ambassador Kolar and Prime Minister Topolánek inaugurated the Czech Caucus on Capitol Hill with members of the U.S. House and Senate.



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Ferzko

March 13, 2008

Ambassador Kolar greeted Maestro Norman Scribner during a reception for the Choral Arts Society in honor of the Society's *Stabat Mater* performance at the Kennedy Center.

Prime Minister in Washington, Czechs Closer to Visa-Free U.S. Travel

Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek visited Washington in late winter where he spent 2 days meeting with U.S. Government officials, among them President George W. Bush and members of his Cabinet. Traveling with the Prime Minister was a delegation of Czech officials including Czech Minister of Defense Vlasta Parkanová and Minister of the Interior Ivan Langer. During these meetings Minister Langer cosigned a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United States, represented by U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, that moves the Czech Republic closer to inclusion in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program. The memorandum contains areas in which the two countries will continue to negotiate, but could pave the way for full visa parity




Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek meets with President George W. Bush at the White House.

Photo courtesy of the Prime Minister's office

between the United States and the Czech Republic. The agreement would have Czech travelers providing U.S. authorities with personal data via the Internet before being allowed to enter the country. The required information conforms to an agreement reached between the United States and the European Union in 2007. Prime Minister Topolánek said that signing the agreement

was an historical moment that represented the fulfillment of a dream for generations of Czechs. Secretary Chertoff said he hopes to see Czechs able to travel to the United States without a visa by fall 2008.

During his stay in Washington Prime Minister Topolánek also gave talks on the "Value of Transatlantic Partnership in the 21st Century" at the Heritage Foundation and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Before his departure he honored those whose lives have been impacted by communism at a wreath-laying ceremony at the Victims of Communism Memorial. He also paid tribute to the first Czechoslovak president, Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, at the Masaryk Statue in downtown Washington, DC. 


Ambassador Kolar Receives CHLI Award



Ambassador Petr Kolar

Photo courtesy of the office of Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart

On behalf of the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute (CHLI), Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart bestowed the Leadership in International Relations Award on Czech Ambassador Petr Kolar at the Fourth Annual Hispanic Leadership Dinner on May 14, 2008.

This award is presented once a year to one individual by CHLI, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering a broader awareness of the diversity of thought, heritage, interests, and views of Americans of Hispanic and Portuguese descent and also in engaging the international community by promoting greater awareness of the U.S. Hispanic community as a strategic economic partner in the U.S. economy. Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart, who was also in attendance, is the President of CHLI. 

Cuba Solidarity Day, Call for the Release of Political Prisoners

On May 15, 2008, the Center for a Free Cuba and the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, DC, hosted a Cuba roundtable discussion, *From Totalitarianism to Democracy: Czech Experience, Cuban Future*.

Congressmen Mario Diaz-Balart and Lincoln Diaz-Balart and Czech Ambassador Petr Kolar opened the roundtable to discussion. Panel topics included "Transformation of a Political and Economic System in the Czech Republic: What went right and what went wrong" and "Transformation from a Cuban Perspective: Expectations, Threats, and Reality."


A reception marking the Cuba Solidarity Day in support



Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, Ambassador Petr Kolar, Mr. Jan Bubenik, and Vaclav Bartuska

Photo courtesy of Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart's staff

of prisoners of conscience in Cuba followed the roundtable debate. Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky stressed the importance of supporting solidarity and human rights in Cuba.

Mr. Lino Gutierrez, Senior Advisor on Cuba to U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez, also offered opening remarks on the significance of showing unity on this day and calling for the release of political prisoners. 

Ambassador's Timeline of Events (continued)



Photo courtesy of Nora Jarkovcova

May 3, 2008

Embassy staff and Ambassador Kolar welcomed over 2,000 visitors to the Embassy during EU Open House Day. The event featured tours of the residence, Czech music, and more.



Photo courtesy of Radka Klondova

May 13, 2008

The Ambassador and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright participated in a commemorative ceremony at the Masaryk Memorial in Chicago.



Photo courtesy of Mary E. Fazlo


May 14, 2008

At the Washington, DC, premiere of the film *Citizen Havel*, Czech Radio and Czech Television interviewed Ambassador Kolar. Over 300 people attended the screening.



Photo courtesy of Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart's staff

May 27, 2008

Ambassador Kolar welcomed President Klaus to the Embassy of the Czech Republic during his working visit to Washington, DC. 



Forman Film Retrospective

Milos Forman, the celebrated Czech-born director whose career spans 5 decades and 16 films, was featured during a recent 2-week retrospective of his work at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). The MoMA retrospective, which marked the first-ever comprehensive presentation of Forman's work, kicked off with a screening of his 1965 Oscar-nominated film *Loves of a Blonde*. In attendance at the opening were Ambassador Petr Kolar, the film's male lead Vladimir Pucholt, and Forman's long-time creative partner, Czech American director Ivan Passer.



Loves of a Blonde (1965)



The Firemen's Ball (1967)



One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)



Amadeus (1984)



The People vs. Larry Flynt (1996)



Goya's Ghosts (2006)

Born in 1932 in the Czechoslovak town of Caslav to a Jewish father and Protestant mother, Forman was orphaned at an early age when his parents perished in Auschwitz concentration camp. He went on to study film at the Prague Film Academy and in the mid 1960s his early movies helped jumpstart a productive period in Czech filmmaking that became known as the Czech New Wave. In 1968, like so many of Czechoslovakia's cultural figures, Forman left his homeland in response to the Soviet-led invasion of the country and the resultant political crackdown. He settled in New York and released his first American-made film *Taking Off* in 1971. But his U.S. career really took off in 1975 with *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* that garnered five Academy Awards including best director.

A screenwriter and actor in his own right, Forman's films are peopled with anti-authoritarian characters whose deeds and misdeeds are portrayed with a permeating dark humor that he says he learned from the early

Forman's Filmography

Audition (1963)
Black Peter (1964)
Loves of a Blonde (1965)
A Worthwhile Walk (1966)
The Firemen's Ball (1967)
I Miss Sonja Henie (1971)
Taking Off (1971)
Decathlon (1973)
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)
Hair (musical, 1979)
Ragtime (1981)
Amadeus (1984)
Valmont (1989)
The People vs. Larry Flynt (1996)
Man on the Moon (1999)
Goya's Ghosts (2006)



Milos Forman, Vladimir Pucholt, and Ambassador Petr Kolar

American silent comedies of Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, and Laurel and Hardy. As a young filmmaker, Forman was fascinated by human spontaneity and the unique performances produced by using non-professional actors and unscripted scenes. He remembers, "I was happy to put unrepeatable moments in human behavior on screen without any story." (*Audition*, 1963; *Black Peter*, 1964) In time, he added more elaborate structure to his storytelling and transitioned from cinema verité to more stylized filmmaking. He focused on increasingly complex protagonists whose lives are riddled with the unpredictable complications of human foibles.

"Truth is very boring because it's known," he muses, "If I tell you two plus two is four, you look at me like I'm an idiot. If I tell you two plus two is five, you suddenly get interested because the lie is very interesting. In the end you find out that I'm BS-ing you but you'll enjoy my BS for 2 hours. In the end, I tell you the truth and it seems interesting."

As Forman's screenplays became more complicated he shifted to using professional

actors because, "You can't improvise with elaborate language," he says. Although four of his films take place in the 18th, 19th, and turn of the 20th centuries (*Ragtime*, 1981; *Amadeus*, 1984; *Valmont*, 1989; *Goya's Ghosts*, 2006), Forman denies an inclination toward period pieces, "You don't fall in love with a project for its place or time," he says, "but for the story and the atmosphere. When it takes place is secondary." *Amadeus*, which tells the story of musical genius and rascal Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, won Forman his second Academy Award for Best Director in 1984. *The People vs. Larry Flynt* was nominated for a best direction Oscar in 1996 and was followed by two more dramas that capture the rise and fall of their protagonists, *Man on the Moon* (about comedian Andy Kaufman) and *Goya's Ghosts* (about fictionalized events from the time of Spanish painter Francisco Goya).

The film retrospective which Forman calls "a dream come true" moves to Washington, DC, in summer 2008 under the auspices of the Embassy of the Czech Republic and AFI Silver Theatre.

For more information on the Forman film retrospective, please go to www.afi.com.

Czech Studio at Filmmaking Forefront

Barrandov Studios, located on a plateau above the Vltava River in Prague, is one of the oldest film houses in Europe. The extensive film production complex was founded by the entrepreneurial Havel brothers, Milos and Vaclav. Milos already owned a film distribution company when Vaclav, a civil engineer and father of the now-former Czech president, wanted to construct a luxurious residential complex. During a trip to southern California Vaclav Havel senior conceived the idea for the studio.

"America was my inspiration," he once said, "It was there—the year was 1924—that the idea for Barrandov came to my mind."

The result was a garden-style city with a contemporary architectural design complete with villas for film stars and filmmaking facilities. Construction started in late 1931 and Barrandov Studios opened its doors for production in January 1933, boasting the most modern sound stages of its day. Throughout the 1930s with the Havel family at its helm, Barrandov produced a body of films that upheld the strong traditions of Czech visual culture while establishing high standards of Czech filmmaking.

Studio ownership went on to reflect the political turmoil of 20th century European history, but Barrandov remained an active center of film production. Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939, and the subsequent outbreak of war, resulted in German confiscation of Barrandov Studios from the Havel family. The well-equipped facility provided an ideal location—away from air raids by the Allied Forces—for production of Nazi propaganda films under the guidance of Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Hitler's Minister of Propaganda. Over the course of World War II, the Germans expanded the studio, building more sound stages, and Barrandov churned out 82 films.

War's end did not return Barrandov to private ownership. Instead the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948 established the nationalized



Barrandov Studios, Czech Republic

Czechoslovak State Film with Barrandov at the center of the state's push to renew Czechoslovak filmmaking. Despite producing numerous forgettable propagandistic works during 40 years of communist control, Barrandov also saw the emergence of Czech New Wave cinema in the 1960s when the creative efforts of young filmmakers such as Milos Forman, Vera Chytilova, and Jiri Menzel, among others—all graduates of the prestigious Prague Film Academy (FAMU)—caught the attention of the international community. The works of both Menzel and director Jan Kadar won Oscars for Best Foreign Language Film (Kadar's *Shop on Main Street*, 1965, and Menzel's *Closely Watched Trains*, 1966) while two of Forman's films also were nominated. The communist crackdown at the end of the 1960s prompted a migration of some of the country's most talented artists, including several of its filmmakers. But Barrandov continued pumping out dozens of films annually, and, during the 1980s, also produced most of the programming for Czechoslovak state television.

Ironically it was an exiled native son's return to his homeland that brought the world's attention back to Barrandov Studios. In 1984, Milos Forman, by then living in New York, came to Prague to film *Amadeus*, which went on to win eight Academy Awards including best cinematography by Czech cameraman Miroslav Ondricek and best costume design by Czech designer Teodor Pistek. Barabara Streisand's production of *Yentl* also was shot in Prague in the 1980s



Barrandov Studios (2005) constructs the set for *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

revealing the high skill level of Czech filmmaking and garnering the attention of Hollywood producers. In the early 1990s, after the fall of communism, Brian De Palma shot *Mission: Impossible* in the Czech Republic, opening the floodgates through which dozens of U.S. productions would follow.

Since 1991, more than 50 U.S. film productions or coproductions have been shot at Barrandov Studios including *The Bourne Identity* with Matt Damon and the most recent addition to the James Bond oeuvre, *Casino Royale*. In that same timeframe Barrandov also has hosted the making of over 50 international films from numerous European Union countries, Russia, Argentina, China, and Canada, among others. And the projects keep coming. Barrandov Studios recently signed a contract with Paramount to host production of *GI Joe* which started shooting in spring 2008. The \$170 million action film is one of the largest price tags ever in the Czech studio's history.

Since the return of democracy to the Czech lands, Barrandov Studios is once again under private ownership. Today, in addition to its international

productions, Barrandov is part of Czech filmmaking's most productive season with 32 locally made Czech feature films expected to hit cinemas in 2008, almost double the 18 locally-made films in 2007. With the latest addition of its new 45,000 square foot soundstage, Barrandov has recaptured its place as the largest filmmaking facility in Europe and has emerged as one of the most productive in the world.

For more information on Barrandov Studios, please go to www.barrandov.cz.

Czech Films Screening at the Avalon Theatre

June 11, 2008, 8 pm

Shark in the Head
(*Zralok v hlavě*)

July 9, 2008, 8 pm

Parallel Worlds
(*Paralelni svety*)

August 13, 2008, 8 pm

The Indian and the Nurse
(*Indian a sestricka*)

Avalon Theatre
5612 Connecticut Avenue,
NW, Washington, DC 20015
www.theavalon.org

Choral Arts to Perform Czech Christmas Music

The Choral Arts Society of Washington (CASW) is partnering with the Embassy of the Czech Republic for the CASW 28th Annual Holiday Concert and Gala at the Kennedy Center on December 15, 2008. Ambassador Petr Kolar and Mrs. Jaroslava Kolarova will serve as honorary chairs of the event. A Washington tradition, the 2008 CASW Christmas concert will feature selections from Czech Christmas music in addition to Christmas standards chosen by Maestro Norman Scribner, artistic director of the 190-voice chorus. The concert will be followed by the Annual Holiday Gala and Silent Auction, one of Washington's premiere charity events that attracts 700 of the city's most prominent diplomatic, social, political, and business leaders, and raises money for



Maestro Norman Scribner conducts the Choral Arts Society of Washington.

CASW artistic, educational, and community programs. Numerous items showcasing Czech culture and commerce will be auctioned off at the fundraiser. Subsequent to the December 15th evening Concert and Gala, CASW will perform the Christmas concert at

the Kennedy Center on December 20th and 24th at 1 pm.

For more information on the CASW Christmas Concert and Gala, and for concert tickets, please contact CASW at www.choralarts.org, or call (202) 244-3669.

Upcoming Czech Events

For a listing of Czech events in the United States, please visit www.mzv.cz/washington.

June 20–22 (Phillips, WI)

25th Annual Czech Festival. The event features music, pageant, ethnic food, and much more. For more information, please call: (888) 408-4800, or visit <http://czech-slovak.tripod.com/>.

June 27–29 (Clarkson, NE)

Clarkson Annual Czech Festival. The festival includes a talent contest, entertainment, food, and fun. For more information, visit http://www.ci.clarkson.ne.us/czech_festival.htm.

Czech Girls Choir Jitro Tours the U.S.

Jitro, meaning “daybreak,” is more than just a concert choir from Hradec Kralove, a town in the Czech Republic. It is an organization of 500 children in 7 preparatory ensembles, of which only the best 25–30 qualify to tour.

Ages of the girls range from 13–19 years old. For 35 years, the group has been admired all over the world for their tonal brilliance, superb intonation, and rich blend of sound. Jitro is today seen as one of the best children's choirs anywhere in the world.

The group's repertory includes a wide range of musical styles, from folk songs and choir cycles, to competition compositions. They have performed oratorios, spiritual compositions, cantatas, mass cycles, and 20th-century Czech compositions. Most of Jitro's

pieces are performed a cappella.

The choir makes over 100 appearances annually at the most prestigious halls throughout the world. Additionally, they have recorded 18 discs on such labels as BMA, Classico, and Amabile.

In 2003, Jitro competed with 171 choruses from all over the world at the International Songs Festival in Olomouc, Czech Republic. Jitro participated in six categories and was granted six gold medals. The choir took part in the 2006 World Choir Games in Xiamen, China, in July 2006, competing with four hundred international choirs and receiving three gold medals and one silver medal. They toured Japan for the fourth time in May 2007, and are in the midst of their tenth tour of the United States.

Under the direction of Jiri



Czech choir Jitro performs at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage under the director of Jiri Skopal.

Skopal, Jitro performed at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage and in the main concert hall on June 1, 2008.

On Saturday, June 7 at 3 pm, Jitro will present a concert at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, 400 Michigan Avenue,

NE, Washington, DC, (on the grounds of Catholic University). This concert is part of the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Our Lady of Hostyn Chapel also known as the Czech National Chapel. Donations at the door will be gratefully accepted.

NAPEX to Display Most Beautiful Czech Stamps Collection

The National Philatelic Exhibition of Washington, DC (NAPEX) will feature the *Most Beautiful Stamps of the Czech Republic* in its Court of Honor at the Hilton Tysons Corner Hotel, June 6–8, 2008, with special guest Jan Kramar from the National Postal Museum in the Czech Republic.

The exhibit represents the

best and most interesting stamp designs in the Czech Republic. From 1993 until today, the Czech Republic has issued more than 550 postage stamps in volumes of tens of thousands up to a million pieces featuring different themes. The Czech Republic is one of the few countries in the world where most postage stamps are produced using a combination

of recess and intaglio printing technologies. It also may be the only country in which some issues are printed by the unique process of multicolored recess printing from flat plates. In principle, the stamps are manufactured with a large share of highly qualified manual work, obtaining the character of a miniature graphic sheet.



For more information about NAPEX 2008, visit <http://www.napex.org/>.

Albright Delivers Inaugural Masaryk Lecture

Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright delivered the inaugural T. G. Masaryk Lecture on Democracy at the University of Chicago on May 13, 2008. Co-sponsored by the Embassy, the Chicago Consulate General of the Czech Republic in the United States, the University of Chicago, and the Chicago Sister Cities International Program, the annual lecture will serve to honor the democratic legacy of T.G. Masaryk, the first president and founding father of Czechoslovakia, and promote this legacy in all its modern forms.


In her lecture Secretary Albright, who was born in Czechoslovakia and is recognized as a promoter of democracy around the world, paid tribute to Masaryk, discussing how his political policies and



Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright presents the inaugural T.G. Masaryk Lecture at the University of Chicago.

philosophies and the basis of cooperation between nations that he stood for in 1918 are just as valid today. "To move forward, democratic societies must stand together, meet every argument with truth as best we see it, and keep faith with democratic principles, not only when it is convenient, but when it is hard... There is a kinship between the United States and the Czech and Slovak peoples that is basic to the history and identity of each—and

that was embodied in the life of Tomas G. Masaryk," Albright said.

The lecture, which was preceded by a wreath-laying at the Masaryk Memorial in Chicago was attended by Ambassador Petr Kolar; Honorary Consul General Marek Skolil; Edward Dellin, Chairman of the Prague Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International; and over 900 members of the Chicago Czech-American community. 



An audience of over 900 heard Secretary Albright's address.

Czech-Slovak Museum Plans Expansion

The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is reviewing plans to enlarge its permanent exhibit, build a new library, and add more public program areas. The Museum has four preliminary design options that will triple its area from 20,000 to 60,000 square feet, including one plan that would add a center plaza and riverfront terraces. Gail Naughton, Museum president and CEO and executive board member of the American Friends of the Czech Republic, said that despite the four solid proposals, challenges to the museum's growth still remain. "There's only so much space available to expand to. We have outgrown our current facility and are in need of more space to have the very best visitor experience that we can provide." In 2007 the Museum & Library hosted approximately 32,000 visitors, double the number from 10 years ago. The Library also has grown from 5,000 to 30,000 titles, while the Museum's permanent collection is constantly expanding and necessitates more public space.

The Museum represents the strength of Czech history in Iowa. Once the dominant ethnic groups in Cedar Rapids, Czechs and Slovaks settled there between 1852 and 1910. In 1974, a group of Czech and Slovak descendants




The National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, IA

formed an organization dedicated to preserving their heritage and, in 1978, founded the museum in a 2,200 square foot building, but outgrew its space within a few years. The organization's leadership hired an architect to design a new building, chose a new location, and raised funds for the project. Groundbreaking for the new museum took place in 1993 and the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library opened in March 1995. Its dedication ceremony, held in October 1995, was attended by President Bill Clinton, President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic, and President Michal Kovac of the Slovak Republic.

Ms. Naughton credits the museum's founders for their planning foresight but adds, "I don't think they could have envisioned how fast and how big

Continued on page 8

SVU Establishes Grant Fund

The Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU) Washington, DC Chapter has established a fund to support events concerning Czech and Slovak communities in the Washington metropolitan area. SVU will confer grants for cultural, educational, and, in some circumstances, humanitarian events or projects that are related to or benefit local Czech or Slovak communities. The grants have an upper limit of \$5,000. Any U. S. citizen or organization can apply for a grant by sending a brief description of the project in triplicate to SVU Washington in January or July of each year. The application must be endorsed by an SVU Washington member or by an officer of the Czech or Slovak Embassy and then will be examined by the SVU Washington Grants Committee. To apply for an SVU Washington grant please send your application to SVU Washington, DC, c/o Mrs. Helena Fabry, 7809 Maryknoll Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20817. 

Fifty Years of SVU

Marking the 50th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU) which will be officially commemorated at the SVU World Congress in Ruzomberok, Slovakia, on September 8–14, 2008, the Society is publishing a memoir by one of the Society's founders and President for many years Dr. Miloslav Rechcigl. The book bears the title *On Behalf of Their Homeland: Fifty Years of SVU An Eyewitness Account of the History of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences (SVU)*. The publication is arranged chronologically, starting with the formative years through the events after the Prague Spring and the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution and ends with a section on Rechcigl's service to the Society as its President for 12 years.

For more information on SVU, please go to www.svu.org. 

President Klaus Visits Washington, DC

(continued)

Continued from page 1


Vision of the End of Capitalism Relevant?" and also shared his views on differing global climate change perspectives during the Gala dinner.

In addition to launching his new book in English, President Klaus used his time in Washington to meet with U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and other officials including Chairman of the Board of Governors of the U.S. Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke. He also met with CEI President Fred Smith, Heritage Foundation President Edwin Feulner, American Enterprise



Photo courtesy of Jaroslav Kurfurst

President Klaus at Mt. Vernon

Institute President Christopher DeMuth, Brookings Institution President Strobe Talbott, CATO Institute President Ed Crane, and representatives from media organizations. Before leaving Washington, DC, President Klaus also visited the historical Mount Vernon home of George Washington. 


Czech-Slovak Museum Plans Expansion

(continued)

Continued from page 7

it would grow." In addition to its permanent and special exhibits, the Museum & Library also offers international conferences, cultural events, continuing

education, and numerous public programs.

For more information on the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, go to www.ncsml.org. 

Czech Film Facts – Did You Know?


•The Czech Academy Award-winning film *Closely Watched Trains* (*Ostre sledovane vlaky*) was based on a novel of the same name by the Czech writer Bohumil Hrabal whose other works that were made into films include *Cutting It Short* (*Postriziny*), *The Snowdrop Festival* (*Slavnosti snezenek*), *Tender Barbarian* (*Nezny barbar*), *Larks on a String* (*Skrivanci na niti*), and *I Served the King of England* (*Obsluhoval jsem anglickeho krále*).



Photo courtesy of www.britannica.com

Closely Watched Trains

•Oscar Schindler from Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* was born in the Moravian town of Svitavy (now in eastern Czech Republic) in 1908.

•The English playwright Tom Stoppard, who received a best screenplay Oscar for *Shakespeare in Love* in 1999, was born Thomas Straussler in Zlín, Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic). 

Embassy of the Czech Republic
 3900 Spring of Freedom Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20008
 Tel.: (202) 274-9100 Fax: (202) 966-8540
www.mzv.cz/washington
 Editor-in-Chief: JoAnn M. Cooper, jcooper@linguabohemia.com
 Art Director: Mary Fetzko, czech_events@yahoo.com
 Writers: JoAnn M. Cooper and Mary Fetzko
 Circulation: Romana Lesakova, cn_washington@embassy.mzv.cz