

The Czech and Slovak Heritage Association

Sdružení Čechů a Slováků pro uchování národních odkazů
Združenie Čechov a Slovákov pre zachovanie národných odkazov

PRESENTS

THE THIRTY-FIFTH CZECH AND SLOVAK FESTIVAL



TRADITIONAL MEALS, PASTRIES, HOT DOGS, BEER, SOFT DRINKS
VENDORS, EXHIBITS, FELLOWSHIP, DANCING
MUSIC BY PAJTASI

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2023

12 noon to 6 p.m.

LEGACY HALL

6680 SYKESVILLE RD, SYKESVILLE, MD 21784

Admission Adults \$10, Children 3-16 \$1

For more information visit our website www.cshamaryland.org or email us at info@cshamaryland.org

Czech and Slovak Heritage Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization – donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

6680 SYKESVILLE RD - SYKESVILLE, MD 21784

LEGACY HALL



From the Baltimore Beltway I-695 = about 20 minutes:

- take **Exit 18** towards Randallstown
- continue onto MD-26 West/Liberty Road for 12 miles
- turn **left** onto MD-32 South/**Sykesville Rd** for 1 mile
- turn right to arrive at the **Legacy Hall**
(*Sykesville Freedom District Fire Department #12*)

OR

- take **Exit 16** towards **Frederick**
- continue onto I-70 West for 12 miles
- take **Exit 80** onto MD-32 North/**Sykesville Rd** for 6 miles
- turn **left** to arrive at the **Legacy Hall**
(*Sykesville Freedom District Fire Department #12*)



Sdružení Čechů a Slováků pro Uchování Národních Odkazů
 Združenie Čechov a Slovákov pre Zachovanie Národných Odkazov

A publication of the Czech and Slovak Heritage Association of Maryland

Traveling Around Slovakia for Fun and Inspiration *by Olga Mendel*

I may not be a blogger or an author, but during my travels, I find solace in journaling. It helps me absorb my experiences, ensuring I remember the places I've explored and the moments I've cherished.

I am a Czech patriot, someone devoted to promoting the architecture, history and culture of the Czech Republic. Over the years I have worked to bring parts of it to Baltimore. This journey began with the birth of my children and the inner need to pass on to them my language, history and heritage.

Along the way I combined my passion for photography and my background as an architect and created my first bilingual calendar showcasing the architectural beauty of the Czech Republic. I'm proud to say that this marks the eighth calendar season.

Although the Czech Republic and Slovakia have been independent countries for 30 years, we are still close to each other. And especially when living in the USA for a long time, Slovakia grows even closer to your heart.

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2024 English Slovak Bilingual Calendar Cover by OM Design and Photography

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Children's Language School resumed the Fall virtual classes. The Czech Beginner's Class began on Friday, September 15, 2023 and will continue on Fridays at 6PM. Advanced speakers resumed classes on September 25, and will continue to meet on Mondays at 6 PM. Slovak Language children's classes continue to meet on Sundays starting on September 17, 2023: beginners at 10 AM, advanced speakers at 11AM. For more information, or to register a student, please visit our website at <https://cshamaryland.org/>

ADULT LANGUAGE SCHOOL

CSHA is one of the few organizations in the USA that offers Czech and Slovak language instruction for adults. Beginning, intermediate and advanced classes are offered virtually on Saturday mornings. Fall classes began September 9, 2023. For more information about the fall semester, please see the registration form, and contact Lois Hybl at 410-243-1710 or e-mail: LHybl@verizon.net or info@cshamaryland.org.

HERITAGE SINGERS

Singers will soon begin rehearsing for our December 3 Mikulášska at St. Wenceslaus Church. We welcome singers of all voice parts. Contact Margaret Supik (443-739-2025 for more information. Future events will be announced on the CSHA website <https://cshamaryland.org> and our Facebook page.

CSHA ONLINE - For more information about any of these activities, joining Heritage Singers or to register for classes, you can contact CSHA at: info@cshamaryland.org.

The CSHA Board of Directors will respond to answer your questions and provide information, and we are eager to hear your ideas and suggestions. Also, please check our website www.cshamaryland.org and follow us on Facebook at Czech and Slovak Heritage Association of Baltimore

JANUARY 2023

The Virtual General Meeting took place on Sunday January 22 at 4 PM. It featured a presentation by Michael Gruenbaum, the author of the book *Somewhere There is Still a Sun* (Někde ještě svítí slunce) his memoir of surviving the Holocaust as a teenager in Czechoslovakia.

APRIL 2023

The 2nd Annual Spring Festival was held on Sunday, April 23, 2023 at the Maryland State Game & Fish Protective Association in Perry Hall, MD. Our guests enjoyed the live music of Orchester Praževica and a BODI Puppet Theater performance.

MAY 2023

The Czech and Slovak Heritage Singers performed at the Bohemian Cemetery on May 29, 2023 and participated in the traditional Memorial Day ceremony.

OCTOBER 2023

The 35th Annual CSHA Festival will be held in a new and better location, the Legacy Hall in Sykesville, MD on Sunday, October 29, 2023.

DECEMBER 2023

We are planning the holiday season celebration with Christmas Carol singing at St. Wenceslaus Church in Baltimore tentatively for Sunday, December 3, at 2 PM and we are coordinating with Mikuláš and Anděl to bring children traditional goodies.

CSHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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HLAS - Dana Havlik - editor

Olga Mendel - graphic design

If you have any suggestions or comments or want to contribute to the Hlas by writing an article, email us at info@cshamaryland.org.

President's Message

Dear friends,
2023 is an election year. At the beginning of the year, the Czechs welcomed a new president. This fall, special parliamentary elections are taking place in Slovakia to elect members of the National Council. The Czech and Slovak Heritage Association is also choosing its leadership, who will serve for the next two years. I encourage all our members to check the attached ballot and cast your vote.

I am excited to introduce five new candidates for the Board of Directors: Robert Horel, Zoe Hruban, David Mitchell, Barbara Vann, and Francis Vojik. They have been serving as volunteers at the Association's events, and some also attend courses at our language school. It also means that we say goodbye to the board members who are leaving this year: Dana Havlik, Rena Schumann, Bill Schumann, Rachel Sullivan, and John Sullivan. On behalf of our Association, I would like to sincerely thank them for their service over the years. We hope they will stay active members of the CSHA.

The hot summer season is behind us and it means that we are resuming our language school classes. There's still time to sign up. We wish all our students a lot of fun throughout the school year.

Finally, I would like to invite you again to the Annual Czech and Slovak Festival. We will be celebrating the 35th anniversary of this great event at a new location in Sykesville, MD. We hope you will bring your family and invite your friends, colleagues, and neighbors. We are all proud of our Czech and Slovak heritage and want to share our traditions with everyone. I can't wait to see you all on Sunday, October 29th, 2023.

Se srdečným pozdravem,



Petr Justin - CSHA president

Barbara Ondo Obituary

Slovak language students were especially saddened to hear of the sudden death of Barbara Ann Ondo on August 3, 2023 at the age of 65. As a CSHA member and Slovak language student, Barbara had special memories of a class visit to the Slovak Embassy. She also suggested that teacher Natalia Karlinsky should write some children's stories in Slovak for the classes to read. So Natalia wrote Jarek Dzarek in Slovakia and a series of children's books in Slovak and English.

Barbara was a 1976 Minersville Area High School graduate and

a 1980 Cum Laude graduate of Kutztown University with a B.S. in Elementary Education and a minor in French. She received her M.S. in Education from Johns Hopkins University in 1985. As a teacher in the Baltimore County schools for 43 years, Barbara had the ability to inspire hope, ignite the imagination and inspire a love of learning in many children over the years. In her spare time, she enjoyed craft shows and the beach.

Barbara will be missed by her parents, brothers, nieces and nephews and friends. Friends and relatives celebrated her life at a luncheon at the Mansion at 5th in Lebanon, PA, on October 7.



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This summer I finally managed to fulfill my wish and travel through Slovakia. Planning the trip was a joy, even though we knew it would be hard to see everything we wanted to. We had to limit our trip to the places we found most interesting and cover the east and west of Slovakia, UNESCO-listed cities, villages and castles, see nature and taste good food.

We started with an overnight train ride from Prague to Košice, and ended with a heart full of experiences, and a memory card in my camera full of material for the first annual English and Slovak bilingual calendar.



The Holly Trinity Square with exhibit about the unfortunate spring fire



Mechanical Nativity Scene featuring Banská Štiavnica itself



Love bench - with lines from the longest love poem in the world

So here... I hope you will enjoy one of my journal entries.
Last day of the trip that started in Banská Štiavnica and ended in Bratislava...

July 15th, 2023, Saturday

I'm not getting up early this morning to catch the morning sunlight in the town square and streets as I did nearly every day for the past 8 days. That's because I have a view of the Calvary from my window - a World UNESCO Heritage Site. So I get up just before the sunrise to sit on the windowsill, freshly made tea in my hand, cell phone and camera, that hardly ever leave my sight while traveling... I am enjoying the clouds floating by, Calvary on the opposite hill appearing in the sunlight, the changing colors and light, and the very peaceful Saturday morning..

Around 8.30, we run into town for morning coffee, fresh pastry and a short walk before we have to pack up and leave that lovely little room.

We'll still enjoy the comfort of the pleasant terrace and then leave the car parked and head out to explore this foothill town properly.

We start our tour of the town from the New castle, where the best view is either from the paid tour (which we no longer have the time or inclination to do) or from the toilet window. So you can guess where I took the picture from



Morning view of the World UNESCO Heritage Calvary out of our window

We have to descend a lot through the back streets into town and slowly make our way back up the main street past Renaissance houses, churches and up to Holy Trinity Square where we treat ourselves for lunch. The view is beautiful. We are lucky to see the New castle in the background, a view that would not normally be visible - if not for the tragic spring of 2023 fire of the UNESCO-protected Renaissance houses right here in the square.

In fact, the makeshift roofs protecting the houses awaiting reconstruction are low, sloping and open up a different, unfamiliar view behind them.

One of the burned down buildings is one called Love Bank. It stored the longest love poem of the world written by acclaimed Slovak poet Andrej Sládkovič for his love - Marína.

On the way to the car, we pass by the Old castle and visit the Štiavnica wooden mechanical nativity scene.

This is such a peaceful town, and my favorite for sure is the picturesque Calvary that we enjoyed not just from our room, but also last night watching it at the golden hour and walking the first few stops toward the top.

But it is time to leave, and enjoy a stop for a swim. There are countless small water reservoirs in the surroundings, which were built for the needs of the mines, but are now a great refuge in the summer heat. Swimming in the clear water was a really peaceful and relaxing experience.

Then we rush south through Nitra that we have to skip this time. But I know we will come back to Nitra soon, because of a family connection. So we will definitely have to make another trip to Slovakia, and hopefully soon.

But even so, we are not leaving the country without at least a short stop in Bratislava. I wanted to capture at least some photographs from Slovakia's capital, so we marched along the banks of the Danube river just opposite of the Bratislava castle in the incredible heat of the hottest summer day. We also explored the SNP (Slovak National Uprising) bridge and spent the last picnic of our trip under the ruins of the Dĕvín castle at sunset. We watched the confluence of the Morava and Danube rivers and reminisced about those who, under communism, hoped to cross the river to Austria, behind the Iron Curtain. So close - and yet so far...

The monument commemorates those who did not make it.

In these places I always realize how lucky we are to live in freedom. How wonderful it is to be able to travel freely and learn from exploring the world around us.

This is how our Slovak trip ended - nostalgically...

Because after that we just drove non-stop to Prague on the hottest night of the year to avoid the heat. We made it home with the midnight.



Dĕvín Castle in Bratislava

Until last year, I published only English / Czech bilingual calendars. But out of this Slovakia trip, a calendar baby was born. And I am so happy I was finally able to prepare an English / Slovak bilingual calendar for 2024. Because Slovakia is full of architectural treasures and natural beauty definitely worth sharing with the world.

As always, the calendars will be available at the CSHA Festival on October 29th, 2023 as well. Stop by my table, look through the calendar and tell me where you or your ancestors came from. I am looking forward to it.

See you there.



Countless places are worth visiting in Slovakia, Bardejov, for example

Olga Mendel is a former board member of CSHA, former teacher in the Children School and has been part of the Hlas production for more than the past decade. After her children were born she focused on promoting Czech language, culture, traditions and architecture to Czech fans in the USA and is proud of her heritage.

Since 2020 she has lived mostly in Prague. She works as an architect and graphic designer, and uses her passion for photography both in her work life and free time. You can find her work on Etsy at <https://czechbyheart.etsy.com>. You can also visit www.omdesigns.cz. For her travel journals follow OM Design and Photography of Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/people/OM-Design-and-Photography/100063572679596/>

How the Czech Language Helped U.N. Inspectors in Iraq

by Vojtech J. Vala

After the Persian Gulf War in 1991, Iraq was obliged by the United Nations to report any development and testing of new weapons systems with a range of 100 kilometers or more. In the beginning of 1998 Iraq reported developing and testing a new Remotely Piloted Vehicle (RPV). The vehicle was declared to be a training device for anti-aircraft artillery crews. The description of the reported vehicle was similar to that of the Czech military trainer L-29 Delfin aircraft, 78 of which had already been delivered to Iraq for use by their Air Force Academy.

For the U.N. and for the U.S. State Department this information was very important. A United Nations Special Commission was organized from countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Jordan, France, Italy, and Germany with a stated mission to gain as much information as possible about the new RPV. The main fear was that such a vehicle could be used as a simple, almost primitive, but effective weapon of mass destruction. Under its wings the L-29 Delfin has two auxiliary fuel tanks with a total capacity of 300 liters of fuel or of any warfare chemical or biological substance. This load would be capable of killing hundreds of thousands of people in one raid. Iraq had already finished intensive research in cloud seeding for initiation of rain - the same technology used for dispersing biological weapons.

The task of the UNSCOM team was simple, but also complicated. Find out how the L-29 was transformed into an RPV? What were the results of test flights? Iraq has enough highly qualified scientists, but where did all the necessary technical material for an RPV come from?

It was soon after I had organized delivery of the first 10 L-29 Delfin aircraft for our new company JET STAR AVIATION, Inc. One day in the summer of 1998, I was at Andrews Air Force base with our L-29 Delfin aircraft for static display during the

annual Air Show. The cockpits of both aircraft were open, and I was ready to answer any questions about the aircraft on display.

Suddenly two gentlemen in business suits and ties approached me and started questioning me:

"Are you an owner, pilot, technician of this aircraft or mechanic?"

I answered, *"Yes, gentlemen, I am pilot, technician, and mechanic for this aircraft, all in one person. How can I help you?"*

They replied, *"We represent the United Nations and U.S. State Department, and we need your expertise in Iraq. It will be a relatively short mission, maximum one and half months. The subject of interest is the L-29 Delfin aircraft transformed to an RPV."*

I needed only several seconds for my answer: *"I am sorry gentlemen, but I am not interested in travel to Saddam Husein's Iraq. This part of world is dangerous, and I am happy here in the U.S. Thanks for asking."* They gave me their business cards and said I could call them any time should I change my mind. My wife was categorically against such an adventure. But shortly, I met those men again and I said YES.

After a short preparation and some paperwork, I left the U.S. for Bahrain by way of London. During the second flight, over several Middle East countries, I saw for the first time the endless, silent, motionless desert. No sight of life at all. No roads, no oasis, nothing. Only huge sand dunes, shaped by wind. Beauty and hopelessness.

We spent several days in the training center of UNSCOM in Manama, Bahrain. My task was to give the rest of the team a short course about L-29 aircraft. For our actual work in Iraq, we were organized into three groups: interviews, documents,



Czech Jet L-29 in Maryland



L29 Delfin aircraft in Iraq

and IT. Each group had its own Arab interpreters. We were surprised to learn that we could not wear shorts or T-shirts in Iraq. Nor could we display military items or insignia. We were in a strict Muslim country!

Our interviews with Iraqi officers were not easy and did not proceed smoothly from the very beginning. They repeated again and again that their project is strictly for training anti-aircraft crews. The atmosphere was more like confrontation than cooperation. We Americans were treated openly as enemies. We were afraid that our mission could not be completed in the allotted time. From some sources we knew a few facts: the RPV project was ordered by Saddam Husein, enormous sums of money were set aside for the project, and the project was code named Hope, which was very alarming.

But we were ready for our inspection trip to the Iraq Air Force base in Samarra where all L-29 RPVs were concentrated.

I was in the middle of a hangar at Samarra, near one of the finished RPVs when suddenly a group of Iraqi officers in uniforms approached me. To my surprise one of them started to talk to me in Czech.

"Mister Vala, in your passport is Czechoslovakia as the place of birth. So, you are originally Czech. It is our honor to meet you in our base. I myself and my comrades' officers spent seven beautiful years in your country studying at the Military Academy in Brno City. We cannot forget this fantastic time in your country. You are the first person, after years, we can speak in your native Czech language."

I replied, *"Gentlemen, what a surprise! By chance I also studied at the Military Academy in Brno City, 1968. graduated."* Their reaction was spontaneous. Everybody from their group wanted to speak to me in Czech. It was like a fantastic family reunion! One of the Iraqis said: *"I cannot forget these beautiful Czech girls and ladies. They are still in my dreams!"* My business-like reply was: *"OK, gentlemen. I am here to work. Can you, please, tell me how you transferred L-29 to RPV? I like to hear all the details"*.

Starting with this exchange, I received an avalanche of information about everything. My notepad was full of notes, graphs, wiring diagrams, block diagrams, and information about test flights. No question was forgotten. Everything transpired in the Czech language! I took all the necessary pictures from the front and rear cockpits. My American and other colleagues were alarmed by what was going on. What language were we speaking? What was the meaning of our intensive conversation? Suddenly all the necessary information about the RPV was available. Of course, it was all in my Czech language!

I had learned that the whole project was done with only what was "available in the house." During flight tests the RPV flew under the control of a ground-based pilot. The flight was 72

kilometers one way; it returned home and landed safely. They even showed me their "working shop" which was one old, wooden table with several chairs in the corner of the hangar. Iraq had 3 completed RPV's and 4 under construction.

When my boss learned what kind of information I had gathered, he gave me strict orders, "Go and immediately take our UNSCOM helicopter and fly to Center and put everything in the computer. Print several hard copies about everything.



Vojtech Vala with UN Toyota SUV in Baghdad

Your information is of top importance!" The L-29 was one of the first RPVs developed from standard aircraft. Nobody knew at this time that drones would be cutting-edge weapons in coming wars. At the end of 1998 Saddam Husein ordered the removal of all UNSCOM personnel from Iraq. Subsequent bombing missions by Americans and Britons destroyed all existing RPVs in Iraq.

I had my minutes of glory. End of story.



United Nations Special Commission Team in Iraq

Vojtech J. Vala, one of our members, has lived in Beltsville, Maryland since 1990. He has two children, Denisa, who is now living in Prague, and Adam who lives in Odenton, Maryland. Mr. Vala holds a Master's degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the Military Academy in Brno, Czech Republic, today's University of Defense. He is now retired, but still active as a pilot, an aircraft mechanic and FAA aircraft inspector.

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The VOICE of The Czech & Slovak
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Czech and Slovak Annual Fall Festival

Please come and join us at the 35th Czech and Slovak Festival on Sunday, October 29, 2023, from 12 noon to 6 p.m. at the beautiful new location - Legacy Hall in the lovely Sykesville countryside (6680 Sykesville Road, Sykesville, MD)

Traditional Czech and Slovak meals will be served, Czech and Slovak beer, wine, homemade pastries, deserts, and

cookies will be available for sale. A number of vendors will be offering their crafts, arts, and foods. Dance classes will be accompanied by Czech and Slovak folk music performed by Pajtasi. These performances as well as crafts, arts and face painting will guarantee entertainment for all ages. The afternoon will be full of fun activities.

For more information visit our website www.cshamaryland.org

