

Jarek Dzarek na YouTube - - Animating a Slovak Children's Book

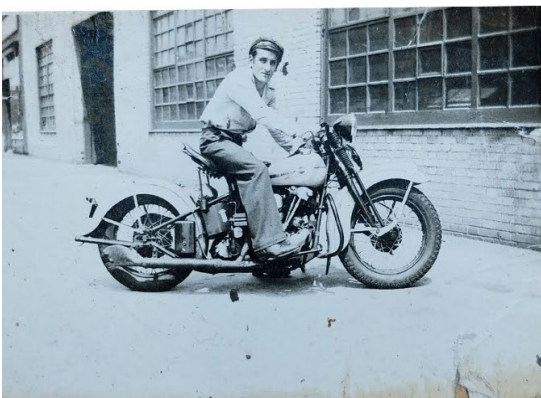
by Alexander Parmley

Yarek Dzharek is a little boy who speaks 10 languages – so far. Natalia Karlinsky, author and creator of the Yarek Dzharek series, is passionate about the character and his continuing adventures. “[He] brings his heart to Slovakia,” she texts me, then adds, “and to the universe”.

The children's book series sees Yarek traveling around the globe, connecting cultures with the help of language learning and imagination. And now, Yarek is making the leap from the page to the obrazovke.

My wife, Sam Latza, and I (both students of language, à la Yarek) first met Natalia in our beginner Slovak language class, where she was our instructor. We, the students, were quickly introduced to Yarek, too: Natalia's beloved creation is also a teaching aid. The book *Jarek Džarek na Slovensku* (Yarek Dzharek in Slovakia) is a mainstay of the class, with students often taking turns reading Slovak passages about Yarek's adventures aloud, the English printed helpfully alongside. At the end of our first semester, Sam and I came up with a plan

continues on page 4



Sam Latza's Slovak Ancestors

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



REGULARLY SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Children's Language School resumed virtual classes the week of September 18-23, 2022. The Czech language beginner's class meets on Wednesdays at 6PM; advanced speakers meet on Fridays at 6 PM. Slovak Language children's classes continue to meet on Sundays starting on September 18, 2022: 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 language instruction for adults. Beginning, intermediate and advanced classes are offered virtually on Saturday mornings. Fall classes will begin September 9, 2023. For information, please contact Lois Hybl at 410-243-1710 or e-mail: LHybl@verizon.net or info@cshamaryland.org.

HERITAGE SINGERS

Future rehearsals and 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

We are planning our 2nd Annual Spring Festival to be held on Sunday, April 23, 2023. The event will take place at the Maryland State Game & Fish Protective Association in Perry Hall, MD and will include live music and a BODI Puppet Theater performance.

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 early December, and we are coordinating with Mikuláš and Anděl to bring children traditional goodies.

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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,
I hope you are looking forward to spring as much as I do. Due to last year's success, we are bringing back the Spring Festival. It will take place on Sunday, April 23rd at the Maryland State Game and Fish Protective Association in Perry Hall, MD. We will again offer food, traditional beer, live music and a BODI Puppet Theater performance.

This year, we will celebrate the 35th year of the Annual Czech and Slovak Festival. This popular event will take place on Sunday, October 29th and will once again offer you the best Czech and Slovak entertainment in the area. Due to challenges with the current rental hall in Towson that were the result of changes in the facility management, we were looking for a better place to host our event. I am very happy to inform you that we found one: the Legacy Hall on Sykesville Road in Sykesville, Maryland. While we understand that it may be farther for some of you, we hope the new hall will make the event more enjoyable for everyone and you will come again. The new location provides more comfort for the visitors, better space for vendors and performers, and easier access to the parking lot and the hall itself. We will also have more control over what our community expects from the event. Our festival planners visited the venue and really liked it. They were also impressed by the facility management that was very welcoming. We will work tirelessly to bring you the best possible festival. Please mark the date and location in

your calendars. We count on your support and hope you will continue attending our events, bringing your family and friends, and most importantly, having fun.

In the last HLAS, I mentioned that the Czech Presidential Elections were being held in February. Our whole family went to the Embassy and proudly voted in both rounds. We nervously followed the counting of the votes on TV and were very excited when the current Slovak president, Zuzana Čaputová, arrived to congratulate the newly elected Czech president, Petr Pavel and praised the democratic course of the elections. It certainly showed how close our two nations are. The Presidential Inauguration on March 9th was truly a brand new day for the Czech Republic.

It warms my heart that our Association is supporting one of the strongest friendships you can find between two countries in the world. The CSHA brings together the cultural heritage of both nations and keeps it alive here in Maryland. Join us at our events or consider joining our language schools. Both languages are challenging but fun to learn.

Thank you for your continued support and we will see you at our Spring Festival.

Se srdečným pozdravem,



Petr Justin - CSHA president



Slovak President Zuzana Caputova and Czech President Petr Pavel - (Source: TASR/AP)

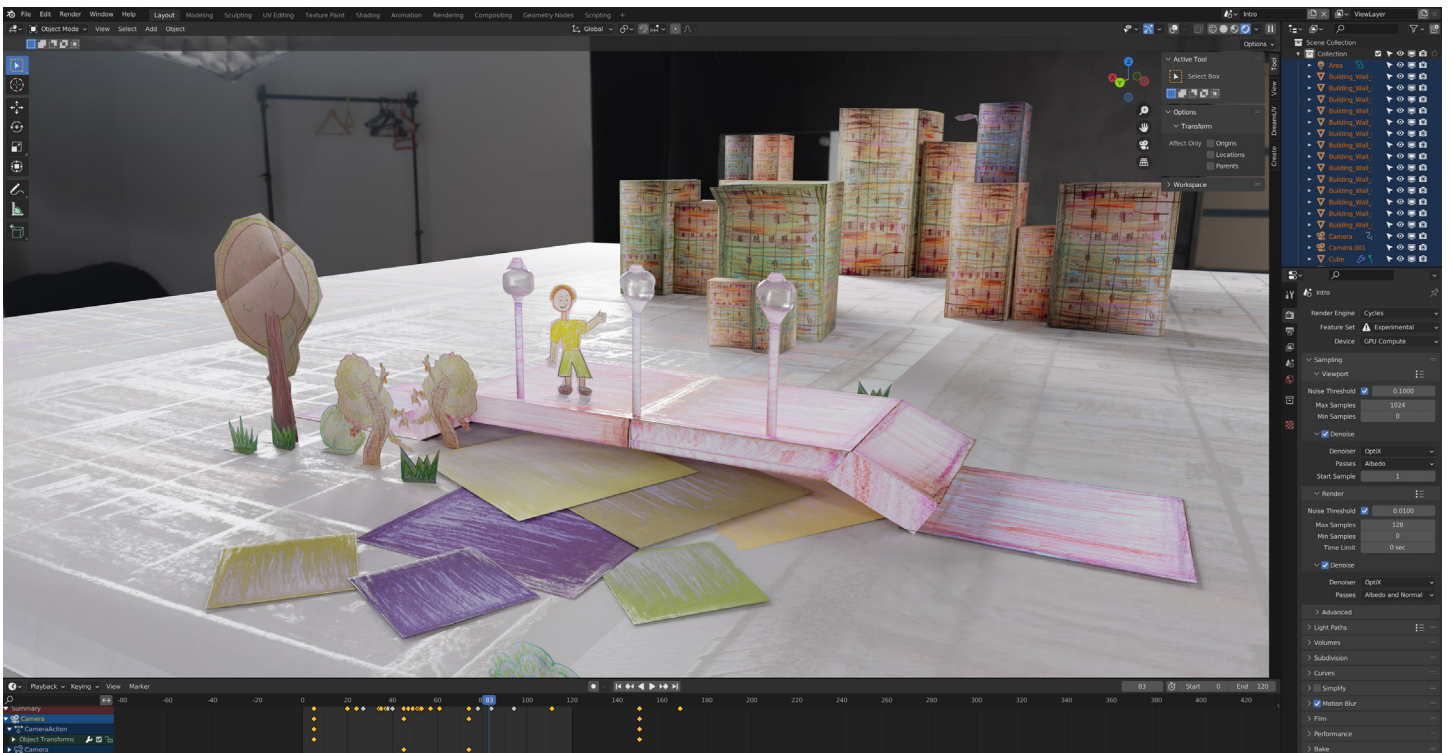
continued from page 1

to further bring to life the character and book that had guided so much of our Slovak language learning so far: we would create an animated adaptation of the book *Jarek Džarek na Slovensku*.

Both Sam and I are video production professionals. She works for Nike as a video and web content developer, and I'm a freelance video and motion graphic designer, so we felt certain we could successfully animate the story in the hand-drawn style of Natalia's original illustrations. We envisioned the



Sam Latza at her workstation



Screen Grab

project as an animated, digital retelling of the story that would see Yarek and friends placed in three dimensions, but which would still pay tribute to the charming child-like simplicity of the source material. To this end we enlisted the help of Sam's young nieces and nephews in what would become a fully Slovak-American team of (unpaid) child illustrators,

asking the kids' moms (Sam's sisters) to send us their children's actual drawings, which we then digitally scanned and began animating.

More important to us than style, though, was our connection to the story, in which Yarek dreams of building a bridge

between Slovakia and America. Not only had the story been an important part of our Slovak learning journey so far, it also reflected the personal journey Sam had embarked upon the year before: bridging the cultural divide between her birthplace of America and the cultural home of her ancestors, Slovakia.

For a year, Sam and I had been hard at work reconnecting with her Slovak family history: gathering stories, like the tale of her great-grandmother's voyage from Podbrezova to the New York City Bronx; documents, like the 19th century marriage certificates that uncovered her distant relation to the very Slovak genealogist who unearthed them; and photographs, like those of her grandfather, an aircraft mechanic in the US Air Force, or his father, a first generation American who served in the Pacific Theater during WWII. This search was all part of a greater reconnection effort that also saw the two of us learning Slovak in Natalia's class, hoping someday to achieve fluency in the language: Sam is in the process of applying for Slovak dual citizenship. We hope to someday live and work in the country. We saw in Yarek Dzharek, therefore, a chance to further bridge the cultural divide for others like Sam: English-speaking language learners who hoped to reconnect with their Slovak past by studying the language with videos online.

The animated version of Jarek Džarek na Slovensku is still in production, but we hope to have released it online within the next few months. In the meantime, we have begun our second semester of Natalia's class, and look forward to learning more and more about Sam's Slovak family history. The animated video will be free to watch on either of our websites: aparmley.com or slatza.com.



Alexander Parmley and Sam Latza

Czech Trip Summer 2022

This past summer, several of our language students participated in a special program for compatriots sponsored by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Upwards of 60 others from around the world participated as well. Our students are delighted to share our experiences and welcome your reaching out to us if you'd like to learn more.

Students in the compatriots' program spend four weeks in a beautiful spa town, Poděbrady, situated an hour east of Prague. Classes take place on weekday mornings in a six-hundred-year-old castle famous for being the likely birthplace of the beloved King Jiri and being the high school and dormitory of President Václav Havel. There are lots of built-in cultural activities including lectures about film, Czech Christmas in July, and several daytrips to significant historical sites. Additionally, students have free time to explore the town and to take their own short trips. This immersion in the Czech language and the opportunity to experience a more Czech lifestyle for a few weeks is a special opportunity.

Even more uniquely, this program is an opportunity to bring together people from all across the world who share an interest in Czech language and culture. Students in this



Statue of King Jiří from Poděbrady (1458-1471)



Spring water fountain in Poděbrady

year's cohort came from five continents and from more than twenty different countries. They ranged in age from 18 to 85 (and some children came along with their parents!). Our connections with Czech culture ranged from those retracing the paths of ancestors who emigrated from Czechia in the nineteenth century to those following the interest of their children who immigrated to Czechia in the twenty-first century.

Some in our group had followed an authentic, self-directed interest in Czech language and culture. This program represents a pretty rare opportunity to spend time with and get to know remarkably different people from across the world. Through several special cultural evenings everyone was able to experience the food, music, dance, and other cultural

traditions of classmates. The Czechia connection created an opportunity to build connections across age, geo-political differences, lifestyles, and differences in language.

Our students really appreciate what a treat that summer of student life in Europe was. While they expected to deepen

their understanding of Czech culture and language, the opportunity to make connections with and learn from so many different kinds of fellow Czech compatriots was a real bonus. Other students are encouraged to apply. Contact the cultural office at the Embassy of Czechia if you are interested.



Poděbrady park



The Poděbrady castle

Czech and Slovak Recipe Corner:

by Dana Petran

Easter Cookies (Velikonoční cukroví)

There is no bad time for delicious cookies throughout the year, but they are best enjoyed during the Christmas and Easter holidays. Of course, the decorations must be seasonal, but the basic recipe remains, a classical "linecké".

DIRECTIONS:

This dough is very fine, easy to work with and good for storing and freezing as well. All ingredients should be at room temperature to start with:

Mix all ingredients with a Kitchen Aid or on the table to create firm, smooth dough. Wrap in foil and let rest for three or more hours in a cool place. Roll out the dough to a thickness of close to 0.1" and cut traditional shapes with cookie cutters. Transfer to baking tray and bake in a preheated oven until light yellow. After cooling, glue two identical shapes with fruit jam. Decorate the biscuits with whipped egg white snow of various colors, chocolate or just confetti sugar.

Icing: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of powder sugar per each egg white

Mix the sugar with the egg whites using a wooden spoon in a bowl until smooth (about 15 minutes). Divide into several portions, each dyed with food color (use very light tones) and decorate using small decorating bags with a very small hole.

INGREDIENTS:

4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of all-purpose flour

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ sticks of butter

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of powder sugar

1 yolk + 1 egg

Fine grated lemon zest



IN THIS ISSUE:

Jarek Dzarek na YouTube - Animating a Slovak Children's Book	pp.1,4,5
Calendar of Events	p.2
President's message	p.3
Czech Trip Summer 2022	pp.6,7
Recipe Corner	p.7
CSHA Language Schools	p.8



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CSHA Language Schools

by Dana Petran and Lois Hybl

Children's School Advanced Group

First, let me tell you what pleasure and fun I am having every Friday when meeting with all our smart students. It is an incredibly interesting group of boys and girls aged 8-14. Their language skills differ a lot, but they all understand spoken Czech quite well and they like to participate and perform. It is very different from those days when we were meeting in person, but schooling online brought some advantages to our approach: their parents do not need to rush home through Friday traffic, children are more relaxed and we can cover much more material, despite the age spread.

We can also be flexible about time, sometimes moving to different days or split into individual subgroups if needed. The unfortunate Covid years brought us online tools unknown before, thanks to the tireless work of many teachers, organizations, and software gurus around the globe and supported by governments.

Our favorites are Skolakov (<https://skolakov.eu/>) and KrajaneK (<https://www.krajaneKvesvete.cz/>), both of which provide a variety of readings, learning, entertainment, and connections with the Czech Republic and other countries as well. My

favorite activity is the time that we spend after class, when my students share their creations, hobbies, models, drawings. That is worthy of a full article in the near future. I would like to invite more children to our group, please come on board! You do not need to wait for a new school year, enrollment is always open!

Adult Language School Enrollment Remains High

We have 28 students enrolled for the spring semester. I continue to be amazed at the geographical diversity.

While the majority of students are from the greater Baltimore and greater Washington, DC area, we continue to attract others from far and wide: South Carolina, Washington State, Illinois, Nevada and Pennsylvania.

The students in western states have to be really dedicated to join classes at 6 or 7 a.m. And Iva Zicha's mother, Iva Aubrisova, zooms in from Cechia, providing another native voice for Czech Conversation. Many thanks to our Czech teachers, Andrea Kletetschka and Iva Zicha, and our Slovak teacher, Natalia Karlinsky.