

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



UPCOMING EVENTS:



Sunday, 4 May 2014: 3-5 pm. CSHA's most popular and best attended meeting of the year. Yes, the Dumpling Meeting! Bohemian Caterers will be on hand to surprize and tempt you with their authentic (and truly delicious) Czech specialties.

Friday evenings throughout the year: Czech language classes for children ages 3 and up. Call or email Margaret Supik at 410-662-6094, usupik@verizon.net, or Markéta Traband marketa.traband@gmail.com. Classes are held in the Undercroft of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen from 6 to 7:30 pm on Fridays. New students are welcome at any time. Our Spring Semester will end on Friday, 13 June 2014.

Saturdays throughout the year: Why not consider learning Czech or Slovak? Or brushing up on what you already know? It's not as hard as you think! We have excellent teachers and beginning, intermediate and advanced classes. It's time now to sign up for the Spring 2014 semester. For complete details, check our website: www.czslha.org or call Lois Hybl at 410-428-6012.

Mondays throughout the year: Czechs and Slovaks have a great musical heritage and *singing is an excellent way to improve your Czech or Slovak pronunciation and vocabulary.* Help keep Czech and Slovak music alive and well in the Baltimore area by joining the Czech and Slovak Heritage Singers on Monday evenings in the Choir Room at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, 5200 N. Charles St. Rehearsals begin at 7 PM and conclude at 9 or earlier. All voice parts are welcome. Call or email Charles Supik at 410-662-6094, chasupik2@gmail.com for dates of Spring rehearsals and for more information.

Monday, 26 May 2014, 11AM: Memorial Day at the Bohemian National Cemetery. Join the Czech and Slovak Heritage Singers, representatives from Sokol, the Lodge ČSPS, The Czech Embassy and the cemetery association in honoring our predecessors.

Sunday, 20 July 2014: CSHA's annual picnic at Towson Unitarian Church, Dulaney Valley Road. Complete details will be in the next issue of HLAS.

HLAS: We would love to have your feedback about HLAS. Let us know your comments, ideas, or what you would be interested in reading about in the next issue. Please contact Margaret Supik at usupik@verizon.net or Olga Mendel at omendel@gmail.com

THE MEMO BY VÁCLAV HAVEL AT SINGLE CARROT THEATRE APRIL 2-27, 2014

The Memo by Václav Havel (translated from Czech by Paul Wilson) will be performed at the Single Carrot Theatre, 2600 N. Howard Street, 21218, Wednesdays through Sunday, April 2 to 27. The theater's website says:

A comic workplace classic about the perils of standardized communication.

“Company President Mr. Gross receives a memorandum but can't read it because it's written in Ptydepe, the newly invented language to which all correspondence must adhere. If he can't figure out what it says, he'll lose his job and certainly his mind. This satirical take on bureaucracy and office malarkey is an incisive look at 20th century socialist Czechoslovakia, but it could just as easily be today's America.”

Single Carrot Theatre has moved from its N. Charles Street location to a permanent location at 2600 N. Howard Street. The new location in Remington, which was formerly a tire shop, offers free parking in a lot adjacent to the theatre and ample street parking as well.

For more information and tickets, see <http://www.singlecarrot.com>, email boxoffice@singlecarrot.com or call (443) 844-9253.



ADULT LANGUAGE SCHOOL

The spring semester of the adult Czech and Slovak Language School is almost over. We are looking forward to our traditional potluck lunch on the last day, March 29.

Thanks again to our teachers—Mary Lou Walker, Margaret Supik, Andrea Kletetschka, Iva Zicha and Natalie Karlinsky—for keeping us challenged during the semester.

We appreciate the willingness of the Gribbin Center on Belair Road to provide a very affordable location for classes. We are grateful to George Mojzisek for his help with the arrangements and to John Sullivan for his help in lugging supplies in and out most weeks. And many students are generous in providing delicious treats.

Our enrollment is down to twenty-three students. We welcome any suggestions for getting out the word about our schools. Many traditional neighborhood papers that formerly announced our classes have either stopped publishing or have fewer issues. Library flyers are no longer effective.

Fall classes will begin on September 6. Fall is the best time to register if you are a beginner in Czech or Slovak. Lois Hybl will be glad to connect you with a teacher to determine whether you are ready for a particular class. Some teachers are willing to do private tutoring if a Saturday class does not fit your schedule. Lois can be contacted at 410-243-1710 or lhybl@verizon.net. On the CSHA website, czslha.org, you can find information about the schedule and a registration form. *Lois Hybl*

WE NEED YOUR HELP

It's that time again. Even though it seems like it was only last week that you wrote that check for \$25 to CSHA, a year has passed and dues are due again. If you haven't already done so, please fill in the form you received with this newsletter and send it, along with your check, to The Czech and Slovak Heritage Association, Post Office Box 20261, Baltimore, MD 21284-0261. Dues from Eastern Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey and Delaware members should be sent to: CSHA Philadelphia Branch, 7928 Burholme Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19111.

So far fewer than half our members have sent in dues for 2014. CSHA depends on your membership fees to help pay for our language schools, our singing group, and this newsletter. We haven't raised dues since the association was formed over twenty years ago and we are relying on your continued support and membership. Please continue your membership so that we can continue our mission of preserving our proud Czech and Slovak heritage.

THE BALLADEER OF LIBERTY

In 2006, at the suggestion of the late Arnošt Lustig, himself a Holocaust survivor and author of many books about the Holocaust, a documentary *The Immortal Balladeer of Prague*, was produced. Arnošt's son Pepi Lustig was co-director of the film about Karel Hašler. Now Peter Sever has written a play, with the working title *Balladeer of Liberty*, about the love story of Karel Hašler and Lotte Jurda. A staged reading has been held and a trailer is in the works to promote the making of a movie.

Prague, the city at the center of Europe, has been for a millennium in the eye of the storm between the German and Czech cultures. Lotte meets Karel Hašler, a legendary balladeer and member of the Czech resistance, and thirty years her senior. They fall in love but cannot marry because of the Nazi purity laws. He is Czech, she is German. Lotte begs Karel to think of her and their as-yet unborn son, but Karel's uncompromising desire for Czech independence dooms their happiness. He is eventually incarcerated and dies at the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, just a month before their son Tom is born.

The (screen) play not only follows Karel's tragic journey, it also reveals to his young love Lotte the high price of liberty and the sacrifice at times required to protect the sanctity of independent thought. The film will be based on Lotte's memoirs which make us realize that this love affair tells an important human rights story about the cultural milieu of pre-World War II Prague, where Czechs, Germans, and Jews lived and worked together in peace.



This will be a Holocaust film with a difference – the victims are primarily non-Jews. Its focus on the love story should appeal to a female audience. Cabaret humor and Karel's songs evoking "Old Prague" provide a lighter touch. Karel's story is virtually unknown outside the Czech Republic; a film about his brave defiance of oppression should provide an example to other artists all over the world. Although Karel Hašler is known in the Czech Republic mostly for his songs of "Old Prague," he also wrote songs on political themes, particularly against oppression. His most famous song, "Our Czech Song," presages the German invasion and motivated the Czechs to resist the occupation. It became the unofficial national anthem when the Nazis banned the official anthem, and continues to be a favorite song of Czech-Americans. *Tom Hasler*

VÁCLAV HAVEL HONORED BY U.S. CONGRESS

On 11 March the House of Representatives unanimously passed a bipartisan resolution honoring the life and legacy of the late Václav Havel. The resolution also authorizes a bust of Havel to be displayed in the Capitol Building's Freedom Foyer. Havel's likeness will stand alongside images of other great champions of freedom: Winston Churchill, Luis Kossuth, and Raoul Wallenberg.

A poet and playwright, during the Prague Spring Havel gained world-wide recognition for his plays. Following the 1968 Soviet Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia Havel, already a vigorous human rights activist, was blacklisted, his plays were banned in Czechoslovakia and he was forbidden to travel abroad. After communist authorities arrested the underground rock band, Plastic People of the Universe, Havel, along with other dissidents, were inspired to draft the Charter 77 Manifesto. In the space of a month over 240 Czechoslovaks signed the document which was immediately and very harshly suppressed by the regime. Declared by the state, "an anti-state, anti-socialist and demagogic abusive piece of writing," Charter 77 was circulated only by the secret underground *samizdat* press. Most ordinary Czechoslovak citizens outside Prague knew of the document's existence only through the government reaction to it.



Prague Castle's heart

As a result of his involvement with Charter 77 and other writings, Havel was in and out of prison during the 1970's and 80's. It was while he was in prison that he wrote his most famous essay, *The Power of the Powerless*. Havel's devastating critique of communist totalitarianism was spread by *samizdat* throughout the Warsaw Pact countries. After the 1989 Velvet Revolution Vaclav Havel was elected president of Czechoslovakia, the first in forty-four years to have been democratically elected. "Havel to the Castle," became a rallying cry for many of the protest marches that brought down the communist government.

Early in his presidency Havel had a giant red neon heart hung on the castle wall above the river. He

always drew a tiny heart after his signature, a reminder of his personal motto, "Truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred." After his death, in 2011, the European Union honored Václav Havel by installing a giant red neon heart at the EU Parliament in Brussels.



Brussels' heart

The resolution authorizing the bust of Havel to stand in the U.S. Capitol quotes his reference to his role as an activist for democracy: "We never decided to become dissidents... We simply went ahead and did certain things that we felt we ought to do, that seemed decent for us to do, nothing more nor less."

BONIFANTES IN BALTIMORE

Those lucky enough to be at the Maryland Boy Choir Center for the Arts on March 8 were treated to an outstanding performance by the boy choir *Bonifantes*, from Pardubice, Czech Republic. Under the direction of artistic director Jan Mišek, the ensemble performed a widely varied program from *Crucifixus*, the Baroque eight part motet of Antonio Lotti, to the fiendishly difficult *Kyrie* from the Mass setting by the contemporary Czech composer Jan Jirásek. Also on the program were two pieces from Dvořák's *Song Cycle*, a rousing version of "Rock a My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham," Irvin Berlin's "Give Me Your Tired and Your Poor," and "America the Beautiful." Everything on the program was impeccably performed. Many of the pieces would be a challenge for an experienced adult choir, but these boys excelled and performed without sheet music.

Bonifantes reflects the high level of commitment to first class musical education in today's Czech Republic. The school, *Bonifantes*, is a basic school specializing in music education. Their stated objective is to prepare boys for the choir and to successfully move on to conservatory or higher education in music and music education. The 350 students there study music theory, solo singing, ensemble singing and, at graduation are proficient on flute or keyboard.

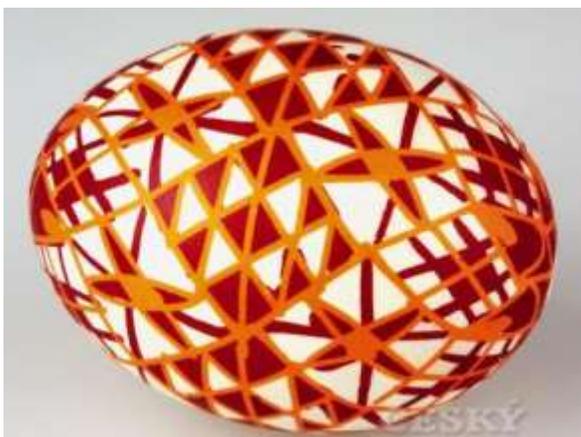
The group was here for the first time in 2006 and we hope they will keep Baltimore on their North American tour schedule and return for another truly outstanding performance.



Bonifantes led by Jan Mišek

EASTER EGGS

In Bohemia and Moravia, the art and techniques of Easter egg decoration reached a standard not to be found anywhere else in the world. In ancient cults, the egg was a symbol of life. It was supposed to ensure a successful harvest of crops as well as fertility. At first, only full eggs, usually cooked, were decorated as Easter offerings and presents. Traditional decorative techniques included coloring with natural dyestuffs, wax batik, scratching, appliques (of rush, straw, etc.), etching, thin-wire filigreeing and relief wax decorating. As the decorating became more elaborate, artists began blowing the eggs to remove the yolk and white thus extending the life of their works of art. Both the techniques and patterns still exhibit distinct regional and even local (village) characteristics.



Traditional Easter Eggs colored and decorated with straw designs

KRASLICE

Snad nikde se zdobení kraslic nerozvinulo do takové výtvarné a technické rozmanitosti jako v Čechách a na Moravě.

Podle starých kultovních představ bylo vejce symbolem života a mělo zajišťovat bohatou úrodu a plodnost. Zdobení vajec mělo tuto symboliku posilovat. Původně se zdobila pouze plná vejce a byla určena jako velikonoční dar. Mezi tradiční techniky zdobení vajec patří barvení kraslic bez jakéhokoli dalšího zdobení, batikování voskem, vyškrabování, aplikace (sláma, síťina), leptání, odrátování jemným drátem a reliéfní zdobení voskem.



The VOICE of The Czech & Slovak
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