

SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC

NEWSLETTER

March 2011

www.dcslovaks.org

Announcing Two Speakers Series Events in March!!!

(Note: new locations!)

Saturday, March 12, 2011, at 11:00am

BOOK TALK: *TALES FROM SLOVAK CASTLES* by Lucy King and Sylvia Lorinc

Where: Bertucci's Restaurant (private room), 2000 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. (next to George Washington University). Cost: The talk is free, but individuals will order and pay for their own lunch
<<http://www.bertuccis.com/menu/restaurant-menu.html>>.

Tales from Slovak Castles, written by Lucy King and Sylvia Lorinc, is based on Dr. Ludovit Janota's *Slovenske hrady*, a collection of oral tales that was published in 1935 and is currently out of print. The stories from 15 castles in Slovakia include romance, war, mystery, comedy, and myth. Each chapter introduces a castle and then follows it up with a tale and notes explaining the historic significance of the people in the tale. Copies of *Tales from Slovak Castles* will be available for purchase and signing. (See page 7 for bios of the speakers.)

Tuesday, March 22, 2011, at 6:30pm

BOOK TALK: *MY SLOVAKIA, MY FAMILY (MOJE SLOVENSKO, MOJA RODINA)*

By John Palka

Where: Second-Floor Meeting Room, Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St., Arlington, VA (located midway between the Virginia Square-GMU and Ballston-MU Metro stations). The event is free and a light meal will be provided.

My Slovakia, My Family simultaneously tells the story of the Slovak nation and of John Palka's extended family, which includes his grandfather, Milan Hodža, the Czechoslovak prime minister from 1935 to 1938.

John Palka, Professor of Biology Emeritus at the University of Washington, is a two-time refugee who acculturated to, and built a successful career in, the United States, but who never lost a deeply-felt connection with his Slovak homeland or his facility with the language. Video clips of John's interview for the Oral History Project conducted by the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library can be seen at
< <http://www.ncsml.org/Oral-History/All-Interviews/20100407/39/Palka-John.aspx> >.

President's Column

SASW begins 2011 after a very successful Svätý Mikuláš party on December 5, 2010. About 100 persons enjoyed the good food and the music of Pajtaši for listening and dancing. Of course, Svätý Mikuláš himself was quite busy presenting gifts to thirty-three children!

As I reported last May, we contributed four \$500 scholarships (two from Millie Schoepe-Evans) to deserving students at the City University campuses in Trenčín and Bratislava. Please note the insert (pp. 5-6) with four thank-you letters in this newsletter. Again, thank you for your contributions! They help young Slovaks stay in school and ultimately contribute to Slovak society and business. Please continue to contribute to this year's scholarships, as we send our money in May. SASW would like to provide four scholarships again this year (see the Treasurer's report below).

If you have not paid your 2011 dues, please do so—see the last page of this newsletter. Please make an effort to attend our Speakers Series talks on March 12 and 22. Your supports matters!

Again, we thank you for your continuing support and participation. Remember, all are invited to our monthly board meetings. These are announced via dcslovaks emails. Please also note that we are looking for at least two persons to serve on the Mikuláš planning committee for the December 2011 party. Please contact me at ktjr89@verizon.net or 703-751-1456.

Kathryn Tatko

Treasurer's Report for 2010---At the annual meeting in October, we promised to provide an end-of-year financial report later, as our Treasurer was on a lengthy foreign trip. The information follows:

Our financial status remains stable. At the end of December 2010, our financial assets totaled \$12,393.18, which was divided between two accounts. Our business checking account is at the Bank of America had a balance of \$6,572.85, while our Certificate of Deposit (CD) is at Lafayette Federal Credit Union and had a balance of \$5,820.33. Thanks to the generosity of one donor of \$1,000, and a number of other donors, our fund for scholarships to the City University of Seattle's campuses in Trenčín and Bratislava had an end of year accounting balance of \$1,663.00. Our goal for this spring's awards is four scholarships (\$2,000 total).

SASW Svätý Mikuláš Party –A Wonderful Slovak Celebration

On a cold and blustery Sunday, December 5, 2010, Slovaks in the Washington, DC, area gathered at the Slovak Embassy for the annual Svätý Mikuláš Party. Sponsored by the Slovak-American Society of Washington, this party features Slovak food, music, and the Guest of Honor, Svätý Mikuláš himself. As guests arrived, parents who had brought gifts for Svätý Mikuláš to give to their children secretly passed them to helpers at the door. Guests then chose their tables, all of which were labeled with the names of cities in Slovakia. After a brief greeting from Kathryn Tatko, the president of SASW, the guests all lined up for food. Delicious smells came from the hallway where the food was set up, ready to be served. Members of the Svätý Mikuláš committee had outdone themselves once again, preparing such Slovak favorites as mushroom soup, pork schnitzel, ham, lots of *holubky* (home-made by Millie Schoepe-Evans and her helpers), *pirohy*, Slovak potato salad, cucumber salad, and for the younger Slovaks, macaroni and cheese. Then, everyone ate as much as they could. Desserts were set out for all to help themselves to while enjoying the music of Pajtaši, a Slovak band from New York City, who provided authentic Slovak folk music.

After dinner, Svätý Mikuláš made his appearance. He had words of wisdom for all to ponder during the holiday season; his helper then brought out bags of gifts to distribute to the excited children. Many children had a song to sing or a poem to recite for the jolly man and the audience after receiving their gift. After Svätý Mikuláš' exit, there was more time for dancing, socializing, and more eating. Everyone agreed that they had a good time celebrating this Slovak saint's feast in a very Slovak way.

Georgene Chastain

SASW News and Notes

Lenten Meatless Meals—Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church, 3410 Woodburn Rd., Annandale, VA, will be selling meatless meals every Friday during Lent, March 11-April 15. Take-out: 4 to 7PM. Dine-in: 5 to 7PM. Enjoy *pirohy* (potato & cheese-filled pasta), *halusky* (sautéed noodles with sweet cabbage), vegetarian homemade soup, and desserts. Meal items are priced individually. Slovak & Ukrainian handiwork & ceramics, egg decorating kits, nut rolls, and cookbooks will also be on sale. Availability may vary. Sponsored by the Epiphany Ladies Guild. Questions? Call the Parish Center on Fridays, after 12 noon, at (703) 573-0777. A Pre-Sanctified Liturgy will be celebrated at 7:30 PM, following the dinner.

Slovak Language Classes—SASW provided information recently (via our dcslovaks email list) about Slovak language courses being offered through the Global Language Network affiliated with George Washington University. The classes are underway (as of the week of January 31). We understand that there are about 30 students in the Saturday afternoon class, and 7-10 in the Tuesday class. SASW has always sought to provide opportunities to learn the Slovak language in the DC area, and several times in the past the Society organized language classes, but it was always difficult to find teachers and a venue convenient to our geographically-dispersed membership. That's why these courses at GWU are a great development and we hope they continue. If you are enrolled in one of the classes, let us know how it's going by sending an email to < dcslovaks @yahoo.com >.

There is also a Slovak conversation group that is meeting on select Tuesday evenings at the restaurant Il Forno, in Frederick, Maryland. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Steve Baluch (304) 876-2291 < baluchsj@juno.com >.

NCSML Conference in Cedar Rapids, IA—On March 11 & 12, the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, will sponsor a major conference, “The 20th Century in Retrospect, 1989-2001: Transition to Democracy.” This is the third bi-annual conference in this series. Featured speakers include Ambassador Peter Burian, former Ambassador Martin Butora, and Zora Butorova. For details and to register, go to < www.NCSML.org > and click on ‘events’, or call (319) 362-8500, ext. 218.

More on NCSML—In a prior edition of this newsletter, information was provided about the NCSML Oral History Project which involved interviews of a number of important Slovaks and Czechs about their experiences emigrating from Slovakia during the Communist era. We have recently learned that NCSML has reached an agreement with the American Folklife Center (AFC) at the Library of Congress to deposit a copy of all of the project's interviews at the AFC in the near future. We will provide further information as the plan proceeds during this year.

Interesting Website—New SASW Board member Tonya Harmon, has created a (blog) website with personal family stories and other information relating to Slovak heritage. Check it out at < <http://paulinescookbook.com> >.

10th Consular Tour to Slovakia—Joe Senko, Slovak Honorary Consul and his wife, Albina, have organized their 10th tour to Slovakia. The 14-day trip will begin on July 31, and will return to the US on August 13. It will include visits to Bratislava and sites in central and eastern Slovakia, and a visit to Vienna. Activities will include two wine tours, a wedding performance, rafting, a visit to caverns, sightseeing, castles, and shopping. For more information and a copy of the daily itinerary, contact Joe Senko at (412) 531-2990 or < jtsenko@aol.com >.

Books of Interest—A number of books have been published recently that deal with events in the history of Slovakia.

Prof. M. Mark Stolarik has compiled and edited a volume entitled *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1968 Forty Years Later*. It is available through the Slovak-American International Cultural Foundation, Inc., 1572 Baskin Rd., Mundelein, IL 60060, or contact < dschmitz@slovakculture.org >. Also, SASW expects to host a talk by Prof. Stolarik later this spring. We will provide details as they become available.

Dr. George Mesko recommends the following two books: *Czechoslovakia: The State that Failed* by Mary Heimann, published by Yale University Press, and *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe 1914-1948*, by

Andrea Orzoff, and published by Oxford University Press. All of the books listed here are available through < www.amazon.com >.

In Memoriam—We were sorry to learn of the passing of the following Slovak-Americans:

Olga Gallik McClure, a past member of SASW and other Slovak-American and Czech-American groups, passed away in September, at the age of 87. She graduated from Cornell and had an interesting and varied career, largely in the foreign service field, including accompanying her Foreign Service officer spouse, Brooks, to Europe and the Middle East. Our condolences to Brooks and their family.

Dr. Edward Keshock, Slovak Honorary Consul for the State of Ohio, passed away suddenly in December. Ed was a professor of mechanical engineering and department chair at Cleveland State University. He had a wide-ranging academic career and visited many countries. He also worked tirelessly in support of Slovakia, including serving for the past 20 years as president of the Cleveland-Bratislava Sister Cities organization. SASW extends condolences to his wife Mary Jo and the entire family.

Global Mitzvah Project Concert—On Sunday, March 6, at 4:00pm, Temple Emmanuel, 10101 Connecticut Ave., Kensington, MD, will hold a concert featuring Eastern European /Yiddish-Klezmer music. Three bands, playing a variety of folk instruments, will perform songs in Yiddish, Hungarian, Romanian, Bosnian, and Slovak. The concert is a fundraiser for the American Jewish World Service organization and Engineers Without Borders. Both groups help families from Nyanza Province in Kenya. The minimum donation is \$10, and additional info is available at (301) 942-2000 or at < www.templeemmanuelmd.org >.

Visiting the Slovak and Czech Embassies in Washington, DC.

by Toni Brendel

It is important that we continue to network with other Slovaks and Czechs in America as well as the homeland to celebrate and preserve our heritage. When an invitation was extended on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Slovak American Society of Washington, DC, to attend their annual Svätý Mikuláš party, I readily accepted. The celebration took place on December 5, 2010, and was held at the Slovak Embassy in Washington, DC. The invitation included a request to bring copies of *Slovak American Touches* for sales and signing. The DC group was established in 1988 and is an independent social, cultural, and educational society serving the national capital area. The warm welcome and recognition for writing the book by fellow Slovaks was very much appreciated and many interesting conversations made me once again realize how much there is to be learned about our heritage. It was a pleasure to meet Helen Fedor, a member of the board of directors, after a few months exchange of e-mails. Likewise, the Society's President Kathryn Tatko, who added to the warmth of the welcome. It continues to seem remarkable to me that a common heritage "thread" binds us together in so many ways.

The dinner included several specialty foods such as *holubky*, pork schnitzels, *pirohy*, and Slovak potato salad, along with other side dishes. A wonderful mushroom soup was prepared and served by noted Slovak cook Lubos Brieda. The dessert tables were heavy-laden with delectable bakery furnished by members of the society. An array of pastries, *kolačky*, cookies, bars, cakes, and other sweets provided a finishing touch to the traditional food fare of the Slovak people. The banquet hall was filled to capacity. The music, provided by the renowned Slovak folk band, Pajtasi, was enjoyed by everyone and some even found a small open spot on the floor in which to dance. Of course, the highlight of the event was geared for children of all ages and came in the form of Svätý Mikuláš, the famed Slovak rendition of St. Nicholas. He presented every child with a gift and spoke to each as they came forward to receive it. With a jovial holiday spirit, Yule-tide greetings were exchanged by old friends and strangers who would never meet again.

Hosting my stay in Alexandria, Virginia, and Washington, DC, were friends Admiral (Ret.) Henry Chiles, and his wife, Alice. The Chiles attended the Svätý Mikuláš dinner party as my guests and expressed delight with the celebration as they became acquainted with new foods, music, and Slovak Christmas traditions. (continued p.7)

On December 9th, 2010, in a prearranged meeting, with a letter in hand from Phillips, Wisconsin, Mayor Jeffrey Fahl, a visit was made to the Czech Embassy. The purpose of the meeting was to raise awareness by the Czech government of the monument to the village of Lidice in Sokol Park, Phillips, Wisconsin, US. In addition, a request was made to send a representative from the Czech Embassy to Phillips to speak at the annual Lidice Memorial Service on June 17, 2011. It was pointed out that the Phillips monument is unique in that it was designed by a Czech immigrant, built by Czech immigrants, and has a good deal of symbolism involved in its creation.

The silo-like pillar on the left of the monument depicts the United Nations, and three rods leaning into the pillar represent the Czechs, Moravians, and Slovaks leaning on the United Nations for support. An evergreen spray on the upper front of the monument, under a wrought iron LIDICE sign signifies that Lidice shall have life everlasting. The rising sun to the right indicates that Lidice, like the sun, shall rise again. In addition to these facts, it is interesting to note that the Phillips monument is now listed on the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places, and the National Register of Historical Places, thanks to the tireless efforts of Therese Trojak of Phillips. An additional plaque commemorating the village of Lezaky, which suffered a similar fate, is affixed beneath the Lidice plaque. This is due to the encouragement and monetary contribution made by Joseph Ondracek before his death, several years ago. The two young diplomats sent by the Czech government, Barbara Karpetova, Second Secretary, Head of the Cultural Section, and Jiri Ellinger, First Secretary, Head of the Political Section, were very interested in learning more about the Phillips monument. An hour-long visit reaped a good harvest in that a recommendation was promised to send a representative to Phillips in 2011. The Phillips Czechoslovakian Community Festival was discussed and the two were presented with books, *Volume I - The Phillips Czechoslovakian Community*, and *Twenty-five years of Ethnic Pride. (A History of the Phillips Festival.)*

Another highlight of the eastern trip was a visit with a paternal Czech cousin and his wife, Jeffrey and Anita Cukr. Information regarding our grandparents, siblings who came to America in the early 1900's, was exchanged and recorded for future generations. The seven-day visit flew by quickly, as these very special friends planned several entertainments and dinners in addition to the already special meetings at the embassies. The two musical performances at the Kennedy Center were greatly enjoyed and a visit to Arlington National Cemetery completed a full week of activity.

* * *

Speakers' Bios for the March 12 Book Talk, *Tales from Slovak Castles*—

Lucille P. King was born in Uniontown, PA, to parents of Slovak descent. She graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a bachelor's degree in economics, and later received a teaching certificate in mathematics from California University. Lucy studied the Slovak language with Sylvia Lorinc, at the University of Pittsburgh, and at Comenius University in Bratislava. Currently, she owns the store La Boheme and the Connellsville Bed and Breakfast, located along the Great Allegheny Passage in Connellsville, PA.

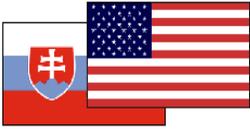
Sylvia M. Lorinc was born in Bratislava, but left Slovakia with her mother after the Soviet Invasion in 1968, living as refugees in Austria until Canada offered them political asylum. It was in Montreal that she met her future husband, John Lorinc, an American, and moved to the United States after marrying. At the University of Pittsburgh Sylvia earned a bachelor's and a master's degree, then taught Slovak at the University of Pittsburgh, and Russian for the Pittsburgh School District. Sylvia knew Dr. Janota, the author of the original work, when she was a little girl in Bratislava. A close friend of the family, he often entertained them by telling these stories. So rapturously did Sylvia listen, that Dr. Janota, who had no heirs, willed her these books.

The **Slovak-American Society of Washington** is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. [Contributions and membership dues are tax-deductible.](#)

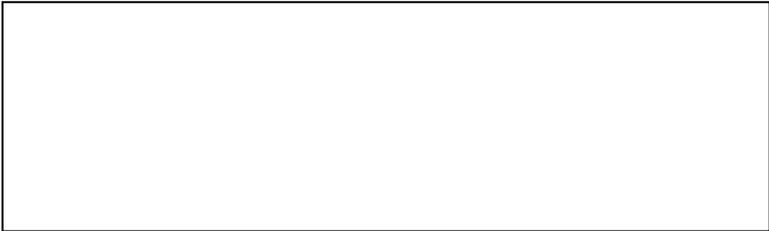
2011 Board of Directors:

Kathryn Tatko – President	Ken Bombara – at large
Jerry Rich – Vice-President	Helen Fedor – at large
Georgene Chastain – Secretary	Tonya Harmon – at large
Tom Marton – Treasurer	John Husovsky – at large
	Anne McKeown – at large

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SLOVAK-AMERICAN SOCIETY
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 CENTREVILLE, VA 20120-1727



It's TIME to RENEW your SASW membership for 2011!

(Thanks to those who have already renewed. Please check your label for the status of your membership. If you have questions, send an email to dcslovaks@yahoo.com, or drop a note to Tonya Harmon at the address on the form below.)

**SLOVAK-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON
 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL/DONATION FORM**
 New membership or renewal runs thru the end of 2012

Individual membership (\$15/year) \$ _____
 Family membership (\$20/year) \$ _____
 Optional tax-deductible donation:
 VSM/City U. scholarship fund \$ _____
 SASW General Fund \$ _____

Make checks payable to:
 Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C.
MAIL THIS FORM TO:
SASW—Tonya Harmon
606 Kentland Drive
Great Falls, VA 22066

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

NAME(s) _____

ADDRESS _____

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TELEPHONE: Home: () _____ - _____
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____ Please do NOT include my phone number in the Annual Membership Directory
 ____ Yes! Please contact me to help out with Society events (02/11)