

SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC

NEWSLETTER

March 2012

www.dcslovaks.org

Mr. Fico's SMER Favored to Win in March 10 Slovak Parliamentary Elections

As the date nears for Slovak parliamentary elections, Slovakia is poised for a shift in leadership and the likely return of Robert Fico as prime minister. Recent polls indicate that Mr. Fico's SMER party could garner a share of the vote near 40%, and the only question may be whether Fico will be able to form a government without the need for a coalition partner, although he may find that having a partner is a desirable option.

Meanwhile the parties of the political right, represented in the current caretaker government, are struggling to gain any traction. In particular, the SDKU party of outgoing PM Iveta Radicova, who is withdrawing from politics, and foreign minister Mikulas Dzurinda, has seen a dramatic fall in popularity. Its problems have been compounded by the emergence of the so-called "Gorilla file" scandal which has revealed the existence of a set of alleged documents, including wiretaps of meetings between Slovak politicians and a businessman conducted by the country's SIS spy agency. Because many of the alleged meetings took place during the second administration of former PM Dzurinda, he appears to be among the most affected and polls suggest he is one of the country's least favorite politicians. Polls indicate that the SDKU will struggle to exceed the five percent threshold to hold seats in parliament. While the Christian Democratic (KDH) party has emerged as the most popular among the center-right parties, the prospect of forming a center-right government looks remote.

The political campaign has also seen the emergence of a number of new parties--a total of 26 will compete for seats in parliament--some of which are fueled by reliance on the social media phenomenon, somewhat akin to our Tea Party, Occupy, and third-party movements. But the real impact of these efforts will only be revealed in the actual election results.

Dr. George Mesko Receives Stefanik Award in NYC

A distinguished Slovak American, and strong SASW supporter, Dr. Zoltan (George) Mesko, accepted the Stefanik Award from the Slovak-American Cultural Center (SACC) at its 20th annual 'Slovak Ball' held in NYC, on February 4, 2012. The event was held at the New York Athletic Club, on Central Park South, and was attended by prominent individuals, such as Slovak Ambassador Peter Burian, U.S. Representative John Mica, numerous representatives of Slovak-American organizations, and other key members of the Slovak-American community. The Stefanik Award was presented to Dr. Mesko by SACC President Rosemary Harvilla Golia, and SACC Vice-President, Matthew F. Culen.

Dr. Mesko, a native of Kosice, has had a long and distinguished medical career and has been active in the Slovak community, particularly in the New York City area. He completed his medical doctorate at Comenius

University in 1952 and became a specialist in pediatric cardiology, holding several positions at hospitals in Slovakia. The 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia caused him not to return there, and he eventually made his way to the U.S. as a fellow at the Children's Hospital of Harvard Medical School in Boston. He then moved on to New York City and spent his career from 1978 to 1996 as an Attending Physician and Associate Professor of the State University of New York (SUNY) at Saint Francis Hospital in Roslyn, N.Y.

Since his retirement, Dr. Mesko has received several awards in Slovakia for instituting the "Heart to Heart" (Srdcom k Srdcu) project, which led to the establishment of the Children's Heart Center in Bratislava. He has also devoted his time to scholarly research on the political history of Slovakia. In 2003, he authored *The Silent Conspiracy: A Communist Model of Political Cleansing at the Slovak University in Bratislava after the Second World War*. His second book, published in 2009 in Slovak, is *In the Footsteps of Communism and Milestones of the Slovak Maelstrom*. The book was the subject of an SASW Speakers' Series event in 2011. During retirement, Dr. Mesko and his wife, Judith, lived in France for a number of years, and then relocated to the Washington, D.C. area, where they are active members of SASW and the broader Slovak-American community.

President's Column

As your new president of SASW, I want to thank all of our loyal, hard-working members who make our organization very successful. I want to dedicate my first President's Column to recognizing and thanking our Vice-president Ken Bombara, Secretary Georgene Chastain, Treasurer Tom Marton, Program Chair Helen Fedor, immediate past-President Kathryn Tatko, and board members past and present Steve Matula, Linda Trout, Mark Sabol, Will Laska, Anne McKeown, Tonya Harmon, John Husovsky, and Evan Stefanik. I especially want to thank my wife, Shirley Rich, not only for her deep interest in all things Slovak, but for her accompanying me to many events at the Slovak Embassy and activities sponsored by SASW. Also, a huge thank you to Alma Laska and Judith Cornecelli for making our annual Svaty Mikulas party such a memorable, fun time. Millie Schoepe-Evans, our "SASW Matriarch" has been extremely generous with her many donations to our scholarship fund for City University in Slovakia. She has also hosted our annual picnic at her beautiful and spacious home for many years, in addition to preparing her famous and tasty Slovak recipes. I know I've probably omitted the names of other hardworking members so I apologize now. A heartfelt thank-you to Ambassador Peter Burian and the entire staff of the Slovak Embassy for their friendship and strong support of our SASW events.

Your officers and board of directors will continue to work hard to provide interesting and relevant events and programs which are enjoyable to the membership. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve SASW, please contact any of the officers and members of the board. Let us continue to foster and strengthen our relations with the Slovak Embassy and Slovakia.

Dr. Jerry Rich

SASW News and Notes

Lenten Meals at Epiphany Church -- Meatless meals every Friday during Lent (February 24 – March 30), serving savory, meatless, Eastern European meals including: pirohy (potato & cheese-filled pasta); halusky (sautéed noodles with sweet cabbage); homemade vegetarian soups, and desserts. Meal items are priced separately, and quantities may vary. Also, Slovak & Ukrainian handiwork & ceramics, egg decorating kits, nut rolls, and cookbooks will also be on sale. Sale times of these items may vary. Sponsored by the Epiphany Ladies Guild. Questions? Call the Parish Center on Fridays, after noon, at (703) 573-0777. Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church, 3410 Woodburn Road, Annandale, VA (703) 573-3986. Take-out: 4 to 7 PM, dine-in: 5 to 7 PM.

The SASW Speakers' Series, in cooperation with the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, National Capital Chapter, presents a

BOOK TALK: *THE LINDEN AND THE OAK*

Talk by Mark Wansa

Saturday, March 17, 2012, 2:00pm

Admission: free

Braddock District Governmental Center, 9002 Burke Lake Rd., Burke, VA

Directions: From I-495, take the VA-620 W/Braddock Rd West exit, EXIT 54A. Keep right at the fork to go on to Braddock Rd (VA-620 W). Drive on Braddock Rd. about two miles. Gradually move into the left lane. When you see Holy Spirit Catholic Church on the right, you should be in the left lane to turn left onto Burke Lake Rd (VA 645). On Burke Lake Rd., the Kings Park Shopping Center will be on the right. You should be in the right lane. Go through the next traffic light at Rolling Road. The Braddock District Governmental Center will be just ahead on the right.

The Linden and the Oak is a highly-acclaimed novel about two Carpatho-Rusyn families living in a village in northeastern Slovakia, and caught up in the tidal waves of World War I, revolution, and emigration from the Old Country to America. Author Mark Wansa will discuss the use of genealogy and family memories in writing a historical novel.

Mark Wansa was born in California and graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in history. Intrigued by the mysterious stories he heard in his youth, he became the first family member in 82 years to return to the Carpathian Mountain village of his father's birth. The result of several years of research and interviews with long-lost family members in Slovakia, *The Linden and the Oak* is Mark's first novel.

Books will be available for purchase and signing.

Co-sponsored by the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, National Capital Chapter.

VSM/City University 2011 Scholarship recipients

In 2011, SASW was able to support four \$500 scholarships for Slovak students to attend VSM/City University at its locations in Bratislava and Trencin. Two of the scholarships were donated by Millie Schope-Evans in memory of her beloved husband, Jim Evans. The other two scholarships were provided by SASW from funds raised from generous donors and from SASW events. One of these latter scholarships was dedicated by SASW in honor of Millie Schope-Evans for her past and ongoing support of the Society. On the following pages, we have a thank you letter from former Slovak Ambassador Branislav Lichardus, who is the rector of VSM/City University, and letters from each of the four scholarship recipients. These letters demonstrate the positive impact our scholarship program is having in Slovakia. We thank all those who supported these scholarships and look forward to continuing and expanding the program in the future.

Dr. Jerry Rich
The Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C.
4004 Isbell St.
Silver Spring, MD 20906-4218

November 30, 2011

Dear Mr. Rich,

Thank you for your generous donation of \$2000.00 to support students of VSM/ City University in Slovakia.

The Scholarship Committee of the City University of Seattle in Slovakia has decided to give it to Katarína Kopúňová, Martina Krchňavá, Veronika Mlynčárová and Martin Labuda, who, according to their application letters, have achieved excellent results in their studies and also in extra-curricular activities.

Please find enclosed also their letters of gratitude.

Best regards,



Prof. MUDr. Branislav Lichardus, DrSc., Dr.h.c.
Rector

Veronika Mlyncarova
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Slovak Republic
+421 905 704 819
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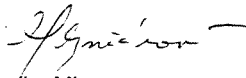
September 16, 2011

Dear Slovak American Society of Washington:

First, I would like to say how truly honored I am to be chosen for the scholarship offered by the Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C. in the name of Mrs. Millie Schoepe-Evans. I also have to admit that after receiving the letter about granting me the scholarship, I realized what great decision it was to change the school last year – this university (not like the previous one) is motivating people to get better - so am I now. I'm sure this money won't be wasted as its future use will consist of paying for my education, which is essential to become a good entrepreneur one day. Also, now I can save money thanks to the opportunity to pay a part of next term's fees from the scholarship, so I can begin to work on my business plan and make my dream of having my own business in merchandising more real.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity. I really hope you won't regret your choice and you will be satisfied with my further work and achievements at university.

Sincerely,



Veronika Mlyncarova

Katarina Kopúnová

Hôrka nad Váhom 172

916 32 Hôrka nad Váhom

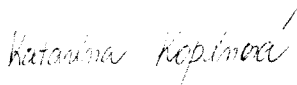
Hôrka nad Váhom, September 1, 2011

I would like to thank the Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C, and generous donation from Mrs. Millie Schoepe-Evans, in memory of her husband, Jim Evans, in the form of scholarship in the amount of 500 USD. I am really pleased and thankful for this financial help and I hope that I will be able to use the gained knowledge not only for my personal benefit but also for the gain of society in general. My good study results and your support motivate me to be an even better student and try to do as much as possible to represent the City University of Seattle and its reputation.

Thank you.

Best regards.

Katarina Kopúnová



August 24, 2011

Slovak - American Society of Washington

Re: Slovak - American Society of Washington Scholarship

Dear Sir/Madam,

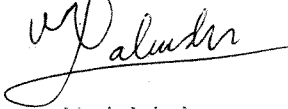
I am writing to thank you for awarding me with the Slovak American Society of Washington Scholarship. I would like to express sincere gratitude to you for making this scholarship possible. I feel honored to be elected as an appropriate candidate.

Currently, I am studying in Finland, at the University of Applied Sciences in Oulu, as an Erasmus student for one semester. After coming back, I will have two trimesters to finish my BSBA degree at City University of Seattle in Bratislava. Afterwards, I would like to continue to obtain the Master degree in business administration or economics abroad. The financial assistance will allow me to focus on my goals and it will be a great help in covering my educational expenses.

To conclude, I would like to thank you again for supporting young enthusiastic students in pursuing their goals and dreams. I can only believe that in the future I will be able to give back to students and the community like you do, because I understand that it is not only receiving help from others, but also giving back, that matters.

Yours faithfully,

Martin Labuda



Martin Labuda
Mlynky 191, 053 76
Slovakia

Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C.

Košice, September 12, 2011

Dear Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C.,

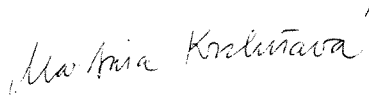
I am writing to personally thank you for the scholarship in the amount of 500 USD from the Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C., a generous donation from Mrs. Millie Schoepe-Evans, in memory of her husband, Jim Evans. I am very glad and honored that I have been selected to be a recipient of your scholarship, which will be a great help for me to be able to continue with my education.

I am currently in the fourth and last year of my Bachelor of Science in Business Administration undergraduate study program. After finishing my last year in spring 2012, I wish to find internship and later a job in the business administration field. After several years of experience, I would like to continue with a graduate degree program either in global or marketing management. Both undergraduate and graduate study programs require sufficient finance resources, and therefore I am very grateful to be awarded this scholarship, without which my future options would not be so open.

Thanks to your generous organization that supports students in achieving their educational goals. Due to your scholarship, I will be able to partially cover my educational expenses, to focus more on my studies and try to successfully finish my undergraduate program and afterwards pursue a professional career life.

Sincerely,

Martina Krchňavá



SASW News and Notes (continued)

Vaclav Havel -- SASW wishes to acknowledge the passing last December of Vaclav Havel, former president of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic, who played a key role in freeing Czechoslovakia from the grip of communism. Innumerable tributes and commemorative events occurred following his passing, and reminded us of the inspiration he provided to Slovaks and Czechs, and to the world community.

Summer Tours to Slovakia -- The Slovak Heritage Society and Folklore International are sponsoring tours this summer: 1) 75th Treasures Tour: Treasures of Slovakia, July 7-16, a Celebration Tour of Slovakia from west to east and north to south. 2) Castles, Helpa Festival, Spis villages in Slovakia & Poland, and Slovakia's Royal Wine Road, June 19-28. For day-by-day itineraries and more info, visit < www.our-slovakia.com >, or email Helene Cincebeaux at < helenezx@aol.com >, or call toll free (888) 529-7150.

Summer Language Study at Pitt -- Information about the University of Pittsburgh's summer language and culture program in Slovakia can be found at the following links: Pictures from the program in Slovakia (PowerPoint): < <http://tinyurl.com/75k6vxn> >; Program details, scroll down for Slovak: < <http://www.slavic.pitt.edu/sli/programs/ceeu/index.php> >. You can also contact Christine Metil < metil@pitt.edu > or call (412) 623-5906.

NCSML -- The Grand Opening of the rebuilt National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, will take place July 14-15. For information, check < www.NCSML.org >.

Mass for Frank Lysy -- SASW has requested a mass to be said for +Frank Lysy on Saturday evening, August 4, at 7:30 P.M., at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 750 Peachtree Street, Herndon, VA.

2012 Membership Renewals -- If you have not yet sent in your SASW membership renewal for 2012 please do so by using the form in this newsletter. Your support is very important to continuing and expanding our programs and activities. If you have questions, drop an email to < dcslovaks@yahoo.com >, or send a note to Tonya Harmon at the address on the membership form. Also, thanks to all those who have already renewed. We will be compiling our membership directory for a mailing later this spring.

News Item -- *The Guardian* newspaper in the UK reports that Slovaks have been voting overwhelmingly in favor of naming a new pedestrian and cycling bridge near Bratislava after 1980s U.S. action film and TV star Chuck Norris. Norris, a martial arts expert-turned film star, is known for playing tough guy characters in such movies as "Lone Wolf McQuade," "Missing in Action," and "The Delta Force." The actor's work has become a popular source of kitschy fun among Slovaks and a mainstay for local jokes about macho strength and invincibility. The online poll will run until April. As of Thursday, 1,157 votes have backed Norris, 74% of the total, leaving the runner-up "Maria Theresa Bridge" far behind with 8%.

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

2012 Board of Directors:

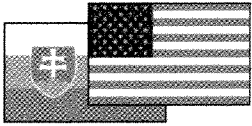
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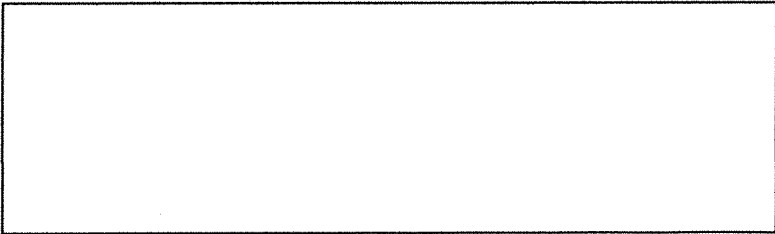
At-Large Members:

Helen Fedor
Tonya Harmon
John Husovsky
Anne McKeown
Evan Stefanik

Website: www.dcslovaks.org
Email: dcslovaks@yahoo.com



**SLOVAK-AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF WASHINGTON
5217 ELLICOTT COURT
CENTREVILLE, VA 20120-1727**



**SLOVAK-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL/DONATION FORM
New or renewing annual membership runs thru December 31, 2012.**

Individual membership (\$25/year) \$ _____

Family membership (\$35/year) \$ _____

Optional tax-deductible donation:

VSM/City U. scholarship fund \$ _____

SASW General Fund \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

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**

NAME(s) _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP+4 _____

TELEPHONE: Home: () _____ - _____

Work or Cell: () _____ - _____

EMAIL _____

____ Please do NOT include my phone number in the Annual Membership Directory

____ Yes! Please contact me to help out with Society events

(03/12)