

SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC

NEWSLETTER

August 2013

www.dcslovaks.org

+ In Memoriam – Millie Schoepe-Evans

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of Millie Schoepe-Evans, on July 28.

SASW extends its sincere condolences to Millie's family and friends.

There will be a local service for Millie at St. Timothy's Parish,
13807 Poplar Tree Road, Chantilly, VA, on Saturday, August 24, at 10:00 a.m.

The following obituary was published in Ohio, where funeral services for Millie were held.

Mildred "Millie" Verkin-Evans, passed away at Fair Oaks Hospital, Fairfax, Virginia, on July 28, 2013, at the age of 90. She was born in Clay Center, Ohio, and traveled the world for many years, living in Turkey, Pakistan, Cambodia, and Taiwan before settling in Fairfax, Virginia. Millie has joined her parents, Mary P. (Svetlak) and Michael J. Verkin, her sisters Helen Meng and Mary Knurek, and brothers Steve, Andrew, and Joseph Verkin. She will also be joining her daughter Andrea Sallberg, her first husband Carl Schoepe, and her beloved husband of 15 years, James Evans. Millie is survived by her daughters Chris Wright (Mark), Barbara Serban, and son C.J. Schoepe (Nyo), as well as four nieces and one nephew, all of northern Virginia. Also surviving are her sisters Ann Jozwiak, Magdaline Johnson, and Margaret Smith (Don), and a multitude of nieces, nephews, and grandnieces and grandnephews. She will be lovingly remembered by Tony and Phyllis Costigan, Marilou Dacayanan, Violet Gatdula, Levita Dacayanan, Louise Weller, and Amanda Sallberg, all of whom were devoted to making her last years as nice as possible.

Millie loved gardening, canning, and cooking, and volunteered with many charities over the years. She was president of the Westbrook Civic Association and worked tirelessly to keep over-development out of a beautiful green neighborhood. She was also a founding member of the Slovak American Society, hosting the annual picnic at her home for many years and organizing the St. Nicholas Party held at the Slovak Embassy each December. In 2012, at a dinner at the ambassador's residence, she was awarded the Slovak Medal of Honor for her tireless and generous support of friendship and fellowship between Slovaks and Americans.

A Funeral Mass was celebrated on Friday, August 9, 2013, in Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Genoa, Ohio. Interment, with full military honors, was held in the Clay Township Cemetery, Genoa. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that memorials be directed to Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, 204 S. Main St., Genoa, OH 43430, the American Cancer Society, 740 Commerce Dr., Suite B, Perrysburg, OH 43551, or the Slovak American Society of Washington, DC, c/o Dr. Jerry Rich, 19614 John Ayres Dr., Fairfax, VA 22032-3115.

(continued)

In addition, the following messages to SASW and Millie's family were sent by former Slovak Ambassador Branislav Lichardus and his wife Eva Kellerova, and current Ambassador Kmec.

Dear Mr. President Rich,

Kindly convey, please, to the Schoepe family and to all the friends – members of the Slovak American Society of Washington, our deep sorrow and sadness about the passing away of Mrs. Millie Shoepe Evans. Millie was a great guarantor and an enthusiastic promoter of the Slovak-American brotherhood. She helped to open hearts and arms of our compatriots to diplomatic representatives of the newly established Slovak Republic to the USA. Moreover, she also supported wholeheartedly academic American-Slovak relations by sponsoring generously Slovak students of City University of Seattle/Vysoka skola manazmentu in Slovakia. Thank you, our unforgettable Millie, and God bless you.

Yours, Branislav Lichardus and Eva Kellerova

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wright,

It is with deep sorrow that I have learnt that your beloved mother, a great Slovak-American and tireless friend of the Slovak Republic and its Embassy in the United States, Mrs. Millie Schoepe-Evans, passed away. Please, allow me to express – on my behalf and on behalf of the Embassy staff – deep sympathy and sincere condolences on your loss that we feel is also ours.

In this time of sadness, let us remember Millie's rich, active and fruitful life devoted to her family, to her country, as well as to the Slovak-American community. She was a proud Slovak, and she never forgot about the land of her ancestors. As a founding member of the Slovak American Society of Washington, DC, she worked tirelessly on keeping up and strengthening the Slovak heritage for which she will always be fondly remembered and loved by all of us.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wright, please accept again my expression of deep sympathy; our hearts and prayers are with you.

Sincerely Yours,

Peter Kmec

SASW President's message

It is with great sadness that I am writing about the recent death of our dear friend and matriarch of the Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C., Mrs. Millie Schoepe Evans. Millie passed away on July 28 at Fair Oaks Hospital after a two-month struggle with congestive heart failure. Millie was a very proud - SlovakAmerican who served in the United States Navy during World War II and with the Central Intelligence Agency overseas and stateside. Millie was a founding member of SASW and hosted the annual picnic at her home for many years. Ambassador Peter Burian awarded Millie the Slovak Ambassador's Medal in honor of Millie's longtime support of friendship and cooperation between Slovaks and Americans. She will be greatly missed by her family and her many friends. God bless Millie and may her memory be eternal.

Dr. Jerry Rich, President
Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C.

SASW Annual Picnic 2013

Saturday, September 14, 2013 – 3:00-6:00 p.m.

**Where: The home of Tonya and Nick Harmon, 606 Kentland Drive, Great Falls, VA
Phone: 703-444-2202**

Join us for a Slovak-style picnic with our very own homemade Slovak sausage, chicken paprikash, halushky, and other dishes inspired by our homeland. Drinks will include Slovak *Zlatý bažant* beer, wine, bottled water, and soft drinks.



Cost: \$15/members; \$22/non-members in advance (by September 6); \$18/members, \$25/non-members at the door. Children 12 and under are free. Members who are not current in their dues can either 1) pay non-member prices or 2) renew their membership for 2013 to qualify for member event prices. Admission is payable in cash or check upon arrival (consider also making a donation toward SASW scholarships at VSM/City University in Slovakia).

If paying in advance, please use the form on the last page of this newsletter, fill it out, and send it to Tonya Harmon (her address is on the form) with your check.

RSVPs are needed by 12:00 midnight, Friday, September 6. Call Tonya Harmon at 703-444-2202 or email your intentions to attend the party or let us know any food you would like to bring, to < tharmon63@gmail.com >. Carpooling may be available from the Metro – let us know if you need it. Leftover food will be sold afterwards, on a first-come, first-served basis.

To get there: It's easy! The Harmon family lives at 606 Kentland Drive in Great Falls, Virginia, near the intersection of Route 7 and Georgetown Pike, not far from Reston, VA. From Georgetown Pike, turn right on Seneca Road and go one mile, then turn left onto Kentland Drive. Their house is at the end of Kentland Drive, approximately one mile down, on the cul de sac, in the house on the left-hand side. You can park along the cul-de-sac or in the driveway.

***The Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C., in cooperation with
the John & Helen Timo Foundation, and the Carpatho-Rusyn Society,
National Capital Chapter presents,***

**MARIA MACOSKOVA and BEATA BEGENIOVA-FEDORIOUK
in CONCERT**

Kick-off concert for the renowned Carpatho-Rusyn singers' first-ever joint American tour

When: Thursday, September 5, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. (A reception will follow.)

Where: Slovak Embassy, 3523 International Court, NW, Washington, D.C.*

**Cost: Free, but an RSVP is required, as space is very limited. Please RSVP to
Georgianna Kostak by 6PM on Monday, September 2, either via email <
kresna1@aol.com > or at (410) 916-1623.**

Maria Macoskova, viewed as the international “grand dame” of Carpatho-Rusyn folk singers, will perform Carpatho-Rusyn and Slovak folks songs together with Beata Begeniova-Fedoriouk, herself a prominent Carpatho-Rusyn folk singer in both Europe and North America. They will be accompanied by noted accordionist Jozef Piroh. All three hail from Presov, Slovakia. This is the first time the two songstresses will appear together in almost 20 years, having sung together previously at various cultural events in their native Slovakia, but never before together in the United States.

Maria Macoskova, born in the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Potocky, in present-day Slovakia, is both an accomplished professional singer and Carpatho-Rusyn cultural activist. She has dedicated her life to using Carpatho-Rusyn song to help people understand the beauty and depth of Carpatho-Rusyn culture. She performed for over four decades with the Dukla Ensemble of Presov (now known as PUL'S), Slovakia's premier professional Carpatho-Rusyn performing ensemble, as well as with the Brno State Radio Folk Orchestra and the Janosko Cimbalom Orchestra in Prague, both today in the Czech Republic. She has done more than anyone else to popularize Carpatho-Rusyn folk music throughout all of the former Czechoslovakia and especially in present-day Slovakia. In 1985, she was named an Artist of Merit by the Czechoslovak government.

Beata Begeniova-Fedoriouk has performed Carpatho-Rusyn folk music since her youth in Slovakia. Born in Presov, she is known in both Europe and America for her talents. Currently, she performs Central and East European folk music with the Cleveland-based ensemble Harmonia, a group that has been called “a musical gem” by National Public Radio and “obscenely talented” by the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, DC.

* The Slovak Embassy is near the Van Ness-UDC stop on the Metro red line.

Slovak American Society Annual Meeting and Speakers' Series Talk

October 26, 2013
at the Slovak Embassy*

at 12:30 p.m.

The SASW Annual Membership Meeting will feature an annual report on the Society's activities and offer a chance for members to meet and address Board members. In addition, we will hold the annual election for three Board members to serve three-year terms, so your participation matters! A light lunch will be provided.

If you are interested in serving on the SASW Board, please make your intentions known to the Nominations Committee. Please contact Nominations Committee Chair Kathryn Tatko at 703-751-1456.

at 2:00 p.m. (open to the public)

**The SASW Speakers' Series,
in cooperation with the Friends of Slovakia, presents**

Prof. John Palka, discussing

My Slovakia, My Family: One Family's Role in the Birth of a Nation

Prof. Palka is the grandson of Dr. Milan Hodža, who was the prime minister of Czechoslovakia from 1935 to 1938, the years leading up to World War II. In the eyes of many historians, he was the most prominent Slovak political leader of the first half of the 20th century.

In endorsing the book, former U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia Ted Russell states, "*Professor Palka's book My Slovakia, My Family is a fascinating and superbly documented biography of the Hodža and Pálka families' significant role in Slovak history. It includes dramatic accounts of his family's escape first from Nazi-occupied Europe and then from Communist-controlled Czechoslovakia to a new life in America. It provides vivid portraits of courage and love of freedom and country that will resonate with anyone interested in Slovak history and Slovaks in America.*"

Dr. John Palka is a retired professor of biology at the University of Washington with a specialty in neuroscience. He is the winner of numerous prestigious academic awards, including election as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, two Fulbright Fellowships for teaching in India, and a Guggenheim Fellowship for research in Cambridge, England. He also co-founded and co-directed the University of Washington's highly lauded Program on the Environment.

*The Slovak Embassy is located at 3523 International Court, NW, Washington DC—near the Van Ness Metro.

Slovak-American Writers: Little Known or Not At All

On Saturday, May 18, 2013, Diana Zidova, a PhD student in the Department of English and American Studies at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia, spoke about her research on literary works produced by the descendants of Slovak emigrants to America. The talk took place in the second-floor meeting room of the Arlington Central Library in Arlington, VA. Some of the authors she has researched include Thomas Bell (Belejcek), Alvena Vajdak Seckar, Lisa Ann Alzo, Rita Malie, Andrew J. Krivak, Milan Kovacovic, Vasil (Charles) Stefan Koban, Michael V. Simko, Fr. Andrew V. Pier, and Michael Novak. Ms. Zidova spoke about how these writers have embraced their Slovak ancestry in novels, short stories, memoirs, or poems.

Through her research, Ms Zidova has found that these writers are searching for their identity, recollecting pieces of their experiences, or retelling stories of their parents' or grandparents' experiences emigrating to America from Austria-Hungary.

Thomas Bell's (1903-61) most famous novel, *Out of This Furnace*, was the book Ms. Zidova read and discussed as part of her research. She was excited to have been able to examine Thomas Bell's personal papers, which were donated to Carnegie-Mellon University, and to visit the town of Braddock, PA, where Thomas Bell grew up.

Ms. Alvena Vajdak Seckar (1916-?) who last lived in Pompton Lakes, NJ, wrote books for children, including *Zuska of the Burning Hills*, *Trapped in the Old Mine*, and *Misko*.

Lisa Ann Alzo (1964-) has written *Three Slovak Women* as an autobiographical novel about the women of her family who emigrated to America.

Rita Malie (1940-) wrote *Goodbye America*, a memoir of her mother's emigration to America. Published in 2011, this book for children has been available for sale at the Ellis Island Museum.

Andrew J. Krivak wrote *The Sojourn*, which takes place around World War I, about his grandfather's experiences. Mr. Krivak won the 2012 Chautauqua Prize for his writings.

Milan Kovacovic (1942-) was born in France and wrote a memoir about his life in France and Slovakia, and emigration to the United States. This book is called *Ma's Dictionary: Straddling the Social Class Divide*.

Vasil (Charles) Stefan Koban (1918-2007) wrote *The Sorrows of Marienka*, an autobiographical novel about his mother's struggles. Mr. Koban was born in Conemaugh, PA, one of twelve children, many of whom died young.

Michael V. Simko (1893-1989) was born in Bridgeport, CT. He wrote a novel called *Mila Nadaya*, which takes place in America and is about a girl who emigrated from Slovakia.

Other Slovak-American writers that Ms. Zidova touched on briefly include: Michael Novak (1933-), who wrote *Naked I Leave* in 1970; Paul Wilkes (1938-), who has written many books, both fiction and nonfiction, including *In Due Season: a Catholic Life*, published in 2009; Charles Washko, who wrote *The Coal Miner* in 2011; Sofia Zufa (1922-), who wrote *Humble Beginnings* in 2000; Joel Mader, who wrote *Woodhill Road: Stories from the Hardware Store*; and Sonja Jason, a Rusyn, who wrote *Eternal Memory*.

Ms. Zidova's presentation was very informative and enjoyable, and there was much discussion afterward about her research and the writers about whom she spoke.

Georgene Chastain

My Visit to Cedar Rapids, Iowa

During June 13-15, 2013, the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, officially opened its new permanent exhibit. "Faces of Freedom—The Czech and Slovak Journey." I was very happy to attend the opening festivities as my father's (Jozef Tatko) sewing machine was incorporated into this permanent exhibit. My father came to Pittsburgh, PA, from Spišská Stará Ves (eastern Slovakia), in late 1936. He trained as a tailor in Czechoslovakia.

The official opening (ribbon cutting) of the exhibit was Saturday morning, June 15. During the early evening of June 13th, members were invited to a cocktail hour and an exhibit preview. The following afternoon, I returned and spent a good deal of time viewing the exhibit in detail, just before the gala dinner that evening, featuring Eugene Cernan as the main speaker. He was, of course, the last astronaut to walk on the Moon. His paternal grandparents were Slovak and his maternal grandparents were Czech. Other guests and speakers at all of the events included the Czech ambassador to the United States, Petr Gandalovič, and the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) of the Slovak Embassy, Peter Zeleňák.

The "Czech and Slovak Journey" contains more than 7,000 square feet of historic artifacts, interactive displays, oral histories, and more. The museum's story emphasizes history's lessons concerning the importance of freedom and identity, family and community, human rights and dignity. These are, of course, the reasons so many Czechs and Slovaks left Czechoslovakia – for personal, economic, political, and cultural independence. Not only does the exhibit offer valuable insights into how these people and their families fared in the United States, it also shows what life was like under Communism, for those who could not or would not leave. There are also interactive activities to let us ponder the same questions both Czechs and Slovaks asked – should we leave or should we stay? Both Ambassador Gandalovič and DCM Zeleňák had high praise for the exhibit.

Should you travel to the Midwest, plan to visit the museum, a day-long stopover which will be both informative and rewarding. The exhibit is housed in a new building, rebuilt above the disastrous flood level of June 2008. Cedar Rapids is, incidentally, just a 4½ -hour drive from Chicago.

Kathryn Tatko

SASW News and Notes

SASW Svätý Mikuláš Party – Mark your calendars! Our annual Svätý Mikuláš Party will be held on **December 8th** at the Slovak Embassy. We can always use some help!! If you are willing to help in planning, serving, or cleaning up, please contact Kathryn Tatko at < ktjr89@verizon.net > or 703-751-1456.

SASW Scholarships – At the April 29 meeting, the SASW Board decided to send three \$750 scholarships to VSM/City University this year, including one in honor of Millie Schoepe-Evans, which SASW had previously pledged to contribute for five years. Another of the scholarships will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Slovak Republic. The Board thanks all those who have supported the SASW Scholarship program and hopes that we can continue to support this excellent program benefitting students in Slovakia.

Epiphany Slavic Festival – The annual Slavic Festival sponsored by the Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church, 3410 Woodburn Road, Annandale, VA, will be held on **Sunday, Sept. 8**, noon-6 p.m. Details will be forthcoming, but if you need more information you can call the parish office at 703-573-3986.

Jednota Mass – The annual mass organized by the First Catholic Slovak Union (Jednota) in the Mother of Sorrows chapel in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., will be held **Sunday, September 15, 2013**, at 10:00 a.m. in the Crypt Church, in the basement of the Shrine. For more information, contact Marion Mistrik at 301-654-5638. The Basilica is located at 400 Michigan Avenue, NE, Washington, D.C. < www.nationalshrine.com >

News and Notes (continued)

Slovak Heritage Festival in NJ – The annual Slovak Heritage Festival, in New Jersey, will be held on **Sunday, September 29**, starting at 9 a.m. at the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel, New Jersey. Call 732-442-9200 for more information.

Folklife Festival in Virginia – On **Saturday, October 19, 2013**, the first-ever Virginia Czech & Slovak Folklife Festival will take place from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Prince George County Regional Heritage Center. This free outdoor event will feature musical performances, polka dancing, baking demonstrations, a farm life exhibition, and activities for children. Musical performances will include polka music, religious singing, and a Slovak “fujara” player. The area’s historically Czech and Slovak churches will be selling food based on traditional recipes. Baked goods such as *kolache*, and Czech and Slovak beer will also be available for purchase. Come learn about the rich and unique culture of Virginia’s longtime Czech- and Slovak-American community. The Heritage Center will feature exhibitions and artifacts about the community. There will also be a documentation and digitization table, as an effort to preserve historical materials related to this community. Attendees are encouraged to bring old photographs, letters, and documents for scanning.

During the late 19th century, more than 700 Czech and Slovak families came to live in Virginia. The greatest number settled in the counties of Prince George, Dinwiddie, and Chesterfield, mostly on farmlands that had been abandoned after the Civil War. Others settled in Charles City, Hanover, Henrico, Greensville, and New Kent. The Festival is being co-sponsored by the Virginia Czech/Slovak Heritage Society, and was made possible by a grant from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities < <http://virginiahumanities.org/events/virginia-czech-slovak-folklife-festival/> >.

Genealogy Conference – The Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) will hold its 14th Genealogical and Cultural Conference at the Westin Lombard Hotel in Lombard, Illinois. The Conference dates are **Wednesday, October 23 through Saturday, October 26, 2013**. For more information, including registration, go to < <http://www.cgsi.org>>. The society's address is Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, P.O. Box 16225, St. Paul, Minnesota 55116-0225.

Slovak Festival at the University of Pittsburgh – The annual Pitt Slovak Festival is always a highly anticipated event, and this year it will be held on **Sunday, November 3**, noon-5 p.m., in the Cathedral of Learning. For more information, contact Chris Metil, 412-624-5906, or email < Slavic@pitt.edu >.

From an interview with former Ambassador Mark Palmer, relating to former House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Wilbur Mills:

PALMER: No. It was another important Ways and Means guy. Wilbur Mills. He arrived with a large co-del {Congressional delegation}. They unloaded from the plane something like 24 cases of hard liquor. It was because he drank all the time. From morning to night, he drank. He was just drunk all the time.

The first night he was there, Gligorov, who was then the president of Yugoslavia, gave a very nice dinner, with white gloves and everything, a really splendid dinner, the best that the Yugoslavs knew how to do. And he got up and said [Palmer imitates a heavy Southern accent], "I want to tell you about my wife." And he talked at great length about how wonderful this little lady is, before he got into anything else.

Then, he turned from that to saying, "I am so happy to be here in Czechoslovakia."

(Laughter) And so Silberman passes him a note, you know, "Yugoslavia."

"Oh!" he said, "I am so happy to be here in Yugoslavia!" (Laughter)

Advance Payment for the 2013 SASW Picnic

Name _____

Address _____

Number of tickets:

Member(s)*: number _____ @ \$15 = \$ _____

*Membership must be fully paid up through the end of 2013 to pay this rate.

Non-member(s): number _____ @ \$22 = \$ _____

TOTAL = \$ _____

Please send this completed form, along with your check, **made out to 'SASW'** and **postmarked by September 6**, to:

**Tonya Harmon
606 Kentland Drive
Great Falls, VA 22066-1030**

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

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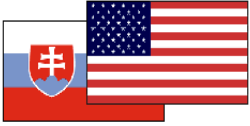
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Email: dcslovaks@yahoo.com**



SLOVAK-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC
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, 2013.

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: () _____ - _____

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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 (08/13)