

SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC

NEWSLETTER

April 2014

www.dcslovaks.org

Andrej Kiska Elected as the Next President of Slovakia

In a run-off election on March 29, Andrej Kiska defeated current Prime Minister Robert Fico to become the next president of Slovakia. Kiska garnered 59.4% of the vote while Fico received 40.6%--an impressive win for Kiska. Fico had finished first in the March 15 first-round election, with Kiska finishing a close second, ahead of a large field of candidates.

Kiska ran as an independent candidate and becomes the first Slovak president to be elected without party affiliation. However, he drew support from a number of opposition (largely center-right) parties, whose candidates threw their support to Kiska after the second round. As such, Kiska had been a relative unknown in the political sphere until recently. He was born in Poprad and is a graduate of the Slovak Technical University in Bratislava. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1990, and upon returning to Slovakia, founded several non-banking financial institutions and Dobry Anjel (Good Angel), a large charity for children that supports families in need. As an independent, he has pledged to "work for all Slovaks."

The defeat of Mr. Fico poses an interesting situation for both him and his current SMER-dominated government. Fico had been an early favorite to win the presidency until the country moved toward Kiska, expressing its disillusionment with the political scene and a lack of trust in political parties generally. How this will affect Mr. Fico's political career, and other government positions, remains to be seen. Some observers note that Kiska's win provides an important democratic check on the power of Fico and SMER, who would have attained complete domination of the Slovak government and politics had they won. While the Slovak presidency is largely a ceremonial position, it does have judicial-appointment and other powers that are important. How Kiska, a relative political novice, will exercise his role vis-à-vis the current parliament, and in the current crisis in Eastern Europe, will be of great interest to observers of the Slovak political scene.

Situation in Ukraine Affects Slovak Foreign Relations

The recent and continuing events in Ukraine pose the most difficult situation in Central and Eastern Europe since the fall of communism. As a result, the U.S. and Europe are once again engaged in an adversarial relationship with the Russian Federation that some have called "the end of the Post-Cold War era". Of particular interest to the Slovak-American community is the response of the Slovak government to recent events. Slovakia is in a challenging situation because of its political and economic ties to the West and to Russia. Slovakia has firmly anchored itself within Western institutions, such as the EU and NATO, and this 'western-orientation' has been continued under the Fico government. However, economically, Slovakia is dependent on energy supplies from Russia, and has trade relationships with Russia. It is a key location for pipelines that carry energy supplies to other locations in Central Europe. *[continued on p.6]*

SASW 2013 Svätý Mikuláš Party

SASW held its annual Svätý Mikuláš party on December 8, 2013. Again, the embassy chef, Michal Šariský prepared very excellent Slovak food--*kapustnica*, *halušky*, *rezne* (schnitzels) and Slovak potato salad! We also served *pirohy* (made by several SASW members in early November, in Tonya Harmon's kitchen). And, of course, we offered Slovak cucumber salad, green salads, and many delicious Slovak pastries. American macaroni and cheese was also available for the children. Svätý Mikuláš presented gifts to about 20 excited children, many of whom sang a short song or recited a short, poetic verse. *Pajtaši* drove from New York and provided traditional Slovak music for listening and dancing. Many attendees took advantage of the music to dance together towards the end of the musical program, including, of course, the children!

I wish to thank everyone who helped set up tables and chairs, organize the room, set up and/or serve food, and, of course, clean up. All of your efforts made the event a great success!

Unfortunately, the snow and ice stopped many people, who had confirmed, from attending. Needless to say, we had a good deal of leftover food and so, were short on our projected income. Following the party, the SASW Board decided on a new procedure for reservations for the next Svätý Mikuláš party, as well as for the annual picnic. Please see the President's Column for details.

Lastly, please annotate your calendars for this year's Svätý Mikuláš party at the embassy, on December 7, 2014!

Kathryn Tatko,
Chair of the 2013 Svätý Mikuláš party

SASW President's message

What a great year we had in 2013. The highlight was celebrating the 20th anniversary of an independent Slovakia. Two of the most significant things to happen in those twenty years were Slovakia's joining NATO and the EU.

SASW continues to grow, and to sponsor cultural and social events for the benefit and enjoyment of its members. We continue to foster and maintain strong, cordial friendships with the Slovak Embassy staff. Ambassador Peter Kmec and the entire staff have given us the honor and privilege of inviting us to Embassy functions and providing space for us to hold lectures, social events, and our annual general meeting. We thank them for their friendship, hospitality, and hard work in helping us. SASW's board of directors has begun planning the annual picnic in late September and the Svätý Mikuláš party on the first Sunday in December. Volunteers are needed for both occasions. We need your help to make these social gatherings successful and fun.

The board has agreed to have pre-paid reservations for the picnic and the Svätý Mikuláš party. This policy will enable us to purchase and prepare sufficient food and drink. In the case of the Svätý Mikuláš party, there is limited space available at the Embassy.

It has been an honor to serve as the SASW President for the past two years. I have been blessed to serve on the board of directors with such a hardworking, dedicated group of Slovak-Americans. If you have any compliments, suggestions, or complaints, please contact any of the SASW board. You can always find them working at our sponsored events or at our monthly meetings at Ballston Commons Food Court. All SASW members are always welcome to attend board meetings and to run for board membership at our annual general meeting in October.

Dr. Jerry Rich

The Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C. Speakers Series,
in cooperation with the Friends of Slovakia presents:

"Slovakia in the EU 10 Years On: Promises Fulfilled?"

A talk by Rick Zednik

Monday, April 28, 2014, 7:00pm

**at the Slovak Embassy, 3523 International Court, N.W., Washington D.C. 20008
(near Van Ness Metro)**



The spring of 2004 was momentous in the history of independent Slovakia. On May 1 of that year, the country joined the European Union. Coming as it did less than five weeks after Slovakia joined NATO, it marked the culmination of a long process that was highly uncertain in the 1990s. A decade later, we can now reflect on what enabled Slovakia to join these European and trans-Atlantic structures, and how the subsequent integration has fared.

Rick Zednik covered Slovakia's early path toward EU and NATO membership as co-founding editor of the *Slovak Spectator* in Bratislava, from 1994 to 2000. Since 2008 he has followed Slovakia's deepening integration within the EU as CEO at EurActiv, the EU policy news network in Brussels. Rick is a dual citizen of Slovakia and the United States. He has a BA in political science from Trinity College in Hartford, an MS from Columbia Journalism School, and an MBA from Harvard. He is the author of the family memoir *A Country Lost, Then Found: Discovering My Father's Slovakia*. For questions about this event, email < dcslovaks@yahoo.com >.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend these upcoming SASW events !!! (details forthcoming later in the summer)

Saturday, September 27, at 2pm – **Prof. Martin Votruba** of the University of Pittsburgh (PA) will give a talk on Slovakia and World War I.

Saturday, October 18 – SASW Annual Meeting – Professor Kevin Deegan-Krause of Wayne State University (MI) will give a post-Slovak-election recap and talk about what's next for Slovakia. At the annual meeting, the SASW Board will report on the status of SASW and the year's activities. Elections for open Board positions will be held. The meeting will start at 12:30pm, and Kevin's talk will start at 2:00pm (just like last year). If you're interested in serving on the SASW Board, email < dcsllovaks@yahoo.com >.

Sunday, December 7 – SASW Svätý Mikuláš Party.

SASW News and Notes

SASW is planning a series of cooking demonstrations and small informal dinners in the coming months. If you are willing to share your kitchen, dining room, or patio, please contact us at < dcsllovaks@yahoo.com >.

VSM/City University Scholarships – In 2013, SASW sponsored three \$750 scholarships for students at VSM/City University in Slovakia. The SASW Board wishes to thank all those who donated to the scholarship fund. We received thank you letters from the three students that are shown below. You can see that the students are very grateful for the support and plan to lend their talents to building a stronger Slovakia. The Board would like to continue providing these scholarships in 2014 but our ability to do so depends on your continued generosity. Please consider a donation of \$25, \$50, \$100, or more if you can, as the deadline for the 2014 scholarship is fast approaching, and we are short of our goal. You can use the membership form on the back page of this newsletter to include with your check, made out to SASW.

Epiphany Church Lenten Meals – Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church invites you to Lenten Dinners every Friday night during Lent, except Good Friday. The dinners feature *pirohy*, *haluški*, salads, beverages, and desserts. Take out begins at 4:00 and goes until 7:00 PM, and eat-in begins at 5:00 and goes until 7:00 PM. A Divine Liturgy of Pre-sanctified Gifts will take place in the church at 7:30PM. The church is located at 3410 Woodburn Road, Annandale, VA 22003. For more information check < <http://epiphanyofourlord.org/> > or call the Social Hall at (703) 573-0777.

In Memorium – Our thanks to Marge Van Lierde who informed us of the passing of long-time supporter of the SASW **Joseph Stipkala**, on March 23, 2014, in Ohio. He had lived in Upper Marlboro, MD, for many years before relocating to Avon, OH, almost ten years ago. Joe was 85 years old, the husband of Janet Stipkala, and the loving father of Jonathan Stipkala, Jennifer Robbins, and Jeremy Stipkala. He is survived by his sister, Ethel Nalepka, and brothers Frank and John Stipkala, along with many nieces and nephews. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Andrew's Abbey, 10510 Buckeye Rd., Cleveland, OH 44014. SASW extends condolences to the Stipkala family. Marge Van Lierde noted that "Joe and I were childhood friends, having grown up together in Cleveland. Our roots go back to Kriva, in Slovakia, the village of his late mother, Helen Stipkala, and my late father, John Shelling. His uncle was the late Dr. Joseph Mikuš." His obituary, together with a photo, appeared in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* on March 26: < <http://obits.cleveland.obituaries/cleveland/obituary.aspx?n=joseph-j-stipkala> >.

VYSOKÁ ŠKOLA MANAŽMENTU

Bezručova 64, 911 01 Trenčín, tel./fax: 032/6529-337
Panónska cesta 17, 851 04 Bratislava, tel.: 02/6381-0601, fax: 02/6381-0611

Programy **CityUniversity**
of Seattle

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

November 27, 2013


Dear Mr. Rich,

Thank you for your generous donation of \$ 2,250.00 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 Monika Makraiová, Lucia Tóthová and Kristína Vavrová, who, according to their application letters, have achieved excellent results in their studies and also in extra-curricular activities.

Please find enclosed their letters of gratitude.

Best regards,


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

November 14th, 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to thank you for choosing me as a recipient of the Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C. scholarship. I really appreciate your kindness and support.

I am glad to be a student of the City University of Seattle because I am receiving proper education here. I truly believe that I will successfully complete my B.S.B.A. degree at City University, start my career and then complete MBA studies later on.

By awarding me, you allow me to focus more on my studies, extra curriculum activities and professional goals. I hope I will be able to help people in the future as much as you do.

Thank you very much.

Yours faithfully,

Lucia Tóthová



November 18, 2013

The Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir/ Madam,


I am writing to thank you for your generous *Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C.* scholarship in the amount of \$750. I am thrilled to hear that you chose me for that honor, and I am deeply appreciative of this support.

I am currently in the third year of B.S.B.A. program (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration). I am learning a lot in this bachelor study and also in part-time employment I am combining my studies with. In fact, my current job helps me to focus on what I enjoy doing most. I have chosen the business administration specialization because I feel I can realize my potential in that field.

This award has brought me closer to fulfilling my goal and living my dreams. First, I feel encouraged to continue in my academic career. I plan on undertaking studies in the M.B.A. program after obtaining my bachelor degree. My desire is to study in a master program abroad and improve my education as much as I can. However, in order to approach that stage of my life, I need to be able to finish this degree. The financial assistance you have provided will rid me of a substantial burden and will be of great help in paying my tuition fees. Consequently, this help will allow me to invest more of my time in studying and improve my GPA substantially. Second, you have motivated me to work harder and aim for even better results. Thanks to your generous support, I have learnt that hard work pays off.

Once again, thank you! Your kindness has inspired me and will certainly help me in many ways. I hope that one day I will be able to do something for others, too.

Sincerely,


Monika Makraiová
BSBA Candidate,
City University, Bratislava

Kristína Vavrová
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vavrova.kristina@gmail.com
0902 432 515
November 20, 2013

Re: Slovak - American Society of Washington, D.C. Scholarship

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a recipient of the Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C. Scholarship, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your generosity. I am very honored to receive such a prestigious award.

I am currently studying at the City University of Seattle, in the BSBA program with the focus on Business Administration, and I am in the second half of my studies. I am working very hard to make my GPA as high as possible (in the present it is 3.37), and I believe that at the end of this trimester, it will be even higher. I am also working part-time as an administrative assistant in NexitraOne company. My free time activities include membership in the student organization AIESEC, where I have taken part in a few projects, events, and conferences.

In the near future, I am leaving Slovakia for more than 5 months to take part in the Erasmus program of our school. I am going to Oulu, Finland, where I would like to experience a different culture, get to know people from other countries, and, of course, educate myself as much as possible. In addition to this, I would like to become a member of AIESEC Oulu and help them with some activities. I believe that this will give me a realistic picture of the economic situation and living standards in Finland.

Receiving this scholarship motivates me to finish this trimester successfully. I am really looking forward to going to Finland and to making this part of my studies a great contribution to my life. I am highly motivated to take every opportunity there is and make it a benefit in the future. I thank you for your confidence and willingness to help me achieve my goals.

Sincerely,



Kristína Vavrová

SASW News and Notes (continued)

SASW extends condolences to the family **Albert P. Solga**, a former resident of Bethesda, MD, and member of SASW for many years. Al was living in Bethlehem, PA, and passed away on January 21, 2014, at the age of 84. He was able to visit Slovakia one last time in August 2013.

SASW also notes the passing of **Helen Zemek Baine**, mother of Helene Cincebeaux, both co-founders of the Slovak Heritage and Folklore Society. Helen was 96 years of age. We extend our condolences to Helene and her family and friends.

The 50th Summer School of Slovak Language and Culture *Studia Academica Slovaca* (SAS) < <https://www.fphil.uniba.sk/index.php?id=899> > will be held under the auspices of the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University, Bratislava, with courses held in Bratislava and lasting **from August 3 to August 23, 2014**. This intensive programme aims to enable students to improve and extend their Slovak language competence, as well as increasing their level of expertise in Slovak literature and culture. Anyone at least 18 years old who is interested in Slovak language and culture can participate in the SAS program. The deadline to apply is April 15. **If you are interested in applying, email < dcsllovaks@yahoo.com >.**

Slovak Heritage Tours This Summer – There are a number of tours to Slovakia every summer and there is a new way to find out about them. The First Catholic Slovak Union (Jednota) fraternal organization now has a list on their website, which you can access at < www.fcsu.com >; click on the “Slovakia and the World” tab. Here are a few of the tours that are available:

11th Consular Tour – Joe Senko, the Slovak Honorary Consul for Pennsylvania, and his wife Albina, are planning their 11th tour to Slovakia for August 10-20. The tour will visit Slovakia’s three major cities, as well as Vienna, and will include wine tastings, a spa visit, and visits to many sites. Details can be found at the FCSU website, or call Joe at (412) 956-6000 or email him at < jitsenko@aol.com >.

Treasure Tours – Featuring renowned folklorist Helene Cincebeaux, Treasure Tours will offer two trips to Slovakia, with the first one conducted July 11-20. It includes Bratislava old town, Modra ceramics, the Detva Folk Festival, the Kezmarok Crafts Fest, two walled towns (Levoča and Bardejov), Prešov, Spiš Castle, a stay at a castle overlooking Košice, charming Čičmany, and more. For more information contact Trasure Tours, Helene Cincebeaux, 151 Colebrook Dr., Rochester, NY 14617, toll-free at (585) 472-5377, or at < helenezx@aol.com >.

September Heritage Tour – This Slovakia Heritage Tour will take place September 4-14, and will finish with a day in Krakow, Poland. It will cover the heartland of Slovakia, including Bratislava, the Tatry mountains, Košice, and Bardejov. There will be time to arrange visits with relatives. For more information go to the FCSU website or go directly to < www.slovakiaheritage.com >. You can also contact Tour Director Judith Northrup-Bennett at (978) 544-5144 or at < connectionswork4u@hotmail.com >.

Ukraine (cont’d from p.1)...Early in the crisis, there were expressions of support by Slovak government officials, urging Russia to respect the independence of Ukraine and its territorial integrity. As the events in Crimea escalated, Slovak President Gašparovič issued a statement that Slovakia would not recognize the Crimean declaration of independence and the subsequent annexation of the territory by Russia. While the US and EU applied sanctions against certain Russian individuals, the issue became more complicated as the topic turned to broader economic sanctions. The Slovak stance generally echoed that of EU officials, who are not as willing to impose sanctions that would have substantial impacts on each of their domestic economies. After a meeting with EU leaders on March 21, Prime Minister Fico confirmed that Slovakia had not imposed broader economic sanctions and would not support actions that inflict harm on the Slovak economy. Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak, who has maintained close contact with the US and EU governments, has noted that these are complicated times in international relations that have not been seen in the Central and Eastern European region since 1989.

PASKA

Paska is a Slovak bread that is traditionally eaten during Easter. It is often the centerpiece of the traditional Easter basket that is blessed on Easter Sunday. A traditional basket usually contains smoked meats, sausage, butter, *hrudka* (a sweet, custard-like cheese), bread, salt, horseradish and *pysanky* eggs. Since Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians fast during Lent, the food in the basket is not eaten until after Mass on Easter Sunday. Each food item in the basket is symbolic of a religious theme. Paska represents Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, and is considered to be the most important food in the basket to be blessed. Paska is typically baked into a round loaf and usually features a dough braid around the edge, along with a decorative cross or other religious symbols made from dough placed on top. The paska recipe listed below was provided to us by the Belensky family.

Ingredients:

1 cup milk	3 large eggs (at room temperature)
5 tbsp butter	2¼ tsp. instant yeast
¼ cup sugar	3½ cups bread flour
½ tbsp salt	⅓ cup raisins

Instructions:

Scald milk. Add butter, sugar, and salt. Let cool. Beat two eggs and add to the liquid mixture when lukewarm. Scoop the yeast, bread flour, and raisins into a mixing bowl. Pour the liquids into the dry ingredients and mix them until the liquid is absorbed into the flour. Knead the dough into a ball, on a floured surface, until it no longer sticks to your hands. Flour your hands as needed to help shape the dough. Place the kneaded dough into a greased bowl and cover. Let the dough double in size. Place it on a floured surface and gently press down to flatten it into the shape of a circle. Fold the dough into thirds, into a loaf shape, and tuck in the ends. Place the dough into a greased 9" X 5" loaf pan, cover, and let rise until doubled. Brush the top of the *paska* with a beaten egg yolk. Place the loaf into an oven that has been pre-heated to 350° F and bake for 50-60 minutes, until the crust is golden brown. Remove the loaf from the pan and place on a cooling rack to cool completely.

Helpful Tips:

- 1. Temperature.** Yeast is very sensitive to temperature. Contact with scalding hot liquids will kill the yeast. Conversely, a cold kitchen will slow the rise of the *paska* dough.
- 2. Flour.** A frequent mistake of novice bakers is to scoop flour like sugar, which adds excessive flour to a recipe and results in very dense bread. Fluff the flour before scooping or sift the needed amount of flour. If bread flour is not available, all-purpose flour can be substituted.
- 3. Different Types of Yeast.** Although this recipe calls for instant yeast, active dry yeast (i.e. Red Star or Fleischmann's), which is more commonly found in most grocery stores, can be used. In contrast to instant yeast, active dry yeast must be rehydrated. Use one ¼-oz. (7g) packet of active dry yeast and follow the manufacturer's directions for rehydrating. Fresh yeast or yeast cake can also be substituted for the instant yeast. Use 6¼ tsp. of fresh yeast as a substitute in this recipe.
- 4. Bread machines.** If you have a bread machine with a dough setting, you can let it do the hard work of kneading. Add the wet and dry ingredients in the order suggested by the manufacturer, and then resume the recipe at the second kneading step in the recipe.

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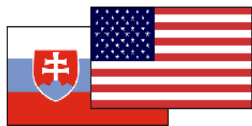
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SLOVAK-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
WASHINGTON, DC
5217 ELLICOTT COURT
CENTREVILLE, VA 20120-1727



SLOVAK-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL/DONATION FORM
New or renewing 2014 annual membership runs thru December 31, 2014.

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:
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Washington, D.C.

MAIL THIS FORM TO:

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_____ Yes! Please contact me to help out with Society events (04/14)