

SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, DC

NEWSLETTER

September 2014

www.dcslovaks.org

A Busy Fall Season of Slovak-American Events

This fall promises to be a busy one for Washington-area Slovak-Americans as SASW and other groups sponsor an array of events. Consider participating in several of the events described below.

Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C. Annual Picnic

Date/Time: Saturday, September 13, 2014, 1pm to 5pm

Location: St. Luke Orthodox Church
6801 Georgetown Pike
McLean, Virginia 22101

Admission: SASW members - \$20 (pre-paid reservations)
Non-members - \$25 (pre-paid reservations)
Children 10 yrs. and under – Free

Join us for a Slovak-style picnic, organized jointly with the Washington Slovak Meetup group. Admission includes food, desserts, drinks (i.e. soft drinks, wine, beer), and recorded Slovak music.

Please consider bringing a small dessert (enough for about four persons). Everyone should also bring chairs.

Send reservation along with check (payable to SASW) to:

**Mrs. Shirley Rich
10614 John Ayres Drive
Fairfax, VA 22032-3115**

Reservation deadline is September 10, 2014

Any reservations received after this date will incur a \$5 per person late fee.

SASW President's message

A huge thank-you to our Board of Directors for their faithful, dedicated, and tireless work on behalf of our Slovak American Society of Washington. Members of the SASW Board are Secretary Georgene Chastain, Treasurer Tom Marton, Program Chair Helen Fedor, Newsletter chair Ken Bombara, Membership Growth Chair and cooking expert Brian Belensky, Marcel Lorincz, and John Husovsky. Our very innovative and hard-working Vice-President Evan Stefanik recently resigned from the board to start a new job overseas. Even from thousands of miles away, though, he has volunteered to help maintain our membership list. We are currently looking for someone to replace Evan as Membership Chair.

Our annual SASW picnic will take place on September 13, 2014, at St. Luke Orthodox Church at 6801 Georgetown Pike, McLean, Virginia, from 1pm to 5pm. This year we were unable to find an SASW member-owned free location large enough to hold our picnic. St. Luke Church has graciously permitted us to rent their church hall and patio. We also had to obtain a banquet license from the Virginia ABC so that we can serve beer and wine at the picnic. The result of these added expenses is an increase in the charge for attending the picnic. Again, we thank Nick and Tonya Harmon for hosting our picnic for the past two years. We wish them well and much success in their new home in Canada.

This year we are doing pre-paid reservations so that we can plan for the right amount of food and beverages. Please try to get your check and registration in as soon as possible so that our SASW picnic can continue to be successful. We look forward to a sunny day and a huge crowd.

Dr. Jerry Rich

Join Us for the Next SASW Speakers' Series Event

Saturday, September 27, 2:00pm

At the Slovak Embassy

Prof. Martin Votruba will lecture on

World War I and the Slovaks

While World War I started with a series of almost operatic coincidences 100 years ago, it brought about grave, but also unexpectedly welcome, consequences for the Slovaks. The territory of present-day Slovakia was affected early on, the eastern front moved west, and the ancestral places of many Slovak-Americans found themselves to be temporarily occupied by Russian troops. About 70,000 Slovaks perished in the war, with a large number of others returning home wounded. At the same time, thanks partly to significant activism by Slovak-Americans, the war brought the Slovaks more freedom than any armed conflict before or since the Great War.

Martin Votruba, PhD, has been Director of the Slovak Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh for a quarter of a century; it is the only North-American university where students can take Slovak culture and language classes through the advanced level and opt to receive a Minor in Slovak Studies. Partly based on people's queries, he maintains the Slovak Studies Program webpage at < pitt.edu/~votruba > with information about Slovak-related topics.

Prof. Votruba's previous SASW talks have been very popular and well received, as this upcoming talk promises to be. Come join us! Admission is free, and light refreshments will be available.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend these upcoming SASW events at the Slovak Embassy*!

Saturday, October 18, 12:30-1:30pm

SASW Annual Membership Meeting

At the annual meeting, the SASW Board will report on the status of SASW, review the year's activities, discuss plans for 2015, and take questions, ideas, or comments from the membership. Please come join us and meet others with shared interests—we'd love to see you!!! A light luncheon will be provided. Elections for three Board positions will also be held. If you're interested in serving on the SASW Board, email < dc Slovaks@yahoo.com >, or contact Nominations Committee Chair Kathryn Tatko at (703) 751-1456. The meeting will start at 12:30pm, and the guest speaker will follow at 2:00pm (just like last year).

(at 2:00 pm – open to the public)

Professor Kevin Deegan-Krause will speak on

The 2014 Slovak Presidential Election and What's Next for Slovakia?

Kevin Deegan-Krause is Associate Professor of Political Science at Wayne State University, Detroit. He has published extensively on the politics of central and eastern Europe, with a special focus on Slovakia. He is the author of the 2006 book, *Elected Affinities: Democracy and Party Competition in Slovakia and the Czech Republic*, and regularly blogs on politics at < pozorblog.com >. His talk will recap the recent election of Andrej Kiska as Slovakia's new president and will discuss the implications for Slovak politics and Slovakia's role in Europe and the world.

* * *

Sunday, December 7, 1:00-5:00pm

SASW Svätý Mikuláš Party

Plan to join us for SASW's most popular annual event as we start off the holiday season with a celebration of Slovak culture, food and music. Families and children love this event!!! We are always looking for volunteers to help with various tasks, so please consider helping out; call Kathryn Tatko at (703) 751-1456. Details forthcoming.

*The above events will be held at the Slovak Embassy, 3523 International Ct. NW, Washington, DC—near the Van Ness Metro station on the Red Line. Street parking is also available.

* * *

SASW continues to be interested in 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 < dc Slovaks@yahoo.com >.

Other Events of Interest in the D.C. Area

Jednota Mass and Choir Performance at National Shrine – Branch 856 (Washington, D.C. area) of the First Catholic Slovak Union (Jednota) is inviting all area Slovaks to its annual Mass commemorating the dedication of the Mother of Sorrows Chapel at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The Mass will take place on **Sunday, September 14, at 11:00am**, in the Mother of Sorrows Chapel, 400 Michigan Avenue, NE, Washington, D.C. Father Martin Kertys from Slovakia will serve as the main celebrant. In addition, this year there will be a special performance after the Mass by the **Bratislava Boys' Choir**, an award-winning choral group that has appeared on TV and in films. For more information, please call Marion Mistrik at (301) 654-5638, or Steve Matula at (703) 671-3013.

Bratislava Boys' Choir, additional performance – The Embassy of the Slovak Republic and the Austrian Cultural Forum in Washington, DC, cordially invite you to a concert of the renowned **Bratislava Boys' Choir**, the recent absolute winner of the International Choir Competition in Lecco, Italy. The concert will be held at the **Embassy of Austria**, 3524 International Ct NW, Washington, DC 20008 (next door to the Slovak Embassy) on **Thursday, September 11, at 7:30pm**. To register, please go to < <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/concert-bratislava-boys-choir-tickets-12600980873> >. For information, the Slovak Embassy's phone number is (202) 237-1054.

Epiphany Slavic Festival – The 41st Annual Slavic American Festival will be held **Sunday, September 7**, noon to 6:30pm, at Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church, 3410 Woodburn Road, Annandale, Virginia. Admission is free and free shuttle parking will be available at 3301 Woodburn Rd. No pets please. For more information on the festival, check out < www.slavicamericanfestival.com > or call (703) 573-3986.

'Embassy Series' Event at Slovak Embassy – On **Thursday, September 18, at 7:30pm**, you can hear one of Europe's finest baritones, **Martin Babjak**, with noted pianist, **Daniel Buranovsky**, a superb soloist in his own right. The program will feature arias, songs, and many of your favorite pieces in the elegant Slovak Embassy, followed by a lovely Slovak cold buffet, prepared by the Embassy chef (\$75, all-inclusive).

The winner of several international singing competitions, Martin Babjak has been a principal singer at the Slovak National Theatre since 1989. He has also appeared as a guest artist at opera houses in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, France, Norway, Egypt, Canada, the United States, Japan, and the Czech Republic. He has particularly excelled in performing roles in the operas of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Giacomo Puccini, and Giuseppe Verdi.

"Mr. Buranovsky's bracing recital offered an intellectual challenge to his audience: a summons to once again learn from and build upon the work laid down by our artistic predecessors rather than rejecting it as irrelevant or hopelessly outmoded in our tempestuous times—the fashionable tactic of increasingly out-of-touch postmodernists." – *Washington Times*. To order tickets go to < www.embassyseries.org > or call (202) 625-2361.

Czech-Slovak Freedom Lecture – This important and prestigious annual lecture will be held on **November 14, at noon**, at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. The distinguished speaker will be **Pavol Demeš**, former Minister of International Relations and foreign policy advisor to the first Slovak president. Mr. Demeš' lecture will focus on the Velvet Revolution and Slovakia's progress since independence, including its entry into the EU and NATO. Admission is free, and an invitation to RSVP will be issued closer to the event. You can also call the Wilson Center at (202) 691-4000.

SASW News and Notes

Café Night fundraiser a success – On June 12, SASW held a “Café Night” event at the Bistro Bohem restaurant to offer a social event for the membership and to raise funds for the VSM/City University Scholarship Fund. Despite having to shift the date from the one originally advertised, the event was successful and SASW was able to raise a nice sum for the Scholarship Fund. A big “D’akujeme!” to all who came to Bistro Bohem for the terrific music of Orchester Prazevica and the delicious food and drink. We were encouraged by how many of you came out for the event, and hope to do this again in the future.

Zednik talk draws large crowd – Rick Zednik, who co-founded the English-language newspaper *The Slovak Spectator*, observed and reported on the events leading to Slovakia’s emergence as an independent country. On April 28 he addressed a large audience at the Slovak Embassy with a talk entitled, “Slovakia in the EU 10 Years On: Promises Fulfilled?”. SASW co-sponsored the talk with the Friends of Slovakia. Zednik noted that Slovakia’s early years of independence presented numerous challenges, and many observers doubted its capacity to succeed. But leaders emerged and young people became involved, which changed the political dynamic, and it is now generally agreed that Slovakia has become an EU success story, with its growing economy and viable democratic institutions. To continue the progress, hard work and diplomacy in the national interest will continue to be required from Slovakia’s leaders.

Slovak sports items – The August 3 edition of the *Washington Post* ran a lengthy story about women’s pro basketball player **Kristi Tolliver**, who attended the University of Maryland. Tolliver recently became a Slovak citizen and will play for the Slovak national team. The details of the story are rather interesting and portray the challenges that women basketball players face in their careers. You can read the article at < http://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/otherSports/kristi-tollivers-career-speaks-volumes-about-life-as-a-womens-basketball-player/2014/08/01/87d354c6-197b-11e4-88f7-96ed767bb747_story.html?hpid=z8 >. Also, congratulations to Slovak cyclist **Peter Sagan**, who won his third ‘green jersey’ in a row at the Tour de France, and to Slovak hockey star Marian Gaborik of this year’s Stanley Cup champion L.A. Kings.

Sanctions complicate Slovak economic and political situation – The ongoing crisis over Russian actions in Ukraine is complicating the Slovak domestic situation. The imposition of increased sanctions on Russia by the US and the EU will likely affect the Slovak economy, but the extent is hard to assess. The focus has been on the energy sector, due to the major natural-gas pipelines that run through Ukraine to Slovakia and on to other parts of Europe. Slovakia is implementing procedures for ‘reverse flow’ of natural gas to Ukraine, should that be necessary, and indications are that Slovakia would be able to weather a gas crisis with alternative supplies. Recent reports suggest however, that instead, it is oil supplies that are vulnerable should there be a cutoff by Ukraine. The retaliation by Russia, of banning agricultural imports from the EU, will have ramifications that are difficult to fully assess. While Slovakia’s final goods trade with Russia is not extensive, businesses are worried that supplies of intermediate goods may be affected, as likely will be prices, with a diversion of trade from other EU countries.

The Ukraine crisis is also affecting Slovak politics. Prime Minister Robert Fico has again publicly spoken out about his dislike for the sanctions, describing the policy as “senseless” and one that is causing unnecessary damage to the Slovak economy and others. This view is compatible with those expressed by neighboring Prime Minister Viktor Orban in Hungary and Czech President Miloš Zeman. Conversely, newly-elected President Kiska has expressed his support for the sanctions policy and the need for solidarity with the international community in standing up to Russian aggression. Political figures from the opposition center-right parties have argued that Fico’s stance is consistent with his past tendency to ‘lean’ toward Russia in foreign policy matters.

The *Washington Post* recently noted the passing of **Sophie Masloff**, a self-proclaimed “old Jewish grandmother” who in 1988 became the first female, and Jewish, mayor of Pittsburgh. She drew attention for her folksy self-deprecating style and used malapropisms to humorous effect, such as when she referred to the famous New Jersey rock star as “Bruce Bedspring”. Another example of her style occurred when a diplomat from the former Yugoslavia came to Pittsburgh for a visit. Mrs. Masloff told the diplomat as they shook hands before photographers, “You know, I’ve never been to Czechoslovakia.” The diplomat responded, “Madame Mayor, I’m from Yugoslavia.” “I know that,” she said. “But the truth is, I’ve never been to Czechoslovakia.”

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

2014 Board of Directors:

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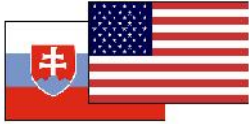
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Website: www.dcslovaks.org

Email: dcslovaks@yahoo.com



SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
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 CENTREVILLE, VA 20120-1727

**SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.
 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL/DONATION FORM**

New annual membership, and renewal of existing members for 2015, runs thru December 31, 2015.

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 – Membership
 816 E St., N.E., Apt 105
 Washington, DC 20002**

NAME(s) _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ **ZIP+4** _____

TELEPHONE: Home: () _____ - _____

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