



SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF WASHINGTON D.C.

SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
WASHINGTON, D.C.

NOVEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

www.dcslovaks.org

info@dcslovaks.org

President's Letter

Ahojte SASW members and friends! Welcome to the busy Winter Holiday season. We are excited to announce the in-person Svätý Mikuláš party coming up on December 11, 2022 at the Slovak Embassy in Washington, DC. More information can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. We hope to see as many of you as possible at the Embassy, so be sure to send in your RSVPs and payment quickly so you do not miss out. There will be a limit to the number of people that the Embassy can accommodate.

After a summer hiatus, the SASW began the Fall with a Zoom program by Mary Gido titled "Threads Across Time." The SASW held its Annual meeting on Nov. 5 at the Slovak Embassy, but we were limited by the Embassy to only 30 in-person attendees. Although the Business portion of the meeting was not recorded, the talk by Professor Edward Snajdr titled "Argonauts of the Eastern Bloc: Environmentalism in Slovakia after the Velvet Revolution" was recorded and should be available on our website shortly. Highlights of the Annual meeting, including the election of new Board members and bylaws amendments, can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

And the SASW cookbook has been submitted to the publishers and should be ready in time for Christmas. We will be taking advanced orders at the Svätý Mikuláš party. We will also send out an order announcement as soon as the cookbooks are available, and you will be able to send in orders through Paypal or through the mail to our P.O. Box. We can ship cookbooks anywhere in the U.S., but shipping payment will be extra. Those in the DC area may arrange to pick up their cookbooks in person by contacting Vice-President Marta Szotakova.

Also, beginning in January, the SASW Program committee is joining Friends of Slovakia and the Slovak Embassy in planning a series of hybrid and virtual presentations to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Slovak Republic. More information will be forthcoming, so stay tuned!

Georgene Chastain, President

Slovak American Society of Washington, DC

Report to the Membership for the Annual Meeting

Membership

As of today, November 5, 2022, we have 136 paid memberships (83 Individual and 53 Family).

On October 23, 2021, we had 131 paid memberships (76 Individual and 55 Family).

In October 2020, we had 113 paid memberships (64 Individual and 49 Family).

In October 2019, we had 107 paid memberships (57 Individual and 50 Family).

A new Lifetime membership option will soon be available. Cost is \$250 for those under the age of 65 and \$150 for those over the age of 65. The Bylaws will be changed to reflect this new option, and anyone interested can renew with a lifetime membership beginning in December at the Svätý Mikuláš party.

Some Slovaks who are interested in obtaining a Slovaks Living Abroad certificate are joining SASW to satisfy the requirement to belong to a Slovak cultural organization. A specially-appointed SASW committee reviews their request for a signed letter stating their participation in SASW after the requester performs a special project or service for us. So far in 2022, the SASW received inquiries from 12 people and we have provided 6 letters of participation for the Slovaks Living Abroad certificate.

Financial

Our financial status is stable. Our total assets as of September 30, 2022 were \$13,629.83, which includes \$10,583.55 to be sent to NCSML as the initial Slovak Endowment that SASW began, and \$253 designated for scholarships to deserving Slovak students at City University.

City University Scholarships

In May, we donated \$6,000 to VSM/City University, which supported 8 scholarships for needy students in Slovakia. One of the scholarships was in memory of former SASW President Jerry Rich, who died in January, 2022. The Thank You letters from recipients are posted on our website. Your donations to the City University Scholarship Fund is much appreciated by these Slovak students.

Charitable donations

In March, 2022, Dr. Martin Javor notified the SASW that, due to the Ukraine crisis he needed additional SASW assistance. He wanted to finish the construction of the museum in order to house two Ukrainian refugee families. The SASW Board voted to send Dr. Javor \$600, and solicited the SASW members for additional donations for this cause. An additional amount of \$379.99 was sent to the Slovak Emigration Museum (Kasigarda) at the end of May, 2022 which included more SASW member donations.

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Tune In!

SASW Member Krysten Jenci and her father, Michael Jenci, were recently featured in The Global Slovakia podcast series. The podcast is available on Apple and Spotify and other podcast platforms (please see the link below). In the podcast, Michael shares stories about his journey from Slovakia to the United States. Krysten talks about how much she values the Slovak culture her father shared with her, and how she is working to pass Slovak culture and traditions on to her children. If you have about 14 minutes to spare, please listen to the Podcast.

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/52EM1PwuaYD5cJ0C174RNb>

<https://www.globalslovakia.com>

Report to the Membership, cont.

Charitable donations (cont.)

A SASW Slovak Endowment to support the National Czech and Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa was initiated in 2022 to provide funds for the acquisition of Slovak materials and Slovak programs and exhibits. The SASW contributed \$6,267.49 from a CD, and donors contributed another \$5,316.06 for a total of \$11,583.55, which will be sent to the NCSML. Future donations to this Endowment can be sent directly to NCSML. The SASW plans future fundraising activities in order to keep supporting this Slovak Endowment at the NCSML.

Programs

The following events were held over the past year on Zoom.

Dec. 5, 2021 - Virtual Svätý Mikuláš party featuring Ambassador Radovan Javorčík reading a Christmas poem in Slovak and English, and a presentation on Winter Holidays in Slovakia by Global Slovakia, besides the arrival of Svaty Mikulas, himself.

February 1, 2022 – Slovak astronaut Dr. Michaela Musilová, Director of HI-SEAS, a NASA Research Program located in Hawaii, spoke about “When Your Goal is to Go to Mars”.

March 5, 2022 - Marty Manor Mullins, Ph.D., Lecturer at Flathead Valley Community College (Montana) gave her presentation on “Košice’s Influential Communist-Era Subversives.”

March 26, 2022 - George Clyne gave a demonstration titled "Easter Egg (Pysanka) Workshop with George."

September 17, 2022 – Mary Gido gave a talk on weaving, spinning, and bobbin lace, explaining how these crafts are part of Slovak culture in her presentation titled “Threads Across Time.”

November 5, 2022 - Dr. Edward Snajdr, professor, John Jay College in New York City, will give his presentation, “Argonauts of the Eastern Bloc: Environmentalism in Slovakia after the Velvet Revolution” later this afternoon.

Steve Matula Service Award

The Stephen Matula Award was created in 2019 to honor an SASW member who embodies the ideals of the Society through his/her ideas, work ethic, and accomplishments.

The 2022 winner of the Steve Matula Award was just chosen in October. The winner is Anne Gornal McKeown. She will be formally recognized at this year’s Svätý Mikuláš party. Congratulations Anne!

Continued on the next page

Report to the Membership, cont.

Social and Cultural Activities

On May 21 the SASW joined Friends of Slovakia for a joint picnic in-person at the Knights of Columbus facility in Arlington. Many members of both organizations attended and everyone was glad to be able to get together in person.

Regular meetings of the Advanced Slovak Conversation group and the Slovak Genealogy Discussion group continue to be held via Zoom. For more information, visit our website at dcslovaks.org

The SASW Slovak Cookbook is almost ready to be printed! We expect to be able to take orders beginning at the Svätý Mikuláš party on Dec. 11 and delivery of the cookbooks will be shortly before Christmas.

We hope to see everyone at the Slovak Embassy for an in-person Svätý Mikuláš party on December 11.

Respectfully submitted by

Georgene Chastain, President

Slovak American Society of Washington, DC

SASW Provides Support for the Slovak Living Abroad Certificate

In April 2022, Slovakia changed its citizenship laws to relax restrictions on dual citizenship and included "citizenship-by-descent" provisions that enables anyone with a parent, grandparent or even a great-grandparent, who was a Czechoslovak citizen born in what is now Slovakia, to obtain Slovak citizenship.

The first step towards Slovak citizenship is obtaining a Slovak Living Abroad (SLA) certificate. An applicant must provide details on their Slovak ancestry and submit a statement listing their public activities demonstrating their national awareness from a Slovak cultural organization. After obtaining an SLA certificate, an applicant can apply for a residence permit and then proceed with a citizenship application.

The SASW has provided letters supporting the SLA applications for several members. Listed below are eligibility requirements and procedures regarding support for SLA applications for new members. If you are a long-time member of the SASW, please contact us at info@dcslovaks.org for more information.

Eligibility:

1.) Length of membership.

Applicants should be a member of the SASW for at least one year (one year from the date of joining) and should be a member in good standing at the time of the SLA application.

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SLA Certificate, cont.

2.) Being an "active" member in the organization.

New members must perform a service project that supports the SASW's mission of promoting Slovak culture. A service project must be worked out in consultation with the SLA committee. For example, a service project could be, but is not limited to, serving on the board or on a special committee, newsletter contributions, a speaker presentation, marketing assistance, graphic design services, video productions, ... etc. The SLA committee is willing to meet with prospective applicants to discuss how they can contribute.

Procedures:

1.) Who decides when the SASW will sign a letter?

The SLA committee appointed by the SASW President will make the determination.

2.) Special handling procedures.

Beyond regular first-class mail, applicants will pay for all special handling costs.

3.) Translation services.

The SASW will not provide translation services, but will provide links to professional translator resources.

4.) Notification.

All potential applicants should provide notice to the SASW prior to application.

5.) "Coaching" services.

At the discretion of the SLA committee, informal coaching could be provided. There is no guarantee that any advice offered by the SASW will guarantee approval by a Slovak government office.

Additional Resources:

For more information on the SLA application process and Slovak citizenship, please consult these resources:

Slovak Embassy in Washington, DC

<https://www.mzv.sk/en/web/washington-en/services/slovak-living-abroad>

Slovak Living Abroad Certificate & Slovak Citizenship Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1454484788071370/>

CzechoSlovak Passport

<https://www.cs-passport.eu/about/>

Highlights from the SASW Annual Meeting: November 5, 2022

About 30 people attended the SASW Annual meeting and presentation by Edward Snajdr of John Jay College, CUNY, titled “Argonauts of the Eastern Bloc: Environmentalism in Slovakia after the Velvet Revolution,” held on November 5, 2022 at the Slovak Embassy. Although the number of attendees was limited by the Embassy, it was great to see those who could be there in person.

During the Business portion of the meeting, President Georgene Chastain read the Annual Report to the Membership, which is included elsewhere in this newsletter. Brian Belensky, Chair of the Bylaws Committee, presented the proposed amendments to the bylaws which his committee recommended to update the bylaws. These amendments included a new Lifetime Membership option, allowance for virtual general meetings, clarification on voting procedures for general meetings, removal of transition language on board elections, extension of board candidacy notice period, and new language to allow the board to conduct business outside of formal meetings. These amendments to the bylaws were passed by unanimous vote by the SASW members present at the meeting. The newest version of the bylaws can be found on the SASW website at dcslovaks.org

Another portion of the Business meeting was the election of 3 Board members for a 3-year term. All nine Board members serve 3-year terms on a rolling basis, so that every year there are 3 Board members who are up for re-election. The Board members elected were Helen Fedor, Andrea Bomar, and Erika Fleegle. Tom Marton stepped down from his Board position and John Husovsky was not re-elected. The SASW Board would like to thank Tom Marton and John Husovsky for their many years of service on the SASW Board, and welcome new Board members Andrea and Erika.

After the Business meeting, Professor Edward Snajdr gave his presentation titled “Argonauts of the Eastern Bloc: Environmentalism in Slovakia after the Velvet Revolution.” This presentation was based on his fieldwork for his dissertation in anthropology where he followed young student activists who were passionate about the environment shortly after the fall of Communism in Slovakia in 1995. He joined protests and met leaders who were instrumental in bringing the environmental situation to the attention of the new government in Slovakia at an important crossroads in its history. This presentation was live-streamed through Zoom and should be available on the SASW YouTube channel, if you missed it.



The SASW Board

Pictured from left: Valerie McNeill, Erika Fleegle, Andrea Bomar, Brian Belensky, Marta Szotakova, Georgene Chastain, Helen Fedor

Not Pictured: Stacey Galik, Virginia Sorokin



SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF WASHINGTON D.C.

SV. MIKULÁŠ PARTY PREPAID RESERVATION FORM

RSVP by 6:00 pm on Wednesday, December 7th

Member reservation(s) _____ x \$ 35 _____

Non-Member reservation(s) _____ x \$ 45 _____ **Children 10 and under are free.**

Total Amount Enclosed for Sv. Mikuláš Reservations _____ (Make check payable to 'SASW')

Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Names of Attendees (please specify adult or child):

Send reservation form and check payable to 'SASW' to:

SASW

P.O. Box 2502

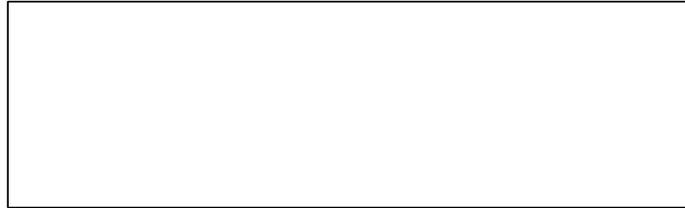
Springfield, VA 22152-2502



SLOVAK AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF WASHINGTON D.C.

P.O. Box 2502

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

New membership or 2023 renewal runs through 12/31/2023. Contributions and memberships are tax deductible.

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

Lifetime - Individual (Under 65 - \$250 / Over 65 - \$150) \$ _____

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

Tax-deductible donation (optional):

City University Scholarship Fund \$ _____

SASW General Fund \$ _____

Mail your check (made out to the Slovak American Society of Washington, D.C.) and this form to:

**SASW Membership
P.O. Box 2502
Springfield, VA 22152-2502**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ **ZIP + 4** _____

TELEPHONE (_____) - _____

EMAIL _____

LOOK AT THE UPPER RIGHT CORNER OF THE MAILING LABEL TO SEE YOUR MEMBERSHIP
EXPIRATION DATE (MONTH/YEAR).